

I Will Build My Church

James Gunn

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Preface

In the New Testament we get adequate instruction for the individual life of the Christian. In the same book we find guidance for family life. Many beloved brethren in Christ would agree with this, but when they come to the third area, church gathering, they say that the New Testament plan cannot work today. This amazes me. Why would the Holy Spirit fail to give us workable principles for church gathering? How can we say the guidance He gives is inadequate or positively wrong? What alternative source of guidance do we go by? Human wisdom, tradition, modern psychology? In what other areas have these succeeded in helping the Christian?

No, we can be sure that God the Holy Spirit will enable us to carry out in all humility the precepts of Scripture. Beside precepts there are precedents. The Lord does not put everything on the basis of a positive command. We should look for suggestions in Scripture. Love seeks all means of pleasing the Beloved. Following little suggestions from His Word might bring pleasure to His heart.

I am grateful to the Lord for a worthy contribution to this subject from the pen of Mr. James Gunn. Mr. Gunn brings to the Scriptures a keen mind and habits of careful writing. I commend this book to all who wish to know what the Scripture says in regard to church gathering.

R. Edward Harlow

Foreword

The need for ministry concerning the basic teachings in the Word of God on the subject of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, was never more evident than it is in our day. News media use such terms and phrases as, “the church without God,” or “the death of God,” with equanimity and without any apparent concern for the effect of the implication of these terms on the spiritual welfare of the youth of the rising generation.

With this in mind, a number of interested folk from many parts of Metropolitan Toronto and nearby centres met to discuss the problem and to seek a solution, at least in part. Following a good deal of prayer and intercommunication, a decision was made to revive Bible Study Classes in a central place in Toronto. The intention was that these studies should be available to all Christians from any section of our population.

A central committee was formed at the meeting composed of seven capable brethren: Russell Took, Don Mills; Allan Ure, Leaside; Gordon Dale, Rexdale; William G. Miller, Islington; Arnold Mattice, Oshawa; Graham Swales, Midland; Norman Lemmer, Agincourt. This committee was asked to consider a list of subjects presented by members of the committee. They were to select what seemed to be the most suitable subject. Following this they were asked to suggest and contact a person to lead the Bible studies. They were also to arrange a suitable time and place for such studies.

The subject chosen was, “A consideration of The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Mr. James Gunn of Midland, Ontario, was asked to lead the Bible Class. For the sake of interest, it should be

pointed out that Mr. Gunn was educated as an industrial chemist. He spent some two and one half years in this vocation before he went into full time service in the gospel and in the ministry of the Word of God. He spent approximately five years in Venezuela and since that time has been very active in this work over a large part of Canada, and to a lesser extent in the United States and Great Britain. He has served as a Director of Elim Homes for many years and as Editor of the magazine known as, "Food for the Flock." He has published at least two books in addition to his long association with the magazine. It was felt, on this account, that he was eminently suited to lead the present group of studies.

The subject was considered in some detail, over twelve hourly sessions, each of which was followed by a one half hour discussion period. The Church in both its universal and local aspects was studied. The studies have to do primarily with the Church as presented by the supreme architect, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the service of Almighty God.

The classes were extremely well attended for over a period of several months during the winter and spring of 1966-67. Christians coming from all over Metropolitan Toronto, and in addition from many outside places up to distances of many miles.

This series of studies is presented herewith, in the anticipation that they will form a basis of truth concerning the Church, which should provide the young people of our day with a solid foundation on which to attain an understanding of this remarkable organism, consisting of folk who have accepted Christ as their

Saviour and have gone on to acknowledge Him as Lord in the committal of their lives to Him.

W. J. Virgin

M.D., M.CH. (Orth.), F.R.C.S. (Ed.)

Introduction

Peter was an old man far removed both by time and distance from the early scenes of his experiences with the Master as he sat in a room away in the city of Babylon dictating a letter to Silvanus, the letter we know as the First Epistle of Peter.

It may be that, as he dictated chapter two, the feet of the aged gentleman which so often grew weary now, seemed light and quick as in thought, with the little group of disciples he hurried along the roads which led northward through Palestine to the base of Mount Lebanon, the source of the river Jordan.

Once again in spirit he may have stood in the little community which in early days had been called Paneas, because of the shrine there to the heathen god Pan, which is better known to us by the name Caesarea Philippi.

It is possible that in thought he stood under the shadow of an idol shrine listening to those questions: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ... "Whom say ye that I am?"

Those never-to-be-forgotten words probably rang again in his ears and heart: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood (My bodily appearance) hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven... Thou art Peter (Petros, a stone), and upon this

rock (Petra, a rock—thy confession of Me) I will build My Church.”

Yes, there was no doubt about it, the Lord Jesus Christ, as Son of Man and Son of God, claimed to be not only the one foundation of the Christian Church but the architect as well. Peter understood exactly what the Lord meant.

Looking back over thirty years, he rejoiced that they had been spent as a builder serving his Divine Master. He thought of the words of his beloved brother Paul, some of which were hard to be understood, and Peter then, as we do now, conceded the fact that to Paul the Lord had entrusted most of the detailed plan. Paul had established more local churches, raised more miniature buildings, replicas of the great spiritual edifice, than any of the other apostles. How carefully we should listen to his advice!

In writing to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul says, “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (I Cor. 3:10-13).

All this, of course, suggests the Judgment Seat of Christ before which we shall all be made manifest. It is therefore imperative that all who build in the Church do so in view of the severity of the final test. A careful

builder executes his work with a view to inspection; he follows meticulously every detail in the blue print; he does not insert his own ideas; he follows only the mind of the architect.

This volume is an attempt to direct attention to the purposes and principles related to the Church: its form, features, and functions as these are revealed in the New Testament. A perusal of each chapter and attention to each suggested biblical reference will be found rewarding.

The devout prayer of the author and his publisher is that unto God be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Chapter 1: The Christian Church: Organically and Ethically

The Church in her universal aspect may well be called the Holy Catholic Church; she is holy in Christ before God, and catholic, universal, in her membership from among men. In this regard the Church is the general commonwealth of all Christians, the community of all saints throughout the world, both Jews and Gentiles, in each generation since Pentecost.

Her Designation

Different terms are used to designate the Church, and, of course, the most common one is the name Church.

The Greek word: The Greek word is “ecclesia” which means to call or summon a people, to segregate others from the masses. In the New Testament it is used in three different relationships: to the heathen (Acts 19: 39), to the Jews (Acts 7:38), and to the Christians (Acts 2:47 etc.). The full implication of these usages implies not only an apartness but a togetherness, therefore, a congregation. Significantly, the New Translation usually translates the word “ecclesia” into English by the word “assembly.”

The English word: The English word church has no actual connection with the Greek word “ecclesia”; it is derived from another Greek word, “kyriake,” which means, “that which pertains to the Lord.” This is the Greek word from which our English word church is directly derived, so also the Scotch word kirk, and the German word kirche.

The word Church in its Christian sense is used to denote the Church in her universal aspect, as for example in I Corinthians 10:32, Galatians 1:13, etc. It is also used to denote the church in any given locality. We read of the church at Jerusalem, the church at Corinth, and the churches of Galatia.

In another sense it is used in certain passages to indicate the actual gathering of the saints for worship or testimony. Paul writes about being silent or about speaking in a public meeting of the gathering, and he calls that meeting the church (I Cor. 14:19 and 35).

The word therefore in Scripture is given these three different applications.

In Current literature: Attention should also be called to certain terms used in some literature relative to the Church. Reference frequently is made to the Invisible Church. This concept embraces all the saints of the present dispensation. Of this vast host, we have seen and known only a very few. The majority are already in glory.

We also read about the Church Militant. This term is applied only to that part of the Church that is still on earth engaged in the conflict with the devil (Eph. 6:12-18).

A third term occasionally appears, the Church Triumphant. This refers to the Church as a conqueror in Christ Jesus and glorified in Heaven.

Her Commencement

From what is now understood, some will be asking, "When did the Church begin?" Is it true, as some say, "The Church is a fellowship of all the faithful who ever

lived: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as Peter, James, John, and Paul?"

One gathers from the reading of the Word of God that the Lord's dealings with man changed after the coming of Christ, and that the Church did not begin until after the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, and after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Seven reasons found in the New Testament support this contention:

1. In the assertion of Christ to Peter in Matthew 16: 13-20, the building of the Church was still future.
2. The foreshadowings of the mystery (Eph. 3:1-10) in the Old Testament that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body as the Jews had to be fulfilled before the Church could be formed.
3. The cross-work of Christ had to be accomplished in order that this mystery be fulfilled. In His death Christ brought Jews and Gentiles together (Eph. 2:14-16).
4. Christ had first to be exalted and in His exaltation be made the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:19-23).
5. The Holy Spirit had first to descend in order that He baptize all believers into one body; this He did at Pentecost (I Cor. 12:12-14).
6. The ministry of the apostles formed the foundation of the Church; it could not, therefore, commence until their ministry began (Eph. 2:18-20).
7. The Holy Spirit had to come into the world and according to the prediction of Christ (John 14:16-18) remain here to progressively erect that spiritual building that will be God's eternal habitation (Eph. 2:21-22).

Her Constitution

A constitution involves three elements: membership, purpose, and government or administration. All this is perfectly true in the Church of the Living God.

Membership: The entire membership of the Christian Church is composed only of saved persons (Acts 2:47). A literal rendering of Acts 2:47 would read, "The Lord added to the same, or together, those that were being saved." See also I Corinthians 3:7. Living stones only are built into the spiritual building, the Church (I Pet. 2:5).

These members are gathered from among the nations (Acts 15:13-21), from among Jews and Gentiles alike (Eph. 3:4-6).

Purpose: The purpose God had in bringing the Church into existence is more comprehensive than first appears. At least six different phases of the divine purpose are stated in the New Testament:

1. That the Lord have a people for a possession (Eph. 1:14; 4:30). The Church is intended to be God's personal property. Such is the literal meaning of the word "peculiar" in I Peter 2:9, and to this end He claims His own and seals them.
2. That through the Church glory might ascend to God (Eph. 1:14), both now and evermore (Eph. 3:21).
3. That the Church demonstrate now before angels the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10).
4. That in the future God display through the Church His kindness and grace (Eph. 2:7).
5. That the Church be the complementary part of Christ (Eph. 1:23). As the body is to the head so the Church is

to Christ; and as Eve was to Adam so the Church is to Christ (Eph. 5:30).

6. That the Church be a testimony in the world to Christ (I Tim. 3:15-16) and to God (I Pet. 2:9).

Government: All Church government is vested in the Lord Jesus. After His resurrection He said, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28: 18), undoubtedly meaning that He had authority over both the spiritual and material realms.

His authority over the Church is seen in both His lordship (Rom. 14:9; II Cor. 6:17-18) and His headship (Col. 1:18; 2:19). Lordship implies government by decree; headship implies control by co-ordination (Eph. 4:11-16).

The constitution of the Church may also be studied by an examination of the figures of speech used in the New Testament to describe not only the Church but her relationship to Christ.

1. The Church is a flock of sheep and Christ is her Shepherd (John 10:16; 21:15-25. Acts 20:28. I Pet. 5:2).

"Believers cannot be confined to those who have come out of Judaism (out of this fold). 'Other sheep I have ... them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice.' Here is opened up the vast panorama of the mission to the Gentiles... "They shall become one flock, one Shepherd.' The verbs here are in the future tense, not merely because from the standpoint of the narrative the mission to the world lies in the future, but because Jesus must first accomplish the will of the Father." (The Fourth Gospel; Sir Edwyn Hoskyns).

2. The Church is a temple (sanctuary) and God is there enshrined (Eph. 2:21).

3. The Church is a priesthood (I Pet. 2:5-9) and Christ the Great High Priest (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 8:1; 10:21).

4. The Church is a new creation (II Cor. 5:17. Gal. 3:27-28), and Christ is the Last Adam (I Cor. 15:45).

5. The Church is a household (Eph. 2:19. I Pet. 4:17) and God, the Father over that household. There is a similar picture in Hebrews 3:6 where Christ is seen to be over His own House.

6. The Church is a Body and Christ is her Head (Eph. 1:22).

7. The Church is a building and Christ is the foundation and Chief Corner Stone; all His people are living stones (I Pet. 2:4-5. Eph. 2:20).

8. The Church is a Bride and Christ her Bridegroom (Eph. 5:24-33. Rev. 19:7. Rev. 22:17).

These three are mentioned last in our list because of their importance for they picture the Church in her complete history: the Body refers to the past, to Pentecost (I Cor. 12:13). The verb tense in this reference to the baptism of the Spirit points to the past, to an event, undoubtedly to the day of Pentecost. The building aspect of the Church refers to the present. According to Ephesians 2:19-22 this spiritual building is still under construction. The Church pictured as a Bride, of course, suggests her future (Rev. 19:7-9).

Her Calling

The Greek verb “to call” that is used quite frequently in regard to God’s people of the Church era means to incite

by language, to bid or to command. Dr. Moule suggests that in the four Gospels this word call refers to outward hearing; in the Epistles that it refers to inward reception, due to a special sovereign influence from above.

The words and the tone we use to invite a person could either induce him to accept or refuse our invitation. Similarly, the language and the tone with which we command can either stimulate prompt obedience or neglect. It is certain that when God calls, He does so effectively for He induces men to accept His invitation.

There are several features of the calling of the Church in relation to the present, and some in relation to the future. These latter we shall consider under Her Consummation.

Its source: "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29). God's attitude toward the recipients of His gifts and call, no matter who they may be, Israel or the Church, remain unchangeable. Furthermore, it is well to remember that the calling of the Church is always referred to as of God the Father, and that it is part of His eternal purpose.

Its object: God's calling is such that He chooses to salvation the foolish things of the world in order to put to shame the wise by giving Christ to the called ones in order that He be their wisdom (I Cor. 1:26). The called of God, generally speaking, are not from among the important and illustrious of earth; notwithstanding, many of the world's great have become humble believers in the Lord Jesus.

Its character: "Called with an holy calling" (II Tim. 1:9). It is according to the eternal purpose of God not only to

call men and women to salvation but to call them to a life of holiness. Such a life was a part of the testimony to the Lord of which Timothy was not to be ashamed.

Its purpose: “The high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus” (Heb. 3:1).

The calling of the Christian is an upward calling. The path of God’s people is ever upward, heavenward, and will terminate in perfection in Heaven. Paul, although he knew the perfect state would be true only in the resurrection, struggled upward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

Partakers of the heavenly calling are those whose inheritance is in Christ and who anticipate, not the prosperity of earth, but the joys and glories of Heaven.

Her Consummation

The consummation of the Church has to do with her glorious future. As demonstrated, the Church has been divinely called from among the nations to be a people gathered to the name of the Lord. This call is more than a mere proclamation of the gospel, it is the effectual call of God’s chosen ones; every member of the Church has been called.

Called to a hope: Paul prayed for the Ephesians, “That ye may know what is the hope of His calling.” Later he wrote, “Ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 1:18; 4:4).

In her call through divine grace the Church has many eternal prospects: the rapture of the Church by Christ (I

Thess. 4:13-18), the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9), an incorruptible inheritance (I Pet. 1:3-4), to be forever perfect like Christ (Phil. 3:20-21. I John 3:1-2), to be manifested with Him in glory (Rom. 8:19-24. Col. 3:1-4), an opportunity to reign with Christ during the kingdom period (II Tim. 2:12. Rev. 5:10). Furthermore, the Church throughout Eternity will glorify God (Eph. 3:21). The eternal existence, designation, and relationship of the Church seem to be implied in the doxology at the close of Ephesians three.

Called unto His kingdom and glory: The Apostle Paul exhorts the saints at Thessalonica, and of course all others, to walk worthy of God who has called them unto His kingdom and glory (I Thess. 2:12).

The devil in his temptation of the Lord Jesus offered Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if He would only worship Satan (Luke 4:5-6). The Lord Jesus calls His own unto His kingdom and glory, and His kingdom is in contrast to the rebellion of Satan and man. Obviously Paul not only presented Christ to the Thessalonians as Saviour but also as King (Acts 17:7). All believers are effectively called unto the kingdom and they enter it by the new birth (John 3:3).

The kingdom and glory referred to in Thessalonians indicate the future aspect of the kingdom when it will be manifested in glory. The Church has been called to share the joys, privileges, and responsibilities of the glorious kingdom age.

The power of her calling: As we think of the call and the consummation of the Church, like Nicodemus we may exclaim, "How can these things be?" Paul replies to any such concern, and directs attention to the Lord as He is

presented in Thessalonians 5:24, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." His faithfulness: "Faithful is He that calleth you." His persistence: "That calleth." His effectual call is constant, not merely a voice in the past. His power: "Who also will do it."

Tests on This Chapter

1. In your own language give a definition of the Church.
2. When did the Church begin?
3. Give at least three scriptural proofs, and name them, to support your answer to the second question.
4. From what races are members of the Church gathered?
5. Does the Church have a democratic form of government? State the form of government positively.
6. What is God's purpose for the Church in Time, and separately, in Eternity?
7. Name at least three pictorial figures of the Church, and what relationship to Christ they indicate.
8. What is the character and purpose of God's calling for the Church?
9. What is involved in the hope of the Church?
10. Who will accomplish the glorious consummation of the Church?

Chapter 2: Christendom Versus Christianity: Profession, Apostasy and Doom

The British Historian Toynbee says that there are three explanations of the relationship of Christianity to civilization. First, as a destroyer of civilization. This is why according to Gibbon the Roman Empire collapsed. Christianity taught men to be more interested in Heaven than in earth, to be more concerned with the future than with the present. Consequently, when the barbarians attacked Rome, the Christians were not zealous for the Empire of earth so did not defend it.

Second, as a bridge. Christianity bridged the gulf between Roman civilization and modern civilization; that is, through the Church the finest elements of Roman culture have been preserved and introduced into our Western civilization. Third, as a benefactor. There are those who see how Christianity has influenced for good those nations called Christian nations.

We are not as interested in the influence of Christianity upon civilization, either ancient or modern, as we are in the influence of civilization, so-called, upon Christianity. To appreciate this, we must differentiate between Christendom and Christianity.

The Distinction

“Christianity is Christ.” wrote Dr. Griffith Thomas, and while this is true, it is necessary to amplify that simple definition. Christianity proper also embraces all who are in Christ. The mystical Christ is Christianity, the Risen

Head and all the members of His Body on earth.
Christianity is that which on earth is genuine.

Christendom embraces all who profess to submit to Christian teaching. Most of the Western nations are in this sense called Christian. They have allowed, and in a measure have been influenced by Christian teaching at sometime during their history. Christendom therefore is profession, not reality. It is an assumption to a Christian position without the acceptance of the essential Christian possession, Christ.

The beginning of Christianity dates from the coming of Christ. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). The beginning of Christendom may be dated about 312 A.D., the days of the Roman Emperor Constantine. Under his policy of government he became very tolerant toward the Christians. His predecessors had cruelly persecuted them. Christianity under Constantine became fashionable. Christianized pagans entered the churches bringing with them their evil practices. Thousands all over the Roman Empire became Christian in name who were not Christian in fact; such is Christendom.

Let us consider the characteristics of Christendom from recorded history and from the Word of God. Let us look at Christendom in the past, present, and future. There are three words which attach themselves to these tenses of time.

Christendom in the Past: Perversion

It was the mixed multitude that went out of Egypt with Israel that caused the problems and sin among God's

people in the wilderness. It is very similar in the history of the professing Church. Very early in the era of the Church evil infiltrated through mixed membership.

A review of the early history of Christendom gives the impression that Christendom is simply Judaized Christianity; at other times, that it is Paganized Christianity. Both of these ideas are well substantiated by recorded history and by the Holy Scriptures.

There are five passages of Scripture which belong to Church history between the days of the apostles and the reign of Constantine: the Epistle to the Galatians, the Epistle to the Colossians, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of First John, and the Book of Revelation 2:1-17. These have much to suggest regarding Christendom in its two subtle forms.

Judaized Christianity: There was a concerted effort in apostolic times to pervert the gospel of divine grace with Jewish tradition. Among Gentile converts certain false teachers taught that faith in Christ alone was insufficient for salvation, that it was necessary not only to believe in Christ but to keep the moral law and to be circumcized, that these were works of merit. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is a strong refutation of this false teaching. In spite of Paul's letter to the Galatians and the whole tenor of New Testament doctrine, Christendom to this day, generally speaking, teaches that good works are meritorious and essential to salvation. Thousands in Christendom believe that Heaven is gained by observing the moral law.

There were also false teachers among Jewish believers who taught that the sacrifice of Christ was incomplete for salvation and that it was necessary to perpetuate the

ceremonial law and offer literal sacrifices for sin. The Epistle to the Hebrews refutes all such. Notwithstanding the emphasis in the Epistle to the Hebrews upon the one and once-for-all sacrifice of Christ, Christendom to this day professes to sacrifice the actual Son of God in the Roman Catholic mass.

Paganized Christianity: Not only did Jewish tradition have a baneful influence upon the teaching of the early Church, but so did Greek philosophy.

After the days of the apostles, a heretical cult developed called the Gnostics (the Knowers). Members of this cult professed to possess a superior knowledge. They believed that all religions, both Christian and pagan, contributed to full knowledge. They believed that Christ was the highest of all creatures, but only a creature. Furthermore, some of them at least believed in two gods, one over all things good, another over all things bad, and that the conflict between these produced all the trouble in the world. All that was good, so they claimed, was spiritual and invisible and all that was evil was physical and material. In matters of conduct, since evil was material and physical, it did not matter what the human body did, and that since the spirit of man was invisible, it could never do evil, it was always pure.

While the cults of Greek philosophy did not fully develop until after the days of Paul and John, their writings anticipated them.

Paul wrote the Epistle to the Colossians against Greek philosophy regarding Christ and emphasized the Headship and Deity of the Lord Jesus. John in his First Epistle refutes perfectionism of the spirit and shows that the emotion of hate is as evil as murder itself.

The passage referred to in the Book of the Revelation (2:1-17), in its futuristic interpretation, reveals that the Church in her early days was orthodox in doctrine but failing in devotion; that is, during the Ephesus period. The same passage shows how that during the Smyrna phase of her history, the Church suffered severe persecution under the pagan emperors of Rome, and that how during the Pergamos stage of her history she entered into compromise with the world. Pergamos means marriage. Constantine was the successful tool of Satan to accomplish the marriage of the Church to the world, and thus institute Christendom.

Christendom in the Present: Apostasy

In the New Testament there are two passages which describe humanity at two different periods of history. The first is in Romans 1:21-32 and the second in II Timothy 3:1-9. In many points there is an arresting similarity. The first passage gives a delineation of Pagan Rome at the beginning of the Church era; the second, a description of Christendom at the close of the Church era. The only real contrast between these passages is in the words, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

A comparison of these conditions could be disturbing for it proves that, with the presence of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the Church, humanity has not improved; in fact, that it has deteriorated. To all its many sins, it has added hypocrisy. The characteristics of Christendom in the present are clearly revealed under many different phases throughout the Word of God.

In morals (II Tim. 3:2-4): Men are involved in low moral practices toward themselves (V. 2), toward their fellows (Vs. 3-4), and toward God (V. 5).

In heresies (I John 2:18): The word “time” used in this passage indicates a short measure of time, an hour: “It is the last hour.” John then gives us the features of this last hour. He predicts the coming of a personal anti-Christ, and then adds that during this last hour, this present period, there are many anti-Christ. He thus intimates that the close of this dispensation will be characterized by a great anti-Christian movement projected by many different leaders, miniature anti-Christ. There may be here a reference to the extensive cultic movement of these last times.

In spiritism (I Tim. 4:1-3): Seducing spirits and doctrines of devils may be identified by the test indicated by John, “Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that spirit of anti-Christ” (I John 4:3).

In infidelity (II Pet. 3:1-4): Men ridicule the predictions of Holy Scripture, and scoff at the Word of Prophecy.

In apostasy: The word apostasy originally had a political significance. In the days of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, we read, “Israel rebelled against the house of David” (II Chron. 10:19). The word rebelled in English is the word apostatized, and means desertion from him who formerly had governed them.

We have a modern example of a political apostate in Castro of Cuba. This man deserted the former policies that governed his own native country, and rebelled against those policies.

The use of this word in a religious sense may be seen in Acts 21:21, where James says to Paul: "They are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses (to apostatize from Moses), saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs."

An apostate according to the New Testament is one who abandons the belief in Scripture he had been taught, and in so doing actually rebels against the Lord.

In the New Testament apostasy is spoken of as a "falling away," a forsaking (II Thess. 2:3), and means a specific defection from the truth of God. Such an apostasy is predicted as taking place before the appearance of the man of sin, the anti-Christ.

The Epistle of Jude has been called, "The Acts of the Apostates." This seems quite descriptive for Jude has much to say about rebellion against the truth of God. He exposes apostasy and gives the genuine believer words of assurance.

Such then is the scriptural description of apostate Christendom at the present time.

Christendom in the Future: Destruction

The Church, that true expression in the world of pure Christianity envisaged throughout the New Testament as a chaste virgin (II Cor. 11:2-3) is indeed the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:24-31). The false church, Christendom, is pictured in the Book of the Revelation as an adulterous woman, a whore (Rev. 17:1-18).

Christendom will continue to function after the Church has been removed from the earth. She will advance her power and her prestige until she rides the back of the

ten confederate kings, possibly all the Western Powers as we know them, and, in the saddle, she will have much to do in their control and government. Eventually, God will influence that great confederacy of the future to throw Christendom in her apostasy from the saddle of power in order to completely destroy her.

The Christian and Christendom

As we examine the characteristics and history of Christendom, this system of hypocritical profession, this expression of blatant apostasy, the question in mind is, What should be the attitude of the genuine Christian toward her? The Word of God gives the answer. First: "From such turn away" (II Tim. 3:5). A modern translation reads, "You must keep clear of such persons." Second: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Cor. 6:14). Third: A call is addressed to suffering saints who will be on earth after the rapture of the Church (These possibly will be of a godly remnant of Jews.), "Come out of her My people, that ye be not partakers of her deeds, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

Compensations: To separate oneself from mere profession and from open apostasy results in positive blessing. To the godly remnant of the future, separation will assure them of deliverance from the plagues that will descend upon the Great Whore at the time of her destruction. Today, separation from a system so hypocritical and God dishonouring will result in an intimate fellowship with the Lord. He says, "Come out from among them, ... I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18).

The Apostle John speaks further of this fellowship. He says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:1-3). Our fellowship is not only with the Father, blessed as that is, but with fellow-believers because they too are members of the same family of the same Father. As we turn from apostate Christendom to fellowship more intimately with the Lord and other Christians the words of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians seem appropriate, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect (mature), be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. 3:15-16).

Tests on This Chapter

1. Distinguish between Christendom and Christianity.
2. What is meant by Judaized Christianity?
3. What influence from paganism affected the early Church?
4. Is there any concrete proof of moral evolution?
5. What characterized Christendom in the past, present, and future?
6. What figure of speech pictures the pure and true Church?
7. What figure of speech pictures the ecumenical organizations of Christendom?
8. What is the proper Christian attitude toward Christendom?

9. What is apostasy?

10. Does separation from the world have any present benefits?

Chapter 3: The Church Local: Constitution, Character and Maintenance

“Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20) is a very precious text of Scripture. In his edition of the Bible, Dr. C. I. Scofield has inserted over it, “The Simplest Form of a Local Church.” Many have come to accept this as the only form of a local church, and look upon this Scripture as a charter for a local congregation. This concept has become so prevalent in some places that its language is unintentionally used with a sectarian connotation.

There is no question about the Lord recognizing and blessing the smallest company of His own. In Matthew 18:20 He gives assurance of His presence to the smallest plural number who meet in His name, but to use this text as a definition of a local church is to ignore the whole tenor of New Testament doctrine on the subject of the Church.

A Definition

The local church is a congregation of Christians that calls upon the name of the Lord, both their Lord and the Lord of every other similar group (I Cor. 1:2). It is a congregation ruled by an administration through overseers (Acts 20:28), and is sustained by the ministry of the spiritual gifts with which it has been endowed (I Cor. 1:7).

A definition of a local church that is based upon the principles of the New Testament might read like this: A

local church is the gathering together in the Lord's name of a number of Christian persons who are submissive to Christ as Lord, and who are ruled over by elders and deacons, and sustained in life and testimony by a spiritual ministry.

The constitution of a local church is not as simple as some claim who glibly quote Matthew 18:20.

Her Constitution

It has been asserted that one may be in the Church of Christ without being in the Church of God. This assertion supposes that the appellation Church of Christ refers only to the universal aspect of the Church, and that the appellation Church of God refers only to the local aspect. This assertion we must investigate.

The Church of Christ: The Lord in Matthew 16:13-18, claimed the Church (the Universal Church) as His own. Peter had acclaimed Him, "The Christ, the Son of the Living God." In reply, Christ predicted, "Upon this rock, I will build My Church." Consequently, we must understand the Church Universal to be the Church of Christ.

In Romans 16:16, Paul writes, "The churches of Christ salute you." In the vicinity of Corinth, the city from which he was writing, there were a number of congregations. From these he sent greetings to the saints at Rome, and in so doing implied that each local church was a church of Christ.

The Church of God: A further survey of Scripture shows that what is true of the appellation Church of Christ is also true of the appellation Church of God. It is used of the universal aspect in such passages as I Corinthians

10:32. I Corinthians 15:9. Galatians 1:13. See Acts 26:10-11. It is likewise used of the local aspect of the Church in passages such as I Corinthians 1:2. I Corinthians 11:16. II Corinthians 1:1.

Obviously, these two appellations are used interchangeably in the Word of God. The universal aspect of the Church is called the Church of Christ as well as the Church of God, and so is the local aspect. From this a dual deduction may be accepted.

First, there is only one Church in the New Testament, and it is presented under two aspects.

Second, that the one, the local, being much smaller than the other, organically is a miniature. Therefore, the local church in the mind of the Lord is a facsimile of the Universal.

All who are in the Universal Church are united to Christ her Risen Head; all who are in the local church should likewise be united to Christ.

Her Character

If these appellations may be used interchangeably, do they have special significance? In the New Testament there are three names given to the local congregations: the churches of God (I Cor. 1:2; 11:16), the churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16), and the churches of the saints (I Cor. 14:33). There is an evident difference between the first two and the last one, the churches of the saints. This last one suggests the membership of the local churches; they are composed of saints. A difference between the other two might also be expected. The name Church of Christ intimates the architect and founder; the name Church of God, that in character she

is to be just what He is, holy (I Pet. 1:16-17). We might therefore conclude that these three intimate: first, membership: the churches of the saints; second, structure: the churches of Christ; third, character: the churches of God.

When studying the universal aspect of the Church, we noticed a number of figures of speech: a flock, a house, a temple, etc. Several of these are likewise applied to the local church, and usually they are said to be of God: the flock of God (I Pet. 5:2), the house of God (I Tim. 3:15), the temple of God (I Cor. 3:16), and, of course, the church of God (I Cor. 1:2).

It is God Himself who gives strength and character to His people. A realization of this will make them more dependent upon Him. It is well to remember that the character of any congregation of saints is only the aggregation of the characters of those who are members of that congregation.

Her Structure

The structure of a local church involves the foundation and superstructure, and how the material is built into the superstructure.

The foundation: Speaking of the local church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul said, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). The doctrine of Christ, His person and work, is the foundation of the Church in both aspects (Matt. 16:13-18; Eph. 2:20).

The material: Several names in the Epistles are given to the material of which churches are made: saints (I Cor. 1:2. Eph. 1:1. Phil. 1:1; etc.), brethren (Col. 1:2), the

beloved of God (Rom. 1:7), the faithful in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:1). From the introductory verses of the Church Epistles, it is evident that God intended that only genuine believers be built into the churches. To be a church member in apostolic days presupposed that one was a real Christian, and so it should ever be.

Building in the material: This is a point quite controversial; we must, therefore, seek to ascertain the literal meaning of Scripture.

Both schools of thought in this regard have some merit, but they are opposites. Each before God must make a choice between them.

The first school of thought contends that since a true believer is a member of the Church Universal, he is, consequently, a member of the church in his locality, and that, whether or not he attends the services of that church.

The second school of thought contends that while all Christians in a locality should be in the church, they are not until they have been duly received by the church.

In other words, they must not only be called out, as the Greek word *ecclesia* implies, but they must be gathered together.

A survey of the use of the word *ecclesia* in the Book of Acts helps in this matter. The Jewish use (Acts 7:38) pictures Israel not only in the wilderness called out of Egypt but gathered together around the tabernacle in which the divine Presence dwelt. The pagan use (Acts 19:39) implies the same. Although, as the archaeologists tell us, there were 25 thousand persons in the theatre, only those in that theatre formed the unlawful assembly

(church). It would seem proper that before one can be a member of a local congregation, it is required that he be called out by a divine summons and then gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Church reception: Reception into the Church Universal is on the ground of the atoning work of Christ and acceptance in Him through the Father. Acceptance into the local church is through the responsibility of the church under the guidance of its elders. The Word of God presents certain guides relevant to this: for original reception, Romans 14:1; for occasional reception, Romans 16:1-2; for interassembly reception, Romans 15:7.

The quality of the material: Good material is of paramount importance. All who are received into the fellowship of a local church should be morally clean (I Cor. 5) and doctrinally sound (I Tim. 1:19-20).

Her Maintenance

The maintenance of a local church depends upon two divine provisions, elders and spiritual gifts. Occasionally these are considered to be but one. The distinction is clear when it is noticed that elders are appointed by the Spirit of God over their own congregations only (Acts 20:28); whereas, spiritual gifts are given to the whole Body of Christ (Eph. 4:10-13). The service of the elder is primarily that of administration in church affairs; the service of the spiritual gifts: evangelist, pastor and teacher, is "for the perfecting (equipping) of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ."

The fact that both Peter and John, men endowed with superior spiritual gift, that of apostle, speak of themselves as elders (I Pet. 5:1. II John 1. Ill John 1) indicates that men of spiritual gifts may be considered elders among God's people wherever they go, elders exercising their gift as pastors. This has also been deduced from I Timothy 5:17, where the elders who rule well are they who have been appointed by the Lord for the administration of matters pertaining to their own local churches, and those who minister in the Word and doctrine are spiritual gifts like Peter and John who serve to edify the members of the Body of Christ.

There is another way in which we may understand Peter's and John's use of the word elder; that is, literally; both were elderly when they wrote their respective Epistles.

Her Projection

The outreach of the local church moves in two directions, churchward and worldward.

Churchward: The churches to which epistles were sent all were addressed as separate congregations, as units of testimony in their respective localities: "The church of God at Corinth" (I Cor. 1:2. II Cor. 1:1), "The churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2), "the church of the Thessalonians" (I Thess. 1:1. II Thess. 1:1). Each church was independent of the others.

This is further emphasized in the history of the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2-3). Each of the seven was an individual lampstand, and each was individually appraised by the Lord. Local churches are envisaged throughout the New Testament as independent

congregations wholly dependent upon the Lord and responsible to Him as Head and Lord.

Notwithstanding, there are statements throughout Paul's epistles which suggest a gracious interdependence among apostolic churches: "The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16), "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (I Cor. 1:2), "As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk, and so ordain I in all churches" (I Cor. 7:17), "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33), "Let your women keep silence in the churches" (I Cor. 14:34). While each church independently must bear its own responsibility before the Lord, each may enjoy an interdependent fellowship with other churches.

In her projection churchward, a local church should maintain its independence and yet foster an interdependent fellowship with other assemblies in sending greetings (Rom. 16:16), in receiving visitors (Rom. 15:7; 16:1-2), in prayers (II Thess. 3:1), in helping the poor (Gal. 2:10. II Cor. 9:1-2), in financially supporting the evangelization of other areas (Phil. 4:15-16).

Worldward: The outreach of a local church world-ward might be considered as Christian witnessing under three aspects: a stable witness, a public witness, and a vicarious witness.

A stable witness (I Tim. 3:15-16): What is true of the Church Universal should likewise be true of the church local. In this reference the Church is envisaged as a

monument made of a base and shaft. Upon these is inscribed the eventful life of the Lord Jesus. The doctrine of Christ is shown upon the monument. This idea indicates what the constant testimony of a church should be in any locality.

A public witness (I Thess. 1:8): Paul's commendation of the Thessalonians illustrates the public testimony of a local church. As they divulged the gospel publicly, even so should all individual congregations.

A vicarious witness (Acts 13:1-5): The church at Antioch, directed by the Holy Spirit, identified itself with some who had been called to witness for Christ in the regions beyond.

The projection of a local church toward the world should be seen in every phase of active witnessing. The sum-total of all that a church is and does should be a monument to Christ in the community. Such a local church should be committed to the public preaching of the Word, and to the commendation of workers to any part of the great harvest field.

Tests on This Chapter

1. Give in your own words a definition of a local church.
2. What, constitutionally, is a local church?
3. Under how many aspects is the Church presented in the New Testament?
4. Does the title Church of Christ imply the universal aspect of the Church, and the title Church of God the local aspect?
5. Why did you answer the fourth question as you did?

6. What must a candidate be in order to become part of a local church?
7. What disqualifies a candidate for church reception?
8. By what divine means is a local church maintained?
9. To what or whom is a local church responsible?
10. What is the projection of the churches worldward?

Chapter 4: Christian Leadership: Qualities, Types and Methods

God intended that the Church be administrative, but He never proposed that she become legislative. All the principles necessary for Church government have been given by divine revelation in the New Testament; they are there ready to direct in all Church administration.

The professing Church departed long ago from this scriptural concept of rule, and for centuries has formulated decrees, issued edicts and published bulls, and sold indulgences.

When a church, or a circle of churches, demands as a ground for fellowship a specified conformity to a fixed code of church practices, that church, or circle of churches, in a degree has become legislative.

The subject of Church administration introduces us to the matter of leadership in the assembly.

Leadership

There is no single passage in the New Testament that deals exclusively with this subject; notwithstanding, mention is made of many exemplary leaders. We therefore may learn by example what we cannot learn from precept.

At the council in Jerusalem (Acts 15) there were gathered most of the leaders in the early Church. Peter, James, and John represented the church at Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas, the churches of the Gentiles. There were also present Matthias and Silas, chief men among the brethren. A reference to these brethren

would give much instruction in Christian leadership. The leadership given by these men apparently had the approval of the Lord and the confidence of the whole Church.

There are four aspects of this subject we must consider: the qualities of leadership, the types of leadership, the methods of leadership, and the purpose of leadership.

The qualities of leadership; It has been said that leaders are born; they are not made. This is only partially true. Even one who is born with an imposing personality is of little value until he has developed certain qualities.

Personality has been defined as the sum total of all that a man is physically, ethically, and spiritually. Some personalities are repellent, others attractive. If one is going to be a good leader among God's people, he should develop those qualities which make personality attractive. We shall consider some qualities that are formative, some that are communicative, and some that are specific.

Formative qualities: The one that we shall consider first is sociability. An unfriendly person is not a good leader. The Apostle Paul was an exceedingly friendly person. He is never seen alone, not even in prison. He speaks of his yokefellow (Phil. 4:3), his workfellow (Rom. 16:21), his fellowservant (Col. 4:7), his fellow-workers (Col. 4:11), and his fellowprisoner (Col. 4:10). The Apostle John wrote, "I John, who am your brother and companion" (Rev. 1:9).

It was said of the supreme example, our Lord Jesus, that He was the friend of publicans and sinners. When speaking to His disciples about the death of Lazarus, the Lord Jesus called him "Our friend Lazarus" (John 11:11).

This quality of friendliness is very necessary in the making of a good leader.

A second necessary quality is responsibility. One of the greatest detriments to our testimony for God today is the irresponsibility shown by many of the Lord's people. A leader must be willing to assume responsibility. Paul, speaking of what he had endured for the gospel's sake, added this, "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (II Cor. 11:28). What need there is today for such responsible brethren!

Another of these formative qualities is knowledge. To be a teacher one must know his subject; to be a guide one must know the way; to be a shepherd one must know the sheep and their needs. To be a leader in the assembly, one must apply himself with diligence and patience to learn the truth of God, the divine principles for directing the people of God. Did Paul know history? Listen to him, "I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud" (I Cor. 10:1). Did he know prophecy? Listen to him, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep" (I Thess. 4:13). Did he know evangelism? Listen again, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that often I purposed to come unto you, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles" (Rom. 1:13).

To be a successful leader one must know well the matters in which he is going to direct.

A fourth formative quality is conviction. Conviction is that inward certainty that expresses itself in outward poise. This certainty results from personal knowledge.

When a man knows, and knows that he knows, he has full assurance and spiritual poise, all else to the contrary.

Paul's knowledge of the purposes of God in regard to the oneness of the Body of Christ, enabled him to remonstrate with Peter over his hypocritical action at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14).

Communicative qualities: No matter how strong and pleasant a leader may be, he must also possess those qualities through which he will make contact with the many followers. If he is strong enough and prepared to lead, he must be able to induce others to follow him. Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). This, a leader may imply without words; he may indicate it by his attitude.

One of the first communicative qualities that will attract other Christians is that of loyalty. Loyalty inspires confidence. Where this is lacking no one will follow. If a leader is unreliable, he will produce fears and doubts in those he wishes to guide.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul asserts his loyalty concerning all that was entrusted to him: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7).

What an example of loyalty and faithfulness is seen in David's friend Hushai (II Sam. 15:32-37)! David could trust him implicitly, and during the revolt of Absalom follow the advice of this staunch friend.

Another quality that enables one to make contact with followers is understanding. Another reference may be made here to the Apostle Paul. Because of the

circumstance that forced him to leave the newly formed church in Thessalonica, he was much concerned about their welfare. So heavy did his anxiety become that he endured loneliness in Athens and sent Timothy to enquire about them (I Thess. 3:1-6). Although he had instructed them that persecution would be their lot, he realized the weakness of humanity. There was no harshness in the attitude of Paul to these saints; he understood human frailty and tried to strengthen them. He sensed that they had misunderstood the doctrine of the rapture of the Church, so he patiently explained it more fully.

How understanding the Lord is! We read, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" (Jas. 1:5).

There is nothing so magnetically attractive in a personality as understanding of the other party.

A third quality by which people are attracted to a leader is appreciation. How we admire those who appreciate what they find in us! Paul, as an example, again presents himself: his letter to the Philippians is one of appreciation. He appreciated their interest and support from the beginning of their Christian career; he appreciated their gift; he appreciated the difficulties that had hindered earlier gifts; and he appreciated the man through whom the gift was sent.

In the same letter he records his appreciation of Timothy, and also of the early services of Euodias and Syntyche.

One last quality in this connection should be mentioned for without it, leadership must be weak; that is toleration. A good leader will always be intolerant of sin,

especially in himself, but tolerant of the weaknesses and tendencies of others. This is also demonstrated by Paul's attitude to John Mark. Paul was not tolerant with the wrong that Mark had done in forsaking the work of the Lord (Acts 13:13; 15:36-41), but when proper adjustments had been made and John Mark was restored to confidence, Paul did not hesitate to commend him for fellowship to the church at Colossae (Col. 4:10), and to commend him highly to Timothy for his work (II Tim. 4:11).

These, then, are some of the qualities that make a good leader. Some of them form a stalwart character; others enable a leader to gain the confidence of those he would have follow him, and attract them. Over and above these there are certain other important requirements in a church leader.

Apostolic requirements: When, in the early Church, it became necessary to have capable men direct the money of the Lord's people, the apostles at Jerusalem specified that leaders in temporal matters possess certain qualities. These qualities are also evident in the careers of the spiritual leaders of the early days. The instructions of the apostles were: "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3).

These three general requirements are: First, a good reputation. A leader must not only be honest, he must be an honourable gentleman in every aspect of life. Second, a genuine spirituality. To be filled with the Spirit means to be wholly yielded to Him so that He encounters no obstacle in His work through your life. Third, an evident

sagacity. A leader must not only have knowledge, but he must know when and how to use it.

Types of Leadership

There are three types of leadership in the New Testament: dictatorial, preferential, and spiritual.

The dictatorial (III John 9-10): We are not certain as to the whereabouts of the local church to which John makes reference. Some have attempted to identify it through the name Gaius, but since there are four different men mentioned in the New Testament by this name, this method of identification is altogether inadequate. The four men are: Gaius, a Macedonian who was with Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19:29), Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20:4), Gaius of Corinth (I Cor. 1:14. Rom. 16:23), and this Gaius to whom John makes reference. Furthermore, between the mention of the first Gaius and the last some forty years transpired, making any identification by this means very improbable. John's letter re-veals the characteristics and the censure of this type of leadership.

The characteristics: Pride: "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence." Arrogance: "Receiveth us not." Maliciousness: "Prating against us with malicious words." Obstructionism: "And forbideth them that would (receive us)." Callousness: "And casteth them out of the church."

The censure: A divine exposure: It is recorded for our admonition in the Word of God. An apostolic denunciation: "If I come, I will remember his deeds." A unique discipline: It is very probable that John's threat resulted in apostolic discipline. The apostles had

authority and power in this regard which were not transmitted to their successors. See Paul's action in connection with Hymenaeus and Alexander (I Tim. 1:20).

The preferential: A preferential leadership is one that results from popular choice. Obviously this is what happened at Corinth (I Cor. 1:11-17). In dealing with this matter the Spirit of God graciously veils the names of the actual leaders, and transfers the whole incident to the names of Paul and Apollos (I Cor. 4:6). The Spirit of God thus, albeit inoffensively, sternly rebukes a popularity leadership, and exposes its characteristics with censure.

Its characteristics: Its source: carnality, "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (I Cor. 3:4). Its practice: "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ" (I Cor. 1:12). Its consequences: It is incisive and produces schisms in the church. "Let there be no divisions among you; ... there are contentions among you" (I Cor. 1:10-11). Its results: immaturity: "Babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (I Cor. 3:1-2). Its issue: pride, "Learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up" (I Cor. 4:6).

Its censure: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (I Cor. 1:13). Paul's rebuke to following men of carnal choice is couched in three rhetorical questions all of which imply a wrong done to the Lord Jesus Christ: First, to the person of Christ; "Is Christ divided?" Both bodily and mystically Christ is one. Second, to the work of Christ,

“Was Paul crucified for you?” Can it be that salvation has come through a human leader and not through Christ? Third, to the name of Christ, “Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” Elsewhere Paul states, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ.” As in the case of Israel who were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (I Cor. 10:2) which meant that they were now under the leadership of Moses; even so, those who have been baptized into Jesus Christ have placed themselves under His exclusive leadership.

The spiritual: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Phil. 1:1). That the bishops and deacons at Philippi formed a truly spiritual leadership seems evident. They were, first, distinctively recognized; second, apostolically approved; third, in their leadership they conformed to the scriptural order (I Tim. 3). Similar qualities may be noticed in the leadership provided by the elders in the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17-31).

Methods of Leadership

We must also take into consideration followers as well as leaders. As leaders may differ in qualities and ability so also may followers. To illustrate: some persons are more emotional than others, some have more initiative than others, and some are more readily susceptible to extraneous influences than others. Obviously all cannot be led by the same method. One person may be led by counselling, another by directing, and still another by suggesting.

Let us notice how the Apostle Paul led others in the Christian pathway.

The emotional: This type of personality has, as we say, more heart than head. He acts according to his feelings rather than through reason. The emotional person acts in haste and repents at leisure. We may consider Peter of the emotional type. At Antioch he hastily associated with Gentile believers, and just as quickly withdrew from them because of the fear of James and those visiting from Jerusalem (Gal. 2:11-21). Although Paul sternly rebuked him for acting in such a hypocritical way, he counselled with him, and reasoned the matter out from the divine standpoint.

Peter was helped by this rebuke and counsel; they strengthened him so that he was able to defend Paul and Christian liberty at the Church council in Jerusalem (Acts 15:16-17). There was no resentment in Peter's heart toward Paul for in his old age he wrote about "our beloved brother Paul" (II Pet. 3:15).

The initiative: The person with initiative has the power to do, and the ability to originate. In modern parlance, he is capable of creative thinking and skilful accomplishment. Luke the beloved physician would be in this category. This man who wrote two volumes on the history and origin of the early Church would surely be a man of initiative.

It is assumed by many that Paul in addressing himself to his "true yokefellow" in Philippians 4 was actually addressing himself to Luke. If this assumption is correct, in so doing, he was only directing him to help two estranged sisters in the Lord, Euodias and Syntyche. He did not reason that this was the proper thing to do, nor

did he tell him how to do it. Paul realized that a directive was sufficient for this brother of initiative.

In leading a man with initiative, it is only necessary to indicate the proper direction.

The susceptible: There are many followers who respond quickly to a suggestion, and, in fact, go beyond what they are asked. It is not necessary to counsel and reason with them; you merely make the suggestion and they are ready to act.

There is a lovely character of this type in the New Testament, Philemon. In his personal epistle to this beloved brother, Paul says that he could have directed him, could have imperatively told him what to do, but instead, he laid the facts before him, and then added, "but without thy mind would I do nothing" (Philem. 14), and further, "Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do more than I say" (V. 21).

Each personality is different, and must therefore be treated wisely. If treated otherwise, some will refuse to follow, and some may even stumble and stray. It is impossible that the sheep of Christ's flock follow one who divides and scatters them. There is a need for leaders to remember the exhortation of Paul at Miletus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (Acts 20:28).

Purpose of Leadership

Among Christian leaders there are hunters and shepherds, and the purposes of these are altogether

different. A shepherd will give his life for the safety and comfort of his sheep.

The hunter: The Apostle Paul in Acts 20:29-30 warns of dangers to the flock from both without and within. Wolves from without (John 10:12), wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15) will not spare the flock; they will ravage the sheep.

The Apostle also warns of danger from within, from among the elders themselves would some arise to draw away disciples after them. "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). Such false teachers would engage in heretical doctrines. Two of these very leaders are named in I Timothy 1:19-20, and another in II Timothy 2:17.

The purpose of such men is to establish themselves as the head of a group or a party; their efforts are schismatic.

The shepherd; In Colossians 1:28-29, the finest human leader in the Christian Church tells of the purpose before him in all his service, and the service of his associate, Timothy. It was to present every man perfect (fully mature) in Christ. To do this he had a method, "preaching," "warning," "teaching," every man in all wisdom. He also showed zeal, "I also labour, striving." These words picture a man toiling to the point of exhaustion, even as an athlete in the arena. He likewise tells us from whence he secured the energy. God was the source of all his energy, "I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily."

What a contrast between the hunter whose efforts are to draw men after him, and the shepherd who exhausts

himself in caring for others in order to present them perfect in Christ! These are the leaders who are much needed in the churches of the saints today.

Tests on This Chapter

1. Name three men mentioned in the Old Testament who possessed exceptional qualities of leadership.
2. Who in your judgment was the greatest leader in the early Church?
3. What qualities induce believers to follow a leader?
4. Name the suggested different types of leadership.
5. How did the Apostle John censure one of the carnal types of leadership?
6. What distinguished the assembly oversight at Philippi?
7. Should elders in an assembly develop a fixed pattern of guidance?
8. Name some of the ways in which persons differ.
9. Name some different methods which influence followers.
10. What is the purpose in Christian leadership?

Chapter 5: Church Government: Representative and Operative

It should be easier, with an understanding of Christian leadership in general, to concentrate upon specific spiritual leadership in the local church. There are few subjects in the lives of God's people more important than the proper administration of church affairs.

Forms of Church Administration

Among the congregations of God's people, a little knowledge of history, and careful observation will demonstrate three types of church government: centralized rule, congregational rule, and representative rule.

Centralized rule: This appears in two forms, the individual and the group. Earlier we learned from the case of Diotrephes that one man may arrogate to himself the right to rule the saints of God, to centralize in himself all authority (III John). This we saw was contrary to the tenor of New Testament principles of church administration.

About 1889 certain bodies in England and Scotland were torn by the divergence named the Needed Truth Movement. This movement resulted in a confederacy of assemblies which claimed to be exclusively the House of God and the Church of God, teaching that all other Christians belonged only to the Church of Christ, the Church that is His Body. In the matter of assembly administration, the assemblies in the confederacy subscribed to a united oversight, sometimes called a

district oversight. In actual practice there was among them oversight in four expanding spheres: assembly, municipal, county, and national. All matters of discipline and importance had to be decided or approved by this centralized rule, at one level or the other.

Congregational rule: The reaction of many to a totalitarian rule is a swing to a democratic system. In such a scheme all matters are placed before the entire church, and decisions are made according to a congregational vote. Congregational rule provides the most carnal believer with as much right to direct the affairs of the congregation as the most spiritual. This policy finds no support in Scripture, nor are there examples of it in the apostolic Church.

Representative rule: Elders are not as much the representatives of the church, deputies to act for it before God and the world, as they are the representatives of the Lord, His delegates over His people. There are three assertions in the New Testament which sustain this idea. First, they are divinely appointed (Acts 20:28); second, the area of their service is divinely allocated. The Revised Version reads in I Peter 5:2, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly unto God; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock." The New Translation has a note that reads, "Do not be as persons lording it over your possessions, viewing the saints as something belonging to you."

Third, godly elders must give an account of their rule and those under them when they appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Heb. 13:17).

Biblical Church Administration

Representative administration is delineated for us in the New Testament. Let us consider: designation, definition, qualification, function, compensation, and disqualification.

Designation: We know from the tenor of New Testament principles that in a properly constituted congregation there are priests (I Pet. 2:5-9), bishops (I Tim. 3:1-7), and deacons (I Tim. 3:8-13); and that while all are priests, all are not bishops and deacons. We know that all are priests only by spiritual birth, that some are bishops by spiritual endowments and appointments, and that some are deacons by spiritual character and service. It might also be noted that all are priests to worship; some are bishops to rule in the church (Heb. 13:17), and some are deacons to serve the church or serve in the church. From these deductions it is obvious that the bishops and deacons have to do with the administration of the local church.

Definition: It now becomes necessary to define the terms, bishops and deacons.

The bishop: There are three synonymous terms employed in the New Testament to indicate the spiritual leaders among Christians: bishops (Phil. 1:1. I Tim. 3:1-8. Tit. 1:7), elders (I Tim. 5:17. Acts 15:6; 20:17; 21:18), and overseers (Acts 20:28). That these refer to the same person is made clear by the context in which they are found. From these contexts it is also evident

that they are used only in the masculine gender. If there is any distinction among the English words, it might be expressed thus: the word bishop suggests spiritual ministry; the word elder, spiritual maturity, and the word overseer, spiritual method. It has been suggested that the word elder sprang from a Jewish source and the word bishop, from a Gentile source. This distinction of source is of little importance to this study.

A bishop or elder is one who engages in a spiritual administration in the local church, this he does with spiritual maturity by spiritual methods.

The deacon: While the name elder or bishop is used in a very specific sense, the word deacon is used throughout the New Testament in a very general sense, and it is also used in both the masculine and feminine gender. The Grimm-Thayer English-Greek Lexicon defines deacon as "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant or minister." The New Translation of the Bible in a foot-note distinguishes three words which may be translated into English by the word servant: *doulos*, a slave, a bondman; *diakonos* (The Greek equivalent of the English deacon), a person who acts or waits in service; and *huperetes* an official servant, an apparitor.

A brief consideration of the usages of both the verb and noun forms for deacon is very enlightening. They are used in the divine sense of the Lord Jesus (Luke 22:27. Rom. 15:8). They are used in an angelic sense for angels are deacons serving the redeemed (Heb. 1:14). They are used in a secular sense for magistrates are appointed deacons of God (Rom. 13:1-4). They are used in a spiritual sense for Paul, Timothy, and others are called

deacons (I Tim. 1:12. II Tim. 4:5), and they are used in a specific sense (Acts 11:27-30; 12:24-25. Rom. 15:31. II Cor. 8:4; 9:12). The specific sense intimated in these passages was the handling of church finances. For our present studies we shall concentrate upon the specific aspect of deaconship. From these considerations, it becomes obvious that deaconship may be any kind of service that is done especially for the benefit of others. Qualifications: These are given principally in I Timothy 3. The qualifications of an elder may thus be tabulated: spiritual, "If any stretch himself to overseership, he is desirous of a good work." This surely implies spiritual exercise before God. Moral, an Elder must be a monogamist, sober, discreet, decorous, temperate, self-controlled, not contentious, not covetous. God imposes these qualifications upon all His own, but in the case of the elder, God demands that in these he be blameless. He must be irreproachable as an example before the flock (I Pet. 5:3). Social, an elder is to be given to hospitality, to rule his own house well, and to have a good reputation among outsiders. Intellectual, he must also have an aptitude for teaching; this may be in private or public. Our King James Version is weak here. The meaning is not that the elder is liable to teach but that he have the ability to teach. Experiential, a novice is not to be considered an elder; any man engaged in this service for God's people must be as the name implies an elder, a man of maturity.

The qualifications of a deacon are found in the same chapter. These may be similarly tabulated: Moral, a deacon must be a monogamist, grave, not deceitful, temperate, not covetous, conscientious. With these this requirement is demanded of the deaconesses, "not a

slanderer.” Social, he must rule well his own house; spiritual, he must hold the secrets of the faith in a pure conscience; experiential, age is not suggested in this qualification, in its place, an approval under testing is required, and only when a man has been proved reliable may he serve in this capacity. In all these things the deacon likewise is to be blameless for he too is to be an example before God’s people.

Functions: The functions of these two levels of church administration are found in different passages of the New Testament.

The functions of elders: Some of these are found in Paul’s address to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:28-38). In this address elders are exhorted to be pastors to feed the flock of God (V. 28). The verb to feed used here has a triple meaning: to feed, to heed, and to lead. They are also exhorted to be sentinels (V. 31). The figure of wolves arising among the saints is a grave one; it pictures men who are cunning and cruel, and who are ready to destroy the sheep of Christ’s pasture. Because of these, elder brethren are to be wakeful, alert. The enemy is ever attempting to infiltrate the churches of the saints. The elder is also to be a pillar of strength upon which the weak and needy may lean; he is to be ready to provide financial help to those who require it (V. 35).

According to other passages of Scripture he is to rule well (I Tim. 3:5; 5:17. Heb. 13:7 & 17). The meaning of the noun form of the verb to rule used in these passages may be noticed in Matthew 2:6 and Acts 7:10. The idea is to rule as did Joseph in the land of Egypt. The godly elder will lead by both example and authority, and this

he will do diligently. This concept of the elder is referred to in five separate passages of the New Testament; it is, therefore, the most prominent feature of oversight work.

To summarize the duties of an elder, we might suggest that he should be a pastor to feed sheep, a sentinel to watch for the enemy, a pillar to support the weak, and a leader who by example and authority directs the way.

The functions of deacons: In Acts 6:1-7, we have some excellent illustrations of deaconship. Widows apparently were being neglected in the daily deaconship of caring for the Christian community at Jerusalem. The apostles said that it was not proper that they be deacons of tables for they were called to be deacons of the Word, and they asked the church to select seven brethren to assume a deaconship in temporal matters. Here the general concept of deaconship is seen in the ministry of the apostles: public preaching and teaching the Word, visiting privately from house to house to do this in a quieter sphere, and to write epistles, and to engage in all things necessary to accomplish these objectives. Then we have the specific concept in the almoner, the deaconship in regard to temporal affairs.

The two brethren Barnabas and Paul when they carried the relief fund from Antioch to the famine stricken area of Judea engaged in a temporary deaconship (Acts 11:27-30; 12:24-25). They were also the same as they collected funds for such use (II Cor. 9. Rom. 15:25).

The labour of love manifested by one Christian to another is called a deaconship (Heb. 6:10). In the case of Phebe the deaconess, we learn more of the ministry of deacons. She was a succourer of many (Rom. 16:1-2). The word succourer implies a protector, a champion.

Archippus received a deaconship from the Lord. We are not told what it was, but apparently he was negligent in it and had to be stirred up by the Apostle Paul (Col. 4:17).

Putting all these references together, we learn much about deaconship in the local church. The deacon's work may be that of administering temporal affairs like the seven men of Acts 6; it may be the collection of money like Paul and his companions; it may be to help and protect others like Phoebe; it may be to carry funds to their destination like Paul; it may be a church assignment in which one can be careless like Archippus. Furthermore, the work of the deacon may be very temporary in nature as seen in several of these references, or it may be continual as in the case of Phoebe.

Disqualifications: Seldom do we realize that according to the divine principles set forth in the Word of God, elders may disqualify themselves through moral failures or become disqualified through physical frailty. Humanity being what it is, depraved, provision must be made for any possible spiritual or physical deterioration.

Standards must be met: In I Timothy 3:1-7, where Paul states the qualifications required of an elder, we have the English word "must." The elder must be blameless. This word "must" could be rendered, it is binding upon the elder that he be blameless, or it is necessary that he be blameless. This word emphasizes that God has set a standard with which we must comply; it must not only in measure be attained but maintained, otherwise the elder is disqualified. A brother may be an elder over God's people only as long as he meets the standard stated in

God's Word; he must be blameless, not sinless but irreproachable.

Sin must be rebuked: In writing to Timothy about elders, Paul uses two different verbs for "to rebuke." He, in the first instance, writes, "Rebuke not an elder" (I Tim. 5:1); and in second, writes, "Them that sin rebuke before all" (I Tim. 5:20). The apparent contradiction disappears when it is noticed that two different verbs are employed. The first verb, the one at the beginning of the chapter, means to inflict blows upon, to chide with. No one is to so treat an elder in the church; there is to be no display of belligerency. The second verb, the one in verse 20, means to expose, to reprove, to discipline. Even an elder when he sins is not to escape the discipline of the church.

The time for retirement: While we must not base our doctrine upon Old Testament pictures, nevertheless, there are principles in the Old Testament which reveal the mind of the Lord in a very general way. In the Old Testament the Lord gave rules for the retirement of the members of the tribe of Levi. There are two passages which deal with the years of service for a member of the tribe of Levi, Numbers 8:24-26 and Numbers 4:1-4. These divide life into four parts. The first part was the early 25 years. The second part was the five years between the 25th and 30th birthdays. During these years the Levite was to wait upon the service of the tabernacle, to serve a sort of apprenticeship. The third part of his life, from the 30th to the 50th birthdays, was actively spent in the service of the most holy things. The fourth part, the years which followed the 50th birthday, was lived in at least semi-retirement.

It would seem to be the mind of the Lord that when a person's faculties become impaired either through illness or age, retirement is advantageous to the work of the Lord. The divine principles require that only those who have learned the ways of the Lord in a practical and experiential way and are spiritually, mentally and physically vigorous serve as leaders among His people.

At the conclusion of a monthly business meeting, an elderly brother said, "Brethren, for forty years I have served this congregation in many different capacities; during those years I gave my best. I no longer have a best to give. I am not as alert as once I was. Some of the questions which arise greatly disturb me; furthermore, during meetings like this, I become extremely weary. I ask that you appoint another to assume my duties. While formally I shall not attend any more of the meetings of the elders, I hope to continue in fellowship with the saints and to help all that I can."

Had others who have grown old in their service realized what this brother did, and had followed his example, God's people would have been spared much unpleasantness.

The appointment and recognition of elders: The matter of the appointment and recognition of elders has become controversial; therefore, it demands our attention. Some believe that because the Apostle Paul and his delegates appointed elders, they should be humanly appointed today. Others believe that the statement of Paul in Acts 20:28, is absolute and implies that elders are divinely appointed.

Human appointments: It must be remembered that the apostles had endowments and powers which belonged

exclusively to the apostolic office. They had power to work miracles (Acts 3:1-11; 9:36-43; 13:9-13). They received direct revelations from God (II Cor. 12:1-10). They had power to deliver unto Satan, a power extended only to a church (I Tim. 1:20. I Cor. 5:5). They had power to command others (I Tim. 5:21; 6:13). They had power to delegate to others the authority to command (I Tim. 6:17). They had power to discipline a church (I Cor. 4:21). No one today possesses these special endowments and powers. Is it proper, therefore, for us to assume an authority that was used and delegated only by the apostles in the appointment of elders?

Paul left Titus at Crete to set in order things that had been incomplete since a previous visit (Titus 1:5), and to ordain elders. A careful examination of the passage demonstrates that Titus merely set before the church men already proved to be elders. The context implies that these elders were being recognized because of their character, ability and work. God had already made them what they were; they had attained to the divine standard, otherwise they could not, according to the context, have been set to function in the church. Furthermore, it would be difficult to believe that Paul did otherwise among the Galatian churches (Acts 14:19-23).

Divine appointment: From Paul's address to the elders at Ephesus it is believed that the Holy Spirit had made the divine appointment of elders. If apostles and apostolic delegates set elders to function in the churches, it was God who made men into elders. Paul's appeal to the Thessalonians, "Know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord" (I Thess. 5:12-13), shows that the authority of the elder is not

based upon human appointment or election, but upon the relation of the elder to the Lord and the scope of ministry assigned to him by the Lord.

The appointment of deacons: If we accept the principles employed in the appointment of the deacons in Acts 6:1-8 as a common practice today, then the congregation should recommend that brethren who have manifested the prescribed character and reliability be used as deacons; these, then, in turn are appointed by the elders.

Recognition: The Apostle enjoined upon the Thessalonians that they know those who were over them. To know here is to see, to behold, to perceive, and thus to recognize them. This same word appears in Paul's description of the house of Stephanas (I Cor. 16:15-18). This household was known because it was addicted to the ministry to the saints; consequently, it was so acknowledged. From the outward evidences of character and activity this family was to be recognized. This is the very way in which elders are to be recognized by the churches of the saints.

The recompense of church administrators: The Lord is not unrighteous to forget any work of love, any effort of faith.

The recompense of the deacon: "They that use the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree" (I Tim. 3:13). Several interpretations of this good degree have been suggested. Since the word degree could mean an academic degree, some feel that it suggests a promotion to a higher service, to that of being an elder. That such a promotion is exemplified in the cases of Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and

Paul and Timothy, this might well be the idea expressed here. There are, notwithstanding, others who feel that it means the progressive acquiring before God of a good standing, and a good testimony before men. One thing is sure, the Lord will compensate all that is done for Him.

The recompense of the elders: "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter 5:4). Shepherd work is strenuous, it implies descending into the valley in search of cool waters and pastures, and climbing into the hills and mountains in search of lost sheep. This type of work exposes one to storm by night and heat by day, and results in weariness, anxiety, and exhaustion. In vivid contrast, the recompense offered for such rigorous service involves all that is suggested by the wearing of a crown: a palace with its luxury, a throne with its authority, and the crown with its glory. If in shepherd ministry we suffer with Him, the Chief Shepherd, we shall certainly reign with Him.

Tests on This Chapter

1. Name at least two current forms of church administration.
2. What is meant by representative rule?
3. Name two synonymous terms for bishop.
4. What intellectual quality is required in the bishop?
5. What experiential quality is required in a deacon?
6. If the elder in a local church is to be a pastor, what else is he to be?
7. Name the functions of a church deacon.

8. Who appoints an elder over a local congregation?
9. What may disqualify a Christian leader in a local church?
10. Are there any compensations for overseership?

Chapter 6: Christian Tradition: General Ordinances and Observations

There are some biblical studies which are particularly for the Christian mind, others for the defense of Christian testimony, and still others for the confirmation of Christian conviction. For example, the studies on the Church and on church administration might be considered for the instruction of the mind; the study on Christianity versus Christendom, for defense; and now, this study on Traditions and Ordinances, for confirmation.

Two questions very relevant to our times present a challenge to every sincere Bible student. First, is Christian tradition of value today? Second, are there any scriptural ordinances imposed upon the Church of God today?

Tradition

The inexperienced student who would list all the references in the New Testament to the word tradition in the hope of thereby gaining a knowledge of the subject, might readily be confused. He would discover that the 13 references indicate that it was used approvingly by the Pharisees but disapprovingly by the Lord Jesus; that it was used deprecatingly by Paul, but then again, with deep regard by Paul. The references in Mark 7:3-13 and II Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6, appear to be in direct conflict.

A word study of tradition offers an excellent example of the Law of Context; a word must be interpreted

according to the context in which it is found; its usage must be determined before its meaning is fully understood.

Since, generally speaking, Christ disapproved of tradition and Paul commanded to keep it, we conclude that although they were using the same word, they were speaking about two different concepts. This is true; Christ spoke against Jewish tradition and Paul spoke in favour of Christian tradition.

Jewish tradition: There are two parts to Jewish tradition; one, the oral law, and the other certain written rules and regulations by the learned Rabbins.

The oral law: The oral law was supposedly received by Moses from the Lord on Mount Sinai, but was not written down by him. It was rather, so it is supposed, committed orally by Moses to Joshua, and by Joshua in turn to the seventy elders. These eventually handed it down to the Rabbins, and they then committed it to writing.

This so-called oral law is called in Holy Scripture, "Tradition from your fathers;" i.e. the fathers of the nation of Israel (I Peter 1:18). Among the Jewish people of today, this oral law is known as Halacha.

Jewish people are taught that they received from God through Moses three binding, mandatory sections of law: on tables of stone, the moral law; on inspired manuscripts, the ceremonial law; and orally the Halacha. The Halacha diverted attention from the true divine law, and occupied the people with trivialities such as the washing before eating.

There is still another source of Jewish tradition, the Hagada. This contains the comments, discussions, and decisions of learned Rabbis upon the written and unwritten law of Moses. These demands and impositions were not as binding upon the people as the former, but nevertheless obedience was expected. The Jewish Talmud actually is a collection of these oral and written traditions.

It was to these traditions that Paul made reference when writing to the churches of Galatia: "I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:13-14).

The Apostle Peter assured his Hellenistic readers that they were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from their vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers (I Peter 1:18). What liberty this brings for all Jews who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Messiah! There are many Christians throughout Christendom who are affiliated with groups who practise a Judaized Christianity. Oh, that they knew that Christ had redeemed them from the bondage of Jewish tradition!

It is worthy of note that as Jewish people believe that by tradition they have preserved the unwritten words of Moses, so the Church of Rome claims in her traditions to have preserved the unrecorded words and works of Jesus. These may be read in the so-called Apocrypha Gospels. In these, so Rome claims, are kept teachings of both Jesus and His apostles that are not found in the New Testament. These, she also insists, are as binding

as any of those that are found in the New Testament. This truly is Judaized Christianity, and from such we have been redeemed.

Christian Tradition

Yes, we all concede, we are redeemed from Jewish tradition and understand why the Lord denounced it, but what about Christian tradition? In writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul says, "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances (literally, traditions) as I delivered them to you" (I Cor. 11:2). Again, in writing to the Thessalonians, he says, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught" (II Thess. 2:15). Later, to the same saints, he wrote, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which he received from us" (II Thess. 3:6). Obviously, Paul in these passages is not referring to Jewish traditions; to what then is he referring?

In these three passages, it should be noticed that Paul speaks of traditions in the past tense: "The traditions as I delivered them." "The traditions which ye have been taught." "The traditions which ye received from us." These traditions had been received by the saints at Corinth and Thessalonica before ever they had received Paul's letters.

From this consideration, it is evident that much oral instruction was given to the saints before they had the written epistles. From the contexts in which Paul uses the word tradition, it might be assumed that the traditions he had delivered to them were actually codes of Christian ethics.

The Greek word for tradition (paradosis) is an old word for what is handed over; it therefore implies instructions given orally.

Written Instructions: The Word of God when written, and the New Testament finally completed, superseded all oral instruction, all apostolic tradition. We read of the Written Word, "All Scripture (Sacred Writing) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

A paraphrasing of this forceful assertion relative to the written instructions of the Word of God might make its meaning even clearer: all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and not only makes wise unto salvation (V. 15), but also is profitable, is useful, with a view to teaching the scholar, reproving the wayward, correcting the ignorant, and training the child, disciplining him in the ways of righteousness, that the man of God may be perfectly furnished or equipped for every good work. Here we have the character of the Written Word: Scripture (Sacred Writing); its source: it came into being by the inspiration, out-breathing, of God; its purpose: to teach, to reprove, to correct, and to train; its objective: to fully furnish the Christian for every good work.

Because she has the Written Word of God, the Church no longer needs tradition. Today, speaking actually, there is no Christian tradition. The Word of God, the New Testament Canon, is our guide, our final and only court of appeal.

Corrupt Christendom rests much upon tradition. The second council of Nicene in A.D. 787 pronounced an anathema on any who should dare to reject the tradition of the Church, and the Council of Trent in A.D. 1549 declared that the interpretation of Scripture had to be regulated by tradition.

The great conflict of the Reformation arose basically from the rejection of tradition, and from the elevation of the Written Word of God to its proper place and dignity as the sole authority for Christian life and faith.

About 175 years ago another great divergence influenced God's people in all sections of Christendom. This was occasioned by the elevation of the Word of God to being the sole authority of Church order and practice. May God enable us to reject that which is only tradition, and to cling tenaciously to the Inspired Word of the Lord.

Our forefathers of the Protestant Reformation suffered and died that God's Word, the only standard of Christian life and testimony, might be made available to the world.

Ordinances

The word ordinance occurs some 54 times in the Bible; 45 of these are found in the Old Testament and 9 in the New Testament. There are three different Hebrew words translated into English by the one English word, ordinance. Three times it is used to indicate the arrangements in creation, the laws of nature (Job 38:33. Jer. 31:35; 33:25); and once in regard to decrees of justice (Isa. 58:2). The other four times it is used in regard to the Mosaic Law, both moral and ceremonial. It

is very relevant to our subject that we notice this particular use of the word ordinance.

In the English New Testament this word occurs just nine times. It is the translation of four different although related Greek words. Six times it is used in connection with the Mosaic Law (Luke 1:6. Heb. 9:1; 9:10. Eph. 2:15. Col. 2:14; 2:20), twice of secular powers (Rom. 13:2. I Peter 2:13), and once it appears in a passage where it means tradition (I Cor. 11:2). These usages are important because they indicate that although we speak of the two ordinances of the Church, baptism and the Lord's supper, these are not so designated in the Word of God.

Good men have used these terms in relation to them, probably because they viewed the words of the Master in the Upper Room as a decree or command, and because they accept, similarly, His words on the mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20). Both of these demand devout obedience for the Lord spoke of them in an imperative manner.

Because of certain extreme views in regard to the Christian symbols, baptism and the Lord's supper, it is necessary that we examine Colossians 2:14-15, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

The "handwriting" in verse 14 is, so to speak, a bond written in ordinances, decrees belonging to the Mosaic Law. These were not only written in stone but upon the consciences of all men. Paul here was writing to Gentiles

and reminds them of the demands of holiness in conduct and righteousness in action required by God. The Mosaic Law is also the code of the law written upon the fleshly tables of the heart.

These ordinances were opposed to man's acceptance by God; they were opposed to God's grace until Christ removed them out of the way that leads to God. On the cross Christ bore the penalty of man's sin against all divine decrees, whether written on stone or in the conscience, and by so doing He cancelled the bond.

It will be seen that the cross abrogated for the believer the ordinances of the Mosaic Law and the decrees of conscience; it does not as some claim dispense with the so-called ordinances of the Church, baptism and the Lord's supper. Biblical research requires honesty. We must not interject our preconceived notions into a text, and pervert its meaning to suit our purpose.

This, the dispensation of the Church, is not as much the era of compelling decrees as it is of impelling devotion. It is not the dispensation of implicit commands as it is of inward consecration. The Church era is not so much one of ordinances as it is of observances.

Christian Observances

God at times makes choice of a word that is quite common and sanctifies it, giving it a special divine and Christian significance. There are a number of such words in the New Testament; the word "Church" being a striking example. He similarly has elevated and made sacred certain pre-Christian customs which in their new setting have a different meaning and force.

Before we discuss the two symbolic ceremonies of the Christian Church, baptism and the Lord's supper, let us review what we know about pre-Christian baptism and the pre-Christian memorial feast.

Pre-Christian baptism: "All the words occurring in the New Testament which express the noun baptism or the verb to baptize have their foundation in the Hebrew words 'tebilah' or 'tabal' and can only mean 'to take a bath by immersion' or 'to immerse ...' The simple verb 'baptein' means to dip in or under, to plunge" (Johannes Warns).

The English word baptism is the anglicized form of the Greek baptismo. To dip or plunge a person into or under water was an accepted ritualism long before the Christian Church was brought into being on the day of Pentecost.

A Levitical ritual: The writer of the Hebrew Epistle exhorts his Jewish readers to lay aside certain matters and to press on to perfection in Christ. Among those to be laid aside is the doctrine of baptism (Heb. 6:2). While some reputed scholars consider this to be a reference only to the many washings of hands, feet, articles, etc. prescribed under the Levitical Law, there are others, equally devoted and careful, who consider it a reference to the consecration of Aaron and his sons, as this is recorded in Leviticus 8. Aaron and his sons were dipped, plunged, bathed, in a ceremonial act that initiated them into the priesthood. This act was not repeated, it was a once for all initiatory step, a public ritual in order that as consecrated priests they enter upon their public ministry.

A Jewish ritual: Pre-Christian baptism of proselytes was long practised by the Jews. A heathen on embracing Judaism was accepted after some instruction by being circumcised, baptized, and having a blood sacrifice offered for him. There is a section in the Talmud which reads: "Your fathers were not received into the covenant except through circumcision, the baptismal bath, and sprinkling of blood."

The baptism of John: The mode of baptism used by John was not new; the striking feature about it was the fact that Jews were submitting to baptism. This to them seemed to imply that they were as unclean as the heathen, and therefore unfit for the coming of the Messiah. Their submission to baptism at the hand of John was a confession that they were in need of repentance and humiliation.

From these facts it will be seen that the disciples of our Lord were fully conversant with the proper mode of baptism. Later they learned how God had elevated this initiatory ritual, how He had made it really sacred, giving to it a new and spiritual meaning; making the customary ritual a symbol of a spiritual reality. The disciples probably did not understand all this but they knew that the form and mode of baptism was by immersion.

Pre-Christian breaking of bread: In Jeremiah 16:7, (N.T.) there is a reference to another ancient custom among the Hebrews, a custom that reminds us of a "wake" as it is called in the Old Land: "Nor shall they break bread for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall they give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother" (V. 7). In view of the

earlier verses many would die under divine discipline and be buried unmourned; there would be no wake for them, no memorial feast as was the custom.

It seems probable that our Lord had this ancient custom in mind when He blessed the bread and the cup before giving them to His disciples at the institution of the Lord's supper. They were to partake in remembrance of Him and be comforted by His promise to return.

It is quite possible that at such a memorial feast, such a wake, which the two at Emmaus were keeping for their crucified Master, the Lord Jesus made Himself known (Luke 24:13-32).

The Lord in His purposes frequently honours the humble, sanctifies the secular, and consecrates the common customs of men so that they become holiness to the Lord. During the golden age of the Millennium all the pots, even all the pots of Jerusalem are to be holiness to the Lord (Zech. 14:21). As in that day there will be nothing unclean and impure but all hallowed to Him, even so these rituals that He would have us observe now have been raised far above what is merely a human custom to that which is sacred, pure, and holy.

Tests on This Chapter

1. What does the word tradition mean?
2. Name the foundations of Jewish tradition.
3. What liberates even a Jew from tradition?
4. What is meant by Christian tradition?
5. What supersedes all tradition?
6. Name four scriptural uses of the Bible.

7. Do the Levitical ordinances have any place in the Church?
8. Where were the Mosaic ordinances abrogated?
9. What does Jewish history teach in regard to the mode of baptism?
10. What feature of an ancient Jewish wake appears in the Lord's supper?

Chapter 7: Specific Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Even a cursory study of the symbolic ceremonies observed by the Church in the execution of her stewardship, demands considerable time and thought, and keen spiritual insight. For our present purpose we shall consider: the ordinances and Christendom, the ordinances compared, and the ordinances viewed separately.

The Ordinances and Christendom

It is many centuries since the word sacrament was first used of the two Christian rites, baptism and the Lord's supper. It seemed proper then that it be so used because it originally meant that which is set apart or made sacred. Furthermore, it was used of an oath of obedience to a military leader. To be baptized, to partake of the Lord's supper, was like taking an oath of allegiance to Christ, the performance of a sacred act.

Little by little throughout the years the word sacrament gathered another significance, that of imparting divine grace. Eventually it was accepted that through the sacraments divine life was imparted, and that through the Lord's supper one received special favour and grace, and even physical strength. This perversion is seen in its full development in the error of all the national churches, baptismal regeneration, and the error of some minority denominations, baptism essential to salvation.

Further perversions followed with time, until in Christendom instead of two sacraments there were

seven: baptism, the Lord's supper (degraded to the Mass), confirmation, penance, extreme unction, marriage, and the taking of Holy Orders. With the reformation, the five added sacraments were rejected, and only the two which had the direct authority of the Lord were accepted. These two should be practised in accord with the Holy Scriptures.

It should be clearly understood that participation in either of the two divine ordinances does not add to a believer's standing before God; a failure to participate in them does not impair a believer's standing before God.

The Ordinances Compared

Both baptism and the Lord's supper are practised by divine sanction, and in one respect, the one seems to complement the other, yet they are quite distinct in ceremony and doctrine.

Baptism is an act by the individual believer; the Lord's supper, a collective ceremony by a gathering of believers.

Baptism is a single act in the lifetime of a Christian; the Lord's supper, a frequent practice by a congregation of Christians.

Baptism is an identification of the individual believer with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection; the Lord's supper is the commemoration by many of the sufferings and death of the Lord, now risen and glorified.

Baptism is linked to evangelism; the Lord's supper, to corporate life and testimony.

Baptism is the initiatory rite of the individual into public testimony; the Lord's supper, the repetitious rite of collective worship and fellowship.

The Ordinances Viewed Separately

The Rite of Baptism: Several important points may be raised in this regard.

The form: From the last chapter we learned that the word baptism means to dip or to plunge. Obviously, then, there are two movements in this rite of baptism, immersion and emergence, a dipping into or under the water and a raising above the water.

Even in this, the form of baptism, man has sadly departed from the simplicity of the word and the picture as these are found in the Holy Scriptures. He practises his own adaptations: he sprinkles, pours, triple-dips, and even spiritualizes away the literal rite altogether. Man is by nature ever ready to assert his own will.

The formula: Not only have there been grave differences in regard to the form of baptism, but there have been differences over the formula used in baptizing. There are those who baptize only in the name of the Lord Jesus, basing their action upon statements in the Book of the Acts. These statements in Acts in which the name of Christ is associated with baptism, prove nothing whatever as to formula. First, they do not claim to give a formula. Second, in the Greek text of these passages, the prepositions: "upon," "in," and "into" and the names used for Christ: "Jesus Christ," "The Lord Jesus," and "The Lord," differ widely.

This striking lack of uniformity is in itself a potent refutation of the suggestion that in the Book of the Acts a new formula had been given to the apostles.

There are very many who believe that the only real formula for baptism is found in Matthew 28:19-20, where the Lord instructs the apostles to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So marked has been the divergence of opinion in certain localities that some persons have talked about baptism in three names and baptism in one name. Such statements, made frequently in the heat of argument, are the evidence of shallow thinking. The Word of God teaches baptism in the one name only. Father is not a name; Son is not a name; Spirit is not a name. The name of the Father is God, so also is the name of the Son, and the name of the Spirit.

A close study of the terms in the Book of the Acts can lead to only one logical conclusion, that the statements of the Book of the Acts imply that it is by the authority of the Lord Jesus that baptism should be performed, and that it should be enacted in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that is, in the name of the Triune God.

In baptizing, mention is made of the three distinct persons of the Godhead because all three were active in the plan of redemption. Believers are chosen in Christ by God the Father; they are redeemed by the sacrifice of God the Son, and they are sealed until the day of the purchased possession by God the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:1-14).

The symbolism: Baptism is the pictorial symbol of a deep spiritual reality, a spiritual resurrection. When a person

receives Christ as Saviour, judicially before God he is considered as dead, buried, and raised up with Christ; baptism is the symbol of that inward experience.

The candidate: In the New Testament, each individual baptized was a believer in Christ. The historical statement about the Corinthians substantiates this: "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

Some have taught the opposite to this; Martin Luther for example. In his translation of Matthew 28:19-20 into German, in a footnote he made that passage to read, "Go and make all people into disciples, by baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." According to this disciples are made by baptism.

Two different verbs "to teach" are used in the King James Version of this great commission, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." This actually means, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations." The same verb is used in Acts 14:21, which reads, "When they had preached the gospel in the city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra." The apostles made disciples by teaching, by the preaching of the gospel.

The second verb "to teach" in Matthew 28:19-20, means to teach a person to do his duty. Obviously, a candidate for baptism is a believer, a disciple, before ever being baptized.

The implications: There are many implications in believer's baptism. Some of these at least should be understood.

1. A new Leader: “So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ (or unto), were baptized into His death,” wrote the Apostle Paul (Rom. 6:3). In I Corinthians 10:1-2, we have an illustration of this. Israel was baptized unto (or into) Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Moses was their new, their divinely appointed leader; so also is Christ the Leader of His people.

2. An eternal relationship: “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” These rhetorical questions asked by Paul of the Corinthians prove that the Christian in his baptism asserts that he belongs to Christ exclusively, not to any man or party (I Cor. 1:12-13). See also Paul’s remarks in I Corinthians 1:14-16.

3. The oneness of the Body of Christ: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. 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” (Gal. 3:27-28). Believers profess in their baptism that all distinctions between them disappear in Christ, that they are not only one with Christ but one in Christ.

4. The certainty of resurrection: “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?” (I Cor. 15:29). Paul in defense of the resurrection argues that if there is no physical resurrection, why, then, symbolize it by baptism? The very practice of baptism is a proof that Christians believe in the future glorious resurrection with Christ.

5. A means of salvation: Of course, a means of salvation for the saints, not for the sinner! “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" (I Peter 3:20-21). As the deluge had delivered Noah and his family from a world of corruption and violence, even so in the reality of his baptism is the believer delivered from this present evil age.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's table to many has become a synonym of the Lord's supper. All students of the Scriptures should examine these two subjects carefully in order to ascertain whether or not there is any distinction.

The Lord's table: This term is used not only in the New Testament; it is also found in the Old Testament. It is found twice in chapter one of Malachi's Prophecy. The people said, "The table of the Lord is contemptible" (V. 7), and again, "The table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even His meat is contemptible (V. 12). Obviously, here it is a figure of speech denoting God's provision for His people. They had turned their back upon this provision and sought sustenance and satisfaction elsewhere.

There is another striking reference in Ezekiel 41:22, "The altar of wood ... and he said unto me, This is the table that is before the Lord." Here the altar is the table, the means and place to enjoy the provisions of God for His beloved people. The altar and the table are one in this passage of Ezekiel.

It is interesting to notice that the altar and the table are again brought together in I Corinthians 10:16-21. From this passage it may be learned that as Israel forsook the Lord's table for idolatry, even so may the Christian

forsake the provision made by the Lord for him, and seek satisfaction elsewhere.

The order of the emblems: These are mentioned in inverted order to that given in chapter 11. The cup is mentioned first because it symbolizes the work of Christ in atonement; the bread is mentioned second for it is the symbol of the mystical Body of Christ, the Church and her oneness in Christ. By the atonement we are all brought into the Church of God and there may enjoy constantly the provisions made by the Lord for us.

At Corinth there were those who were reverting to what they had enjoyed formerly, the provisions of a pagan world. We too may revert and seek enjoyment once more in the world we formerly knew and loved. May the Lord preserve us!

The Lord's Supper: If in chapter 10, we have the symbol of the Universal Church, in chapter 11, we have the action of the local church in the celebration of the Lord's supper.

In chapter 11 we have the emblems mentioned in the order of the physical experience of our Lord during crucifixion: the broken bread symbolizing the wounding of Christ's body; the cup, symbolizing His blood shed at the cross. There are a number of points we might consider together.

1. A possibility (Vs. 20-22): the carnal abuse of the Lord's supper.
2. A prerequisite (V. 28): Self-discipline is part of the preparation for the Lord's supper.
3. A penalty (V. 30): Where self-discipline is ignored and there is carnal indulgence, God will penalize the guilty.

4. The participation: The consideration of I Corinthians 11:20-34, reveals several salient points. From these we learn that the Lord's supper is:

An act of contemplation: Since it is the Lord's supper, He is the pre-eminent person there. In this passage Christ is mentioned seven times by the title Lord. True worship is the outcome of contemplation; it is as we contemplate our Sovereign Lord that we worship in spirit and in truth.

An act of commemoration: The Lord instructs us to celebrate the Lord's supper, saying, "This do ye ... in remembrance of Me." Jeremiah tells of God's judgment upon the land of Israel being so severe that many died, and of all these, we read, "Neither shall men break bread for them in mourning to comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother" (Jer. 16:7). For those who thus died there would be no commemorative feast. The Lord's supper is a commemorative feast.

An act of appropriation: It would be impossible under the leading of the Spirit to eat the literal bread and drink the literal wine, the symbols of Christ's body and blood, without appropriating afresh by faith the Lord Jesus in His person and work.

The Word of God does not support the teaching of the Church of Rome relative to transubstantiation, the transmuting of the symbol bread and wine into the literal body and blood of the Saviour. Nor does it support the teaching of some of the national churches, consubstantiation, for the bread and wine are not made the same in substance as the body and blood of Christ.

The Word of God teaches only the spiritual appropriation of Christ, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6: 53-58). The divine life we possess as believers is sustained by eating the true Bread from Heaven. There is no more suitable place or time for this figurative eating than at the Lord's supper.

An act of fellowship: "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup," said the Lord Jesus. The act of eating and drinking together has been since earliest times a token of intimacy and fellowship. To abstain from eating and drinking together was an indication of distance and even estrangement. Of the brother living in gross sin at Corinth, we read, "With such an one no not to eat" (I Cor. 5:11). Of the early Christians, we read, "They, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46).

An act of testimony: "Ye do shew the Lord's death," wrote the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, as he gave them detailed instructions relative to the celebration of the Lord's supper. The verb "to shew" actually is the verb "to proclaim." In the New Testament this verb is usually associated with the oral proclamation of the gospel, and suggests a royal declaration by a herald of the king. With this in mind, what dignity and honour is attached to our participation in the Lord's supper!

An act of expectancy: We are instructed by the Spirit of God to celebrate the Lord's supper "Until He come." As all the Jewish altars of the past were in anticipation of the Lord's first coming, so the Lord's supper is in

anticipation of His second coming. Let us eat the bread and drink the wine in constant expectancy of His return. At the institution of the supper, the Lord said, "Till I come." Later, in the upper room, He said, "I will come." During His absence, the Spirit says, "He that shall come will come." May our hearts ever respond, saying, "Amen. Even so come."

An act of frequency: In the explanation of the Lord's supper, it is stated, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup." These words indicate the freedom we have through the grace of God relative to time, place, and frequency. There is no doubt that the early Christians remembered the Lord in the evening because many of them were slaves, and were therefore not free so to do at any other hour of the day. Church history records that the last thing done by many of the Christian martyrs was to celebrate the Lord's supper in the prison, irrespective of the day or the hour.

As we celebrate the death of our risen Lord, it is most befitting that we keep this love feast, the Lord's supper, on the day of His resurrection. We have the apostolic example of this, although we have no direct precept covering this in the New Testament (Acts 20:7).

The Lord's supper and the Lord's day make a splendid combination. Together they lay special emphasis upon His death and special emphasis upon His resurrection. Let us do this until He return, our blessed Lord Jesus.

Tests on This Chapter

1. How many sacraments are held by Christendom?
2. How many ordinances have divine authority?

3. Make at least three comparisons of baptism and the Lord's supper.
4. What is the scriptural form of baptism?
5. Of what is baptism a symbol?
6. Name at least three of the implications in baptism.
7. Is the Lord's table an Old Testament or a New Testament concept?
8. What does the bread symbolize in I Corinthians 10?
9. What does the bread symbolize in I Corinthians 11?
10. Name at least four features of the Lord's supper.

Chapter 8: The Priesthood of All Believers: The Spiritual Sanctuary and Its Ministry

The concept expressed by the noun priest is a dual one for it answers to the urge of the human heart, and to the divine provision made to meet that urge. Men who by sin broke relationship with God, being conscious of God, out of this inherent consciousness, seek after God, “if haply they might feel after Him” (Acts 17:27). God in His grace provides such a means of approach.

The Hebrew word for priest, “kohen,” suggests a mediator between God and man, one who represents each to the other. Hebrews 5:1-2 may be considered in this light as a definition of a priest. He is taken from among men in things pertaining to God ... He is one who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. A priest, therefore, has a ministry both Godward and manward. This is as true of the Christian priest as of the Jewish priest.

There are three important sections to this lesson on priesthood: biblical priesthood in general, the New Testament spiritual sanctuary, and the Christian priesthood.

Priesthood in General

God has placed in man an exclusive aspect of life that raises him far above the animal; He has given him a spirit, an eternal existence, and it is this that urges him to approach God, even although this may be in fear. Because of this inward urge there have been priests

seeking after God among all peoples; pagan, Jewish, Christian, for the human heart is ever the same. Let us consider briefly the different aspects of priesthood that appear in the Word of God.

The antediluvian priest: From the fall to the deluge, it would seem that every man was a priest and had access to God. Cain acted as a priest, so also did Abel; both functioned in a priestly manner and offered before the Lord (Gen. 4:3-16), and by means of their sacrifices sought to approach God.

The patriarchal priest: In post-diluvian, patriarchal times, it appears that the head of each family became the priest for the household, and offered sacrifices to God and received revelations from God. This was true, not only among the fathers of Israel: Abraham (Gen. 12:7-9), Isaac (Gen. 26:24-25), and Jacob (Gen. 35:6-8); but of Noah (Gen. 8:20), Job (Job 1:4-5), Melchisedec (Gen. 14:18), and no doubt others. Job's actions as recorded in chapter one of his Book provide an excellent illustration of the patriarchal priest.

A nation of priests (Ex. 19:1-6): One of the promises made to Israel under the terms of the Mosaic covenant was that if they as a nation would obey the Lord and keep His covenant, they would be a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, an holy nation. We know that they broke God's covenant, that they did not obey His voice, and that consequently they were not a kingdom of priests. Instead of each individual possessing the personal right of approach to and acceptance with God, each needed to come to God by an intercessor, an appointed priest, or remain at a distance.

The Aaronic priesthood (Ex. 28:1): Although nationally Israel failed, God in grace provided a priesthood for them; He chose Aaron of Levi and his family for this ministry. He clothed and fitted these to represent God to them as a nation, and to represent them as a nation to God. Although this office functioned for many centuries, the continuity of service was frequently interrupted by death (Heb. 7:23).

The priesthood of Christ (Heb. 8:1-6): A reference to the Aaronic priesthood naturally suggests the priesthood of Christ for it was a type of His present ministry for us.

Christ in His priestly capacity ministers both Godward and manward. Godward, He ministers in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, and there offers gifts and sacrifices (Heb. 8:1-3). Manward, He appears in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24). Furthermore, He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15).

The Christian priesthood: Chronologically the priesthood of all believers fits here, but we merely mention it now for we intend to deal with it more fully later.

The Millennial priesthood (Ezek. 44:15-31): That there will be a priesthood, a temple, and an offering of sacrifices during the millennial reign of Christ presents a grave problem in the minds of some of the Lord's people. At least part of a solution to the difficulty may be found in two important facts. First: The priestly functions and sacrifices of the old dispensations were anticipatory; they were intimations of the first advent of our Lord, of His sufferings and death. The priestly functions and sacrifices during the future millennium will be commemorative; they will demonstrate that the

Son of Man now reigning in glory does so because He suffered and died; that His kingship rests upon His redemption.

Second: The priesthood of the glorious millennium will be of the descendants of Zadok. Although Zadok was of the house of Aaron, he seems to have been chosen of the Lord to head a new phase of Israel's priesthood. It is interesting to notice that in the immediate pre-Christian centuries, Israel's priests were considered as the descendants of Zadok rather than of Aaron. History records that Antiochus Epiphanes "interfered with the legitimate priesthood of the Jews replacing the descendants of Zadok by Menelaus."

Aaron was the head of that phase of priesthood that had to do with the wilderness. His priesthood actually began and ended in the wilderness (Ex. 28:1. Num. 20:23-29). Zadok began his priestly ministry during the victorious reign of David (I Chron. 24:3) and continued it during the magnificent reign of Solomon (I Chron. 29:22). A prince of the house of David will be enthroned ruler over the nation of Israel in her restoration and glory (Ezek. 37:25; 45:7), and a priest of the seed of Zadok will be her high priest (Ezek. 44:15). The nation with her king and priest will all be glorified in that day.

The Spiritual Temple

There are two detailed descriptions of the spiritual temple that God is raising today by His Holy Spirit. The one description shows the building under construction; the other shows it as complete.

The building under construction (Eph. 2:20-22): In order to carefully follow the logic of Paul's Epistle to the

Ephesians, it is necessary to pay attention to his use of pronouns, particularly in the doctrinal section (the first three chapters). When he wrote, "We who first trusted in Christ" (1:12), he meant, we Jews. When he wrote, "In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth" (Eph. 1:13), he meant, ye Gentiles. In chapter two the Apostle presents the way in which God brought Jews and Gentiles together in one spiritual edifice. "And you (Gentiles) hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (V. 1). "Ye (Gentiles) who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (V. 13). "Ye (Gentiles) are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints" (V. 19). "In whom ye (Gentiles) also are builded together" (V. 22).

Let us now view the building in at least four different phases: First, the foundation and Corner-Stone. This spiritual edifice is "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Corner-Stone" (V. 21. N.T.). Second, the progress in construction: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord" (V. 21). Third, the material used in construction: "In whom ye (Gentiles) also (that is, even as we Jews) are being builded together" (V. 22). Fourth, The future use of the building: "An habitation of God" (V. 22). This is the Church since Pentecost.

The building completed (I Pet. 2:1-9): Since the Christian priesthood requires a building in which to function, this building must be complete and ready for use. In one respect the Church is incomplete and awaits Eternity for its highest and fullest service; in another respect, she is complete and definitely has a present

service. This latter is the picture given by Peter. At Caesarea Philippi, the Lord gave him the revelation of the true foundation of the Church (Matt. 16:17-18), and somewhere along the way, the Spirit of God gave him a revelation of the superstructure, and of the building in use. Three points suggest themselves for study: the architecture of the building, the material in the superstructure, and the use of the finished edifice.

Its architecture: There is a foundation of which the Lord Jesus is the Corner-Stone, the key stone. There is a superstructure upon the top of which there is a Cornice-Stone, the Head Stone of the corner, again, the Lord Jesus. Christ is the prominent stone in the foundation; He is also the supreme ornament of the Church. Christ is the First and the Last of all Church doctrine and of all Church history. He is the Alpha and the Omega in all Church affairs.

Its material: This is composed of living stones to which Christ as the Living Stone has imparted life, and has imparted even His preciousness ("To you therefore which believe is the preciousness" N.T.). This is a beautiful building for all the material is of similar quality-alive, precious.

Its use: Within this building, the Church beautiful, the Christian priesthood functions. This is the Church of God on earth at any given time.

The Christian Priesthood

Any consideration of the Christian priesthood requires a survey of its institution, extent, character, and purpose. All these are dealt with by the Holy Spirit in I Peter 2:1-10.

Its institution: It will readily be seen that verse nine is a quotation from Exodus 19:5-6. There the Lord promised to His ancient people that under the condition of obedience to the old covenant, Israel would become a kingdom of priests. This was not fulfilled to them because they did not comply with the condition, obedience. It seems so befitting that to Jewish believers whose ancestors had failed under law, Peter, by the Spirit of God, asserts that through grace on the terms of the New Covenant, God's people today are a kingdom of priests, a personal possession, and an holy nation. They are these without any imposed condition because they have tasted, experienced, that the Lord is gracious (V. 3), and because they have obtained mercy (V. 10). The Christian priesthood is instituted because of, and it rest upon, the grace of God alone.

Its extent: Obviously, the Christian priesthood is coextensive with the holy nation, the chosen generation, and the people for a possession as these are mentioned in verse nine. It is therefore all-inclusive, embracing all the people of God in the dispensation of grace. Among these priests therefore there is no distinction relevant to position or order.

Its character: A careful reading of this passage (I Pet. 2:1-10) shows that the Christian priesthood appears under two aspects, the holy (V. 5) and the royal (V. 9). It is holy, set apart, sanctified and made sacred because "by one offering He (Christ) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). It is royal because God not only saves men and women from ruin but elevates them and gives them a distinctive place in His presence.

Its purpose: The priesthood of all believers is holy because of its standing in Christ (Eph. 1:4; 5:27). As Aaron and his sons were set apart and consecrated by ceremony (Exod. 29:1-14), even so Christian priests are set apart to their office in Christ.

The purpose of the holy priesthood is to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. Three such offerings might be mentioned: the offering of praise (Heb. 13:15. Psalms 50:23; 141:2), the offering of possessions (Heb. 13:16. Phil. 4:18), and the offering of persons (Rom. 12:1. II Cor. 8:5). This is worship.

The purpose of the royal priesthood: Under the broken Mosaic Law there could not have been a royal priesthood. This is a matter that is exclusively Christian. Under the Law priesthood belonged to the tribe of Levi; whereas, royalty belonged to the tribe of Judah. Grace has brought kingship and priesthood together and invested these in the same person. The Church will praise the Lord in Heaven that He has made her "kings and priests," and that she shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5: 10). What dignity and honour! God is saving men and making them priests in Christ, and elevating them to a place of authority and distinction in His presence.

The real purpose of the royal priesthood is to shew forth the praises, the excellencies, of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

There might be here a delicate allusion to the Mount of Transfiguration. In II Peter 1:16-18, Peter makes a direct reference to the excellent glory seen on the Mount, here he writes about the marvellous light. By grace man is brought from darkness, ignorance, into the excellent glory, the marvellous light of the gospel; it is, therefore,

his duty and privilege to shew forth the praises of the One who accomplished so much for him; and this by both character and conduct. Creation gives us a great example of this, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork" (Psa. 19:1).

An apostolic priest: The Apostle Paul in his own language (Rom. 15:16) pictures himself as a royal and holy priest. A paraphrasing of this unusual passage may better elicit his true meaning: "That I should be the administrator of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, priestly ministering, as a royal priest, the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles as they are dedicated by me as an holy priest, may be acceptable to Him through the Holy Spirit."

As Epaphroditus, according to Philippians 2:25, administered to Paul's needs (The same word is used in both the Philippian and Roman passages), so Paul administered Christ to the needs of the Gentiles; and as Aaron offered the Levites before the Lord for an offering of the children of Israel (Num. 8:11), so the Apostle as an holy priest offered up his Gentile converts.

The ministry of the Christian priesthood is by the preaching of the gospel to bring men to Christ as Saviour, and to have them yield themselves as living sacrifices to God in His sovereignty.

May we, like the Psalmist who wrote, "I will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast lifted me up" (Psa. 30:1), extol the Lord for He has made all believers members of a chosen generation, an elected spiritual race, the declared generation of the crucified Saviour (Isa. 53:8), the seed that shall serve Him (Psa. 22:30). Let us conduct ourselves in an honourable manner as an holy nation, a

pure and sacred nation, gathered out from among all nations, separated to God alone. Let us ever rejoice that all Christians are a peculiar people, peculiarly God's possession, for Christ gave Himself for us all, that He might redeem every one of us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for a possession (Titus 2:13-14).

Tests on This Chapter

1. What passage of Scripture gives us a description of a priest?
2. What is the double function of a priest?
3. How many phases of priesthood are found in the Old Testament, and how many in the New?
4. Name some of these phases.
5. How much of the Church is visualized in the spiritual temple now under construction?
6. What part of the Church is pictured by the complete building?
7. How extensive is the Christian priesthood?
8. Name the different aspects of the Christian priesthood.
9. Name the dual purpose of the priesthood of believers.
10. Which of all the apostles pictures himself as a priest?

Chapter 9: Spiritual Gifts: Endowment and Character

A spiritual gift may be defined as the divine bestowal of a special faculty upon a member of the Body of Christ. In each thus endowed, the gift embodies qualification, fitness and strength. In the Scriptures and in the Church, the special ability is sometimes called a gift apart from the individual to whom it has been entrusted: as for example, in I Corinthians 12. At other times the endowed individual is called the gift as in Ephesians 4. In other words, this subject of gifts in the New Testament is treated in more or less an abstract and concrete manner. Spiritual endowment should be considered altogether apart from natural ability and talent.

We must study this important subject in a progressive way as it is set forth in the Holy Scriptures. In this lesson we shall examine the source of gifts, their ultimate objective, their intermediate purpose, their character and their classification. Let us therefore read very carefully Ephesians 4:7-13.

Their Source

The context in which Paul's statement relative to spiritual gifts is found in Ephesians 4:7-13, is most interesting and instructive. In the earlier part of the chapter he lists the seven unities of the Christian faith and Church. Unity does not necessarily imply sameness, nor does diversity suggest disagreement. While unity does not require uniformity, the exercise in the Church of the diversified gifts should be in complete accord with

the divine, absolute unities revealed in the Word of God. Let us now notice:

The general statement: "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (V. 7). Paul acknowledged that by himself and all his Ephesian readers some gift had been received. He does not give a list here, this he does in I Corinthians 12, but here he makes the statement of fact. Each Christian has received in measure a heavenly endowment.

The specific illustration: "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (V. 11). These are the specific gifts that were used in the founding, developing and maintaining of the Church Universal, particularly in apostolic times. The more general gifts listed elsewhere are used usually in the administration and function of the church in her local aspect. Paul mentions these to demonstrate that all gifts, specific and general, come from Christ, the Victorious One.

Christ their source: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (V. 8). This verse is a quotation from Psalm 68:18, with a remote allusion to the song of Deborah after the victory of Barak (Jud. 5:12). Psalm 68 was probably written by David to celebrate a victory. In the Psalm he pictures the Lord as a king triumphantly leading his enemy into captivity, and taking from him gifts to distribute among his own men. In Ephesians 4:8, the words are applied to Christ, victorious at Calvary, leading the one-time captor, Satan, as a captive into captivity. This He did in death by destroying him who had the power of death,

that is the devil (Heb. 2:14). In triumph, He then gives gifts unto men.

Christ in His humiliation descended from His royal throne even into the grave, and in His ascension He passed through the heavens (Heb. 4:14) and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3). It is from that exalted position in glory that He distributes all spiritual gifts.

Their Ultimate Objective

The final objective of the gifts mentioned here is threefold: First, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (V. 13). The ministry of the divine gifts should deepen confidence in the Lord and increase the knowledge of Him in the individual; furthermore, this development should result in a closer cohesion of the members of the Body of Christ. The spiritual ministry of the gifts from the Risen Head of the Church should deepen faith and broaden knowledge in the individual believer and draw all believers more intimately together.

Second: "Till we all come ... unto a perfect man." That is, until we all come to full maturity. It was this type of perfection that Paul sought to attain, a perfection consummated at the resurrection (Phil. 3:11). Although he knew that this could not be fully realized in this life, he laboured that he might present every man perfect in Christ (Col. 1:28-29).

Third: "Till we all come ... unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." There is a reference to the full stature of Christ in I Corinthians 12:12, where the definite article appears in the original, "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) the Christ" (N.T.). When the Lord Jesus raptures His Church home to Heaven, He will be the glorious Head of the completed mystical Body, and then shall be attained the full stature of Christ.

In this ultimate objective of the gifts, a divine progress may be noticed. First, a deepening of faith in Christ and an increasing knowledge of Him which draws the members of the Body of Christ into closer cohesion, then a growing into maturity, and finally a reaching of the full stature of the Christ. What a wonderful future awaits the Church!

The Intermediate Purpose

Immediately after enumerating the major gifts, Paul states that they were given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ." The word "perfecting" used here is kindred to the verb used in Matthew 4:21, where it is recorded that James and John were mending their nets. It is also used in Galatians 6:1, where the spiritual are to restore the fallen. It also appears in I Corinthians 1:10, where Paul exhorts the saints not to be divided but perfectly joined together. The idea expressed by the word is that of repairing a tear and adjusting that which is broken; it implies, therefore, the making fit and ready for service. Consequently, the intermediate purpose of spiritual gifts is to fit the saints, both private and public, for effective contributions to the edifying of the Body of Christ. Through the ministry of divinely endowed men, Christians in general are made builders, each on his part

furthering the consolidation of the spiritual building, the Church of the Living God.

Their Character

While all the spiritual gifts are not mentioned in Ephesians, those that are have frequently been called the major gifts, by this it is not to be understood that some other gifts are of minor importance, for all have their source in Christ and accomplish that for which they were intended. Let us now define the terms properly:

Apostles: This appellation is used in both a general and specific sense in the New Testament. Specifically it refers to the immediate envoys of the Saviour, those who actually had been called by Him, and who literally companied with Him in life. Paul is the only exception to this; nevertheless, even he saw the Lord in glory, and was called by Him in a very special way, and, furthermore, companied with Him in an unusual manner (Acts 22:18-19; 23:11. II Tim. 4:17). Paul claimed to be an apostle not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father (Gal. 1:1). In general, the appellation apostle was used, as the name implies, for an envoy or missionary of the Lord like Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7), and Titus and others (II Cor. 8:23). In the Corinthian passage where the word messenger appears it should read apostle. An apostle might be understood to be a delegate of the Lord or even of the church.

Prophets: It should be noted that in four separate passages in the Pauline epistles we read of the apostles and prophets, the prophets being mentioned second to the apostles (I Cor. 12:28. Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11). This

order is sufficient to prove that they were not prophets of the Old Testament, but gifts given by the Exalted Head of the Church, second only to the apostles. It should likewise be noted that their ministry, along with that of the apostles, was in the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20). Three prophets are mentioned by name in the Book of the Acts. Three prophetesses also are referred to in the same book, but they are not named. A word or two in connection with these latter might be helpful here. It should be remembered that Paul had already written his Epistle to the Corinthians in which he stated, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (I Cor. 14:34). We therefore conclude that the Holy Spirit in making mention of Philip's three daughters did so because, although they possessed this extraordinary gift, they were using it in accord with the restriction that He, the Spirit of God, had set down for public church gatherings through the pen of the Apostle Paul. It has been thought by some that their prophesying was well within the context of Acts 21:8-11. That with prophetic vision, they joined Agabus in predicting what would happen to Paul if he went up to Jerusalem. If this be so, their service was in the home, in private, rather than in the public congregation of the saints.

From the references to the three prophets, we might be able to ascertain something about their gift and ministry. "Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them" (Acts 15:32). "And there stood up one of them (the prophets) named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the

world" (Acts 11:28). He was capable of predicting the future. Furthermore, this same prophet predicted the arrest of Paul by the Jews and his being delivered into the hands of the Gentiles (Acts 21:11).

According to I Corinthians 14:30, the prophets received direct revelations from God, and according to Ephesians 3:5, they received the revelation of the mystery relative to the Church as did the apostles, and they promulgated it as did the apostles.

From an examination of the several statements made in the New Testament about the prophets, we learn that at times they received direct revelations from God, and that these revelations could be of divine verities like the mystery (Eph. 3:1-12), or material wants like the famine in Judea, or like the imminent change in the circumstances of Paul. Furthermore, we learn that they could exhort and confirm disciples, and minister in the local church, albeit their message was subject to definite regulations (I Cor. 14:29-30), and their ministry to the appraisal of the hearers. Obviously their ministry was spontaneous and impromptu.

Such a ministry would no longer be needed after a permanent record of the will of God had been received as we have it in the New Testament Canon. This may explain why we have none of the sermons of the prophets recorded for us, and why no epistles were written by them.

Evangelists: This particular gift is directed to the proclamation of the gospel message; the evangelist is the bearer of glad tidings. The noun form occurs three times in the New Testament; in the passage where the major gifts are mentioned, and in Acts and Timothy.

Philip is called an evangelist (Acts 21:8). He was one of the seven deacons appointed to administer the funds at Jerusalem in the first days of the Church (Acts 6:5), but eventually left there and settled in Caesarea where, obviously, he was known as “Philip the evangelist.” He possessed that gift.

As the central gift in the list, it may be considered the essential gift and ministry between the foundation Church of the past and the contemporary Church of the present. That which was founded by the apostles and the prophets is perpetuated and made ever contemporary by the continued work of the evangelist, and is consolidated by the pastors and teachers.

Timothy is told by Paul to do the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5). This language seems to suggest that although not a gifted evangelist, Timothy, notwithstanding, was to spread the gospel as well as to pastor and to teach.

The mighty work of grace that finally resulted in the establishing of the church at Antioch, began when those “who had been scattered abroad through the tribulation that took place on the occasion of Stephen, passed through (the country) to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one but to Jews alone” (Acts 11:19, N.T.). Every believer should be ready to speak the gospel, but God has gifted some as evangelists who with dignity and authority, as heralds proclaim the glad tidings of salvation.

Pastors and Teachers: Dr. Moule and others suggest that from the form of the sentence, these two functions are regarded as coinciding and combining in the one person. The true guardian of the flock of Christ is a shepherd to

heed and lead the sheep, also he is a teacher to feed them. We have looked at the shepherd and his ministry in former lessons, so need add nothing here, except it be that we pray the Lord to raise up among us gifted pastors and teachers, for these probably are the greatest needs in the Church today.

The Classification

In the study of the spiritual gifts, and especially those that are called the major gifts, it becomes necessary to classify them. This in great measure has been done in the New Testament. We may group them into foundation and temporary gifts, and into structural and permanent gifts.

Temporary gifts: It is noticeable that the appellations apostles and prophets are linked together by the Spirit of God, and they always appear in the same order, “apostles and prophets” (I Cor. 12:29. Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11). It is also noticeable that their active ministry was related to the early period of Christianity; the ministry of Christ was in the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20), and their receiving of the revelation of the mystery that God intended to bring both Jews and Gentiles into one body was given to and promulgated by both the apostles and prophets, and that, of course, was relevant to the beginning of the Church.

These facts, and the truth that nowhere in the New Testament is there any intimation of a succession of apostles or prophets, lead to the conclusion that the gifts of apostle and prophet were temporary in duration.

Furthermore, we are definitely told that prophecies were to end. In I Corinthians 13:8-13, there is drawn a

vivid contrast between divine love which is eternal and the temporary sign gifts: "Whether there be prophecies they shall fail." The verb "to fail" used here is translated into English differently in other passages of this same letter to the Corinthians. It is rendered "to bring to nought" (Chap. 1:28), "done away" (Chap. 13:10), "put away" (Chap. 13:11). It means that prophecies had to end. There was no need for fragmentary prophecies when the Word of God had been completed. Shadows are not appreciated when the true substance appears.

Permanent gifts: That the gifts "evangelists, pastors and teachers" were given for the permanent blessing of the Church is evidenced by the tenor of the New Testament Scriptures. We know that the gift of the evangelist was exercised in both apostolic and post-apostolic days. Paul anticipating his own martyrdom wrote to Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist" (II Tim. 4:5). He expected a non-apostle to carry on this type of service.

Furthermore, Peter was considering post-apostolic times when he committed to younger men the commission that he had received of the Lord, "Feed My Sheep" (John 21:15-17. I Peter 5:1-3). That these are to continue is further proved by a careful reading of such passages as II Timothy 4:1-5, and I Peter 5:1-4.

Tests on This Chapter

1. Does a spiritual gift differ from a natural talent?
2. Does everyone receive an endowment from Heaven?
3. How many major gifts are mentioned in Ephesians?
4. What is their intermediate purpose?
5. Name all the major gifts.

6. Name the passage that states that prophecies shall cease.
7. How many gifts are in the first group of these endowments?
8. Name the classifications of the major gifts.
9. What specifically is an apostle?
10. Name the second part of the threefold final objective of spiritual gifts.

Chapter 10: Spiritual Gifts: Sphere and Control

The doctrine of the Bible is Trinitarian doctrine; it teaches that God is One (Deut. 6:4. Mai. 2:10. I Tim. 2:5) and that it has pleased Him to manifest Himself in the threefold distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In regard to this study, it should be realized that each person in the Godhead is active in the bestowal and operation of spiritual gifts.

The Trinity and Gifts

There are three major passages in the New Testament which deal with the matter of spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:3-18. I Cor. 12 through 14. Eph. 4:1-16). The first passage is related to God the Father; the second, to God the Spirit; and the third, to God the Son. It should also be noted that the first is relevant to the individual Christian's attitude toward others; the second, to the function of spiritual gifts in the local church; and the third, to the importance of spiritual gifts in the progress of the Universal Church.

The tenses of time may also be considered as significant in these three passages: The past, "Think soberly, according as God hath dealt (did deal) to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we" (Rom. 12:3-8). This may have been at conversion or some other past experience. The present: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (I Cor. 12:4). The future: "Gifts unto men ... for the perfecting of the

saints, ... unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:7-13).

The Sphere of Function

While in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Romans we have the record of the bestowal of spiritual gifts, in I Corinthians we have the sphere in which they function.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians quite naturally divides itself into two parts. The first section from chapter one to the end of chapter ten; the second, from chapter eleven to the end of chapter sixteen. In the second section we have the repeated expression "be come together," indicating that Paul is not dealing with matters relative to the individual in the church, but with the practices in public church gatherings. Furthermore, he also makes other references to the local church as it is gathered for congregational services.

There is only one Church in the New Testament and it is presented under two aspects, the Universal and the local. The spiritual gifts are given for the benefit of the entire Church, but, according to Scripture, their proper place of activity is the local church.

The Groups of Gifts

The Spirit of God, by selecting two certain words, divides the list of gifts in I Corinthians 12:7-11 into three. Unfortunately the two words are translated into English by only one word, the word another. Paul used one word that means another of the same kind, and a second word that means another of a different kind. We could paraphrase verses 8-10: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, and to another of the same kind, the word of knowledge. To another of a

different kind, faith by the same Spirit, and to another of this same kind, the gift of healing, and to still another of this same kind, the working of miracles; to such another, prophecies; and to such another, discerning of spirits. To another of a different sort, divers kinds of tongues; and to another of this sort, interpretation of tongues.”

It will readily be seen that in these groups there is first, the faculty of wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge is acquired and by wisdom is applied. In second place, there is the faculty of performance and accomplishment. In the third place, there is the faculty of speech and communication.

The Operation of Gifts

In the matter of spiritual gifts and their operation, the three chapters of I Corinthians: 12, 13, 14, are very important. In chapter 12 are the various abilities of the gifts; in chapter 13, the proper attitude accompanying the gifts; and in chapter 14, the specific arrangement controlling the operation of the gifts. It has been said that great gift requires great grace; according to these three chapters, any gift requires much love for its proper function.

At the opening of chapter 13, the Apostle casually and only approximately refers to the three groups in the list (chap. 12:8-10): the first, the faculty of speech in verse one; the second, the faculty of knowledge in verse two; the third, the faculty of performance and action in verse three. The Apostle implies that although a Christian might be the personification of all the gifts, without love speech would be merely a noise, knowledge as nothing, and the most spectacular accomplishment would receive no compensation.

I Corinthians 13 is frequently called Paul's Psalm of Love, and it is all that. It opens with the possible absence of love in the centre is given the pure ability of love, and at the close mention is made of the permanent abiding of love. Love causes spiritual endowments to function without irritation for the profit of all concerned.

The Abuses of Gifts

In the closing section of First Corinthians the Apostle condemns the extravagant use of a spiritual gift, and shows that the true value of a gift is demonstrated by its utility to the entire Church.

In this section, Paul deals with various abuses in public church practices: the insubordination of the women (11:1-16), the desecration of the Lord's supper (11:17-34), the improper use of spiritual gifts (12:1—14:40), and the perversion of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection (15:1-58), and the negligence relative to church funds (16:1-9). The carnal mind is always ready to deviate from the divine plan, and to adapt God's intentions to suit its own purposes.

In a study of the chapters which were meant to correct the abuses of spiritual gifts, it is discovered that some were given for extraordinary purposes, they were sign gifts of only temporary duration.

There were many signs and wonders at the beginning of the Church era. They accompanied the ministry of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 2:3-4). They were seen in the ministry of all the early apostles of the Lord (Acts 2:43; 5:12). They were seen in the testimony of Stephen (Acts 6:8), and were a part of the preaching of Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:6). They also accompanied the service of the

Apostle Paul (Acts 15:12. Rom. 15:19). The birth of the Christian Church was fully attested by confirmatory spectacular signs; they demonstrated the divine origin, the supernatural character of the great movement of grace.

These signs and wonders gradually ceased with the passing of time. Even before the end of the apostolic period, the record of signs and miracles closed, and there is no indication that apostolic delegates like Timothy and Titus performed miracles.

The Gift of Tongues

One of the most spectacular sign gifts was the gift of tongues, a gift abused at Corinth, a gift still abused by the claims and perversions of the present.

Its importance: The importance of the gift of tongues becomes evident when we contrast God's government with God's grace. In government, God confused the tongue of men. He confounded their language that they might not understand one another (Gen. 11:7).

Furthermore, in government God shall restore humanity to one pure language (Zeph. 3:9). The discord of Babel will give place to a unity of language when idolatry has ceased and when the Lord has executed judgment upon all the nations and established a reign of righteousness. Now between God's governmental dealings at Babel and during the Millennium, God sent a message of grace to all the world; therefore, He made this world-wide message available immediately to the representatives of the nations gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. These representatives were amazed and asked the question, "How hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? ... We do hear them

“speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:8-11).

Its ancient abuse: This is readily detected in the reading of chapter 14 of I Corinthians, and more of this will become evident as we study Paul’s correctives for this abuse.

Its modern abuse: The modern abuse of this gift is fairly well known. This abuse arises from three erroneous concepts. First: It is contended that under the power of this gift, persons are able to speak the language of angels, that what sounds like jargon to us is actually a heavenly language. All this is based upon one word appearing frequently in I Corinthians 14 in the King James Version, the word “unknown.” It occurs in verses 2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27, and is taken by some to mean a language unknown to men, therefore angelic. Even a cursory reading of these verses shows that in every case the word “unknown” is italicized which means that it is not in the original. It would have been much better had the translators used the word foreign, implying a language foreign to the gathered congregation. Second: This abuse also arises from the failure to understand the apostolic use of this gift. These points should be noted: (a). The Greek word tongues (glossia) is used synonymously with language in the three historical demonstrations recorded in the Book of Acts: at Pentecost (2:4-11), in the case of Cornelius (10:44-46), and in the case of the disciples at Ephesus (19:1-7). (b). The gift of tongues was one of the sign gifts, particularly to Israel. The prediction of Isaiah (Isa. 28:11-12) is quoted (I Cor. 14:21) to prove that this spectacular gift at the beginning of this era was a sign to the Jewish people. (c). Only a few in the apostolic church possessed

this gift, and all were not encouraged to seek it. Paul raises seven rhetorical questions (I Cor. 12:29-30), and all imply that the major and sign gifts were limited to a comparatively few persons, (d). There are two lists given in I Corinthians 12, and in both of these tongues and the interpretation of tongues are at the last (Vs. 8-10 and 28). These two gifts are at the very bottom of the lists. What some men would put at the beginning, God places at the end. (e). It is also worthy of note that the most gifted in languages among all at Corinth, the Apostle Paul, preferred not to use this gift. He said, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding" (I Cor. 14:18-19). (f). Unrestricted use of tongues, even in apostolic days, brought the church into disrepute before the world (I Cor. 14:23). (g). The gift was not to be employed at all in apostolic churches unless there was also present an interpreter.

Third: This gift is sadly abused today because of a refusal to accept the scriptural assertion found in this very context that tongues were to cease (I Cor. 13:8). Three salient points appear in I Corinthians 13:8-12, and these may best be understood by asking three questions: What was to cease? Why were they to cease? When were they to cease?

What was to cease? Certain gifts that belonged exclusively to the early days of the Church: prophecies, tongues, and knowledge (V. 8). Why were they to cease? Because they were imperfect, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part" (V. 9). The full revelation of God had not yet been given. When were they to cease? "When that which is perfect is come" (v. 10). While there are differences of opinion in regard to what this means,

there is one suggestion which seems more suitable than others, and it agrees with all the items in this context, that divine revelation as given in the Scriptures would eventually be completed. The Apostle Paul informs us that he had received a stewardship to fulfil, complete, the Word of God (Col. 1:25). Doctrinally this is true; there was no further revelation from God after Paul's day. The completion of God's will to man is seen in the unfolding of the mystery in regard to the Church (Eph. 3:1-10). There were other writers chronologically after Paul, but there was no further new doctrine revealed. Paul completed the New Testament Canon in connection with doctrine.

The Objectives of Gifts

There are three statements made by the Apostle in this closing section of First Corinthians which provide a goal for all gifts and activities in the local church. Two of them are found in the chapter that deals with the abuse of the gift of tongues, (a). "Let all things be done unto edifying" (14:26). (b). "Let all things be done decently and in order" (14:40). (c). "Let all your things be done in love" (16:14). Here then are guiding rules in the employment of all gifts entrusted to men.

Tests on This Chapter

1. What relation has the Holy Trinity to spiritual gifts?
2. If gifts are given to the Universal Church, where is their scriptural sphere of operation?
3. Name the three classifications of the gifts listed in I Corinthians 12:7-11.

4. What more than endowment is necessary for the proper function of gifts? State chapter.
5. Name some of the abuses corrected by Paul in the closing section of I Corinthians.
6. How important was the gift of tongues?
7. Why is it abused today?
8. Who was the greatest apostolic linguist?
9. What Scripture states that tongues would cease?
10. Name three objectives of any gift.

Chapter 11: The Woman: Comportment and Function in the Church

Herrick Johnston, a moderator of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., toward the close of the nineteenth century wrote: "Christianity has lifted woman to a new place in the world, and just in proportion as Christianity has sway, will she rise to a higher dignity in human life. What she has now, and all that she shall have of privilege and true honour, she owes to that gospel which took those qualities which have been counted weak and unworthy and gave them a divine glory in Christ."

The study of the woman's place in the church requires that we reach our conclusions only after an examination of the various phases of her history.

The Woman in Creation

There are two accounts of the creation of man, male and female, in the Book of Genesis.

The first (Gen. 1:26-28) pictures Adam and Eve as if they were created simultaneously and states their divine origin, character and purpose. Man and woman both alike were created by God; they bore a likeness to Him; they possessed reason, the powers of God-consciousness, world-consciousness, self-consciousness, and the faculty of self-manifestation. God blessed both and instructed them to replenish and subdue the earth, and to have dominion over it.

Man and woman in this account of creation are treated as equals; what the one received the other also received; and what the one was to do, the other was to do.

The second (Gen. 2:7-25) describes the earthly origin of man; he is of the earth, earthy. The emphasis in this passage is not upon the equality of man and woman, but upon the fact that woman is man's complement. She was created as an help meet for man; that is a help suitable for him, his counterpart.

Adam's language when the Lord brought Eve to him indicates that he accepted Eve in this manner. "Adam said, This is now (colloquially speaking, This is at last) bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." Adam had considered well the animals around him; they came at his call; they were his daily companions, and were in their way helpful to him, but at last he recognized in Eve a second self, his very reflection, his true counterpart.

Matthew Henry quaintly says that woman was taken out of man's side to suggest her equality with him: "not out of his feet to imply inferiority, or out of his head to suggest superiority, but out of his side, implying companionship and equality."

Such, then, was the blessedness and the blessing of woman in her creation.

Woman in Probation

The Apostle Paul states this succinctly, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Tim. 2:14). Paul is not suggesting that Adam was much superior to Eve and beyond ever being deceived, he merely is making a statement of fact in regard to the historical order of the fall; Eve was

deceived and in her deception she assumed to lead Adam. "She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6). So ruinous was her act that not again was she by divine appointment to be permitted in the place of leadership over man.

In Satan's deception of Eve we see the beginning of the slimy trail that throughout the centuries has beguiled so many in the world: "The lust of the flesh;" "The woman saw that the tree was good for food." "The lust of the eye;" "It was pleasant to the eye." "And the pride of life;" "A tree to be desired to make one wise."

The sentence of God upon Eve remains unto this day. It is well to notice that neither Adam nor Eve were cursed; only Satan and the earth were thus judged by God. "Unto the woman He (God) said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16). The God who had said at their creation, "Let them have dominion over the fish, ... fowl, ... and over every living thing" (Gen. 1:28) now says to the woman, "He shall rule over thee." The period of the co-rule of man and woman had ended with the deception of Eve; she henceforth was to be in a position of subjection to man. Ever since, woman's position both in the world and in the Church has resulted from her transgression.

The divine sentence upon the woman was suffering from the hand of God and subjection under the hand of man. Yet this sentence was alleviated by the promise of Satan's final defeat. "The Lord God said unto the serpent, ... I will put enmity between thee and the

woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Since sin came by way of the woman, God ordained that the blessed Saviour Himself also come by way of the woman. Although the channel of much misery, the woman has become the channel of all mercy.

The Woman in Paganism

How womanhood has suffered in the pagan world! In that world her subjection is complete; she is degraded, abused, and enslaved. One of the so-called enlightened philosophers of the ancient world expressed the feelings of his day in words something like these: "We need wives to bear us legitimate children, concubines to give us physical pleasure, prostitutes for our times of profligacy, and female slaves to provide us comfort." Woman in the mind of pagan man, is little better than a serf oppressed by a lustful lord.

We think of the anguish and grief of womanhood in the pagan world when her child was taken from her breast to become a human sacrifice to Moloch. We think of the horror and dread when she herself became a human sacrifice to accompany her dead husband into the unseen world. The day was when even here in North America a maiden from among the Indians became a human sacrifice to the gods at the time of their religious festivals.

From this awful picture of abject subjugation, let us turn and consider the woman under the law.

The Woman under the Law

While the woman's position in Judaism may have been paradoxical, under the Law she was held in esteem.

There are several points that should be examined here: her subjection, her esteem, her spirituality and devotion, and the honour of all honours bestowed upon her.

Her Subjection: Woman was constantly reminded of her submission in the dispensation of the Law. First, by statute. For example, if a daughter vowed a vow and bound her soul before the Lord, and her father overheard her vow, he could disallow it. If her father so acted, the Lord freed her from her obligation; she was under submission to her father. The same was true of a married woman; her husband had authority over her to disallow her vow (Num. 30:3-8). Woman in both these cases was under subjection to man.

Second: She was reminded of her subjection by ceremonies. The submission of the woman is obvious in the law of purification (Lev. 12). Third: She was also reminded of her position by the example of the mother of the Hebrew nation of whom we read, "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord" (I Peter 3:6).

Her esteem: That womanhood, especially motherhood was to be highly regarded under the Law is demonstrated by the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12). "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father" (Lev. 19:3). "He that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death" (Ex. 21:15).

The usual sphere of the woman under the Law was her home. Public affairs, therefore, were considered outside the woman's province altogether.

Her special service: Notwithstanding the quiet and more or less secluded sphere of her home, during the

dispensation of the Law woman reached a high standard of spirituality, and because of the weakness of man in certain circumstances she gave leadership: Miriam was called a prophetess (Ex. 15:20). Deborah was called a prophetess and a judge (Jud. 4:4). Huldah was a prophetess in the days of Josiah (II Chron. 34:22). Isaiah's wife is called a prophetess (Isa. 8:3). Noadiah in the days of Nehemiah was a prophetess, but she hindered the work of God being done at that time (Neh. 6:14). This list would not be complete without the name of Anna of the tribe of Asher who as a prophetess served God with fastings and prayers (Luke 2:36). In all these cases, with the exception of Miriam and Anna, God used these women in a public sphere because of weakness on the part of man. Notwithstanding, none of these are mentioned in the great chapter of faith and fame, Hebrews 11. In fact, although Deborah, rather egotistically sings of her own prowess, in that wonderful chapter of the New Testament, she is not even mentioned and the credit for the victory is given to Barak (Heb. 11:32).

Her spirituality: Our hearts are warmed by the devotion seen in some of the godly women who lived near the end of the dispensation of the Law, women who developed strong spiritual characters and who waited for the consolation of Israel: Joanna, Susanna, Salome, the Marys and many others. We admire and thank God for the blessed virgin Mary, the example of womanhood in its noblest and purest form.

The Woman under Christianity

Through Christianity the woman has a place she finds nowhere else. We shall look at her in Christ, in the home, and in the Church.

In Christ: In Christ all distinctions among believers are lost. "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" (Gal. 3:28). In Christ woman becomes equal to man. She therefore is accepted in the Beloved as well as he (Eph. 1:6), and becomes a member of the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:12), a member of the Christian priesthood (I Peter 2:9). She, as well as man, is justified, sanctified, and glorified (Rom 8:30). These are the concepts which have led to the elevation of woman under this dispensation of the grace of God.

In the home: In her home the Christian woman should be loved by her husband (Col. 3:19), honoured and obeyed by her children (Eph. 6:1-3. Col. 3:20). There she should be submissive to her husband (Col. 3:18. Eph. 5:22), for if unconverted, through her conduct, he is sanctified (I Cor. 7:14), and eventually may be won to Christ (I Peter 3:1-6). She should always dress decently and act decorously (I Peter 3:3-4).

The Christian woman may make her home the centre of hospitality (Acts 16:14-15), a means of spiritual instruction (Acts 18:24-28), and a place of intercession (Acts 12:11-17). Through her own spirituality, the Christian woman may make her secular sphere a sacred sanctuary.

In the Church: The place of the Christian woman in the Church is a highly controversial matter today; consequently, we must adhere closely to the Holy

Scriptures, and examine in them her status, subjection, service, and silence in the local church.

/ . Her status: Paul has forcefully expressed this, "Treat ... the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity" (I Tim. 5:1-2). The attitude of all in the church to elderly sisters should be that of respect and love worthy of maturity; the attitude of all in the church to younger sisters should be one of restraint and holiness worthy of chastity. The attitude of all in both of these cases should be that of care and love.

// . Her subjection: Paul opens up the second section of First Corinthians by commending the brethren at Corinth for their observance of the oral instruction he had given them; he then adds to former congregational instruction a lesson on divine headship. "The Head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the Head of Christ is God" (I Cor. 11:3).

Since there is headship, argues the Apostle, there must also be submission; Christ to the headship of God; man to the headship of Christ; and woman to the headship of man. He then suggests a visible symbol of headship and submission to be worn by the woman.

The symbol: The symbol is a head-covering which is illustrated by nature (I Cor. 11:14-15), but the reality must not be confused with the illustration. That these are altogether distinct may be proven by substituting the hair of the illustration for the covering of the symbol, and reading the passage aloud. By this means it will be readily seen that the natural hair of the woman is not the covering that Paul is advocating.

The reason: This passage raises the wearing of a hat by our sisters far above the idea of etiquette; it states the

true reason. "For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head because of the angels" (Margin, K.J.V.). As the angels, invisible spectators, view in the Church the manifold wisdom of God, they see the symbol of headship and submission on the heads of Christian woman, and they are reminded of their own subjection to the headship of God.

The statement about woman praying and prophesying in I Corinthians 11:5, is a difficulty. Although there have been different attempts to explain it, there seems to be only one that is in keeping with the context and the whole tenor of Scripture.

Even a casual reading of the passage convinces one that Paul is correcting one of several abuses prevalent in the Corinthian church, the insubordination of the women. In his statement, Paul, for the sake of logic, is merely accepting what was being practised in the local church. He does not break the force of his argument here to correct this abuse; he later returns to it in chapter 14:34, and says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches." A proper exegesis of these two passages requires that the statement of I Corinthians 11:5 be interpreted in the light of I Corinthians 14:34, because six years later, when writing to Timothy, Paul restates his correction, saying, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection" (I Tim. 2:11).

Again, it should be noticed that ever since she was deceived and in the transgression woman is in the place of subjection.

III. Her service: There are three what might be called recognizable titles used in regard to the service of women in the Church: prophetess (Acts 21:9), servant or

deaconness (Rom. 16:1. I Tim. 3:11), and succourer or patron (Rom. 16:1-2).

Inasmuch as we have seen that the gift of prophecy was to cease, and in fact did cease eventually when the Canon of Scripture was completed, the title prophetess has little significance for us today. Since there have been false prophetesses from apostolic times until the present, it is only proper that we be ready to detect and expel them from our fellowship. The Word of God exposes one such woman, "That woman Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess" (Rev. 2:20).

The title deaconness is in perfect accord with the teaching of God's Word concerning women for it means under-worker. That there is much for women to do is obvious, but they must do it in the place of submission. As we formerly saw, the noun deacon is very comprehensive and embraces many different types of Christian activity which assist in the work of the church. A sister may be a deaconess of the church; she may be appointed to some special task within her own sphere of usefulness and submission. The word deaconness indicates her relationship to her own church.

The third title is that of succourer, a patron, and indicates a Christian woman's attitude toward others. If the word deaconness suggests the how of sisters' service, the word patron suggests the what of her service. Woman's service in the church is under the brethren, the elders, and toward others as advocate and defender, a strong capable helper in the time of need.

In the New Testament there are commendations of many women who served the apostolic churches. In Roman 16, Paul commends a long list of his helpers; eleven of the

names he mentions are feminine. He commends Euodias and Syntyche (Phil. 4:1-3) and other women in the early churches, but from what he says, we cannot gather the specific work they did. He commends the service of Phoebe, the devotion of Priscilla and her husband, and says that Mary bestowed much labour upon him and his helpers. Of some of the others he says, "They laboured in the Lord," or "They laboured with me in the gospel." The reasonable conclusion is that sisters' service in the churches may be any ministry for, and with, and under the brethren overseers which will assist in the furtherance of the work of the Lord.

IV. Her silence: In this regard there are two important points which must be covered, the fact of the woman's silence and the reason for the woman's silence.

The fact of her silence (I Cor. 14:27-35): As intimated earlier in our study, here Paul is correcting the abuses of woman in taking public part in Corinth (I Cor. 11:5). This he does by stating imperatively that she must be silent in the church. This command has been explained away by some. They have suggested that all Paul meant was that women were to stop gossiping and chattering before and during the church services. An examination of the context precludes such an interpretation.

The clause to keep silence occurs three times in this passage. First, in connection with the gift of tongues (Vs. 27-28); the absence of an interpreter in the church required silence. Second, in regard to the gift of prophecy (V. 30). A further revelation from God through a prophet meant that the first speaker, in silence must give place to the second. Third, it is used relevant to the woman and must be understood within the immediate

context. In the first two cases the clause is not used to silence chatter, but to control divinely endowed gifts. This control required that under certain conditions even spiritual gifts had to keep silence; it must therefore mean that in the gathering of the saints the woman is to remain in silence.

The reason for her silence (I Tim. 2:8-15): Six years after writing his imperative to the Corinthians, Paul gives instructions to Timothy whom he left at Ephesus during his absence, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Paul now gives his reasons for this. The first, Adam's priority in creation, "Adam was first formed, then Eve." "The head of the woman is the man." The second, woman's priority in sin, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Woman in her deception assumed the place of head over man with calamitous results; therefore, henceforth in the church she must remain silent.

Her commendation: That Paul had the highest possible esteem for the Christian woman is seen in many of his writings. One may slightly adapt and paraphrase one of his statements and find an exceedingly warm commendation: "Well reported of for good works; because she has brought up children, because she has lodged strangers, because she has washed the saints' feet, because she has relieved the afflicted; well reported of because she has diligently followed every good work." See I Timothy 5:10.

Tests on This Chapter

1. How did Satan bring about the Fall of mankind?

2. What did Adam, at the time of her creation, see in Eve?
3. State the elements in God's penalty upon Eve.
4. If man was not cursed by the Fall, what does bring curse upon him?
5. Name some of the prophetesses under the Law.
6. Under the Law, what reminded woman of her subjection to man?
7. What, in Christ, is the woman's position compared to man's?
8. Why should the Christian woman wear a hat or veil?
9. Name some of the Christian women commended by Paul.
10. Give both reasons why woman is to be silent in the churches.

Chapter 12: Church Discipline: Obligation and Scope

Discipline should appeal strongly to the intellect; it is a call to sound judgment, a teaching of the mind to think soberly in order that Christian character be strengthened. Discipline is divine training that produces mental and moral health.

In the study of this subject it is necessary that we first interpret the terms we use, then examine the purpose of discipline, its different aspects, and finally its actual benefits.

The Meaning

The English word discipline primarily means to instruct, to teach, to tutor. In a secondary sense, it means that which is taught, the subject; for example, Greek is a good discipline. Any branch of knowledge may be called a discipline. In a tertiary way, it means also to impose punishment.

It is necessary for clarity of thought to constantly bear in mind the true biblical significance, a call to soundness of mind.

There are two important and relative words in Hebrews 12:6, “chasteneth” and “scourgeth.” The first is akin to our English word “discipline,” and means to train and to tutor. The word “scourgeth” is much more intense and means to whip or flog. In the school of God, if we do not learn by tutoring, then we must learn the hard way, by flogging, and that is grievous both to us and to our heavenly Father.

The Purpose

The Lord has several purposes before Him in regard to this matter. Discipline must not always be considered as punishment; it may be that, but it may be otherwise. Let us consider four possible purposes of biblical discipline.

Instructive (I Tim. 1:20): In the case of Hymenaeus and Alexander, they were delivered unto Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme. Their heresy in all probability was in connection with the resurrection (II Tim. 2:17). Two solemn points are obvious in these two men, and failure in these resulted in corrective discipline. First, they rejected sound doctrine. Second, the adverbial conjunction at the beginning of chapter two suggests that they also had been negligent in regard to prayer. Paul writes, "I exhort therefore (because of what has happened to these two men) that prayers be made."

The Word of God and prayer are preservatives in the Christian life, from both sin and chastisement.

The language of Paul here relative to the delivering unto Satan is the same that he uses of the incestuous man of I Corinthians 5, and there it seems synonymous with "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Cor. 5:13). Excommunication from the church places a guilty person in Satan's domain, the world of which he is the god.

Preventative (II Cor. 12:1-7): The case of the Apostle Paul in this passage illustrates God's care and protection toward His child. "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me."

The Lord can use even the cruelty of Satan to accomplish His own purposes. God was not the source of “the thorn in the flesh,” but under His sovereign will He permitted it. Satan’s evil intent under divine control became a benefit in the life of the Apostle Paul.

Restorative (II Cor. 2:4-11): The case of the immoral man of I Corinthians 5 is a case in point for restorative discipline. He was excommunicated for his sin, but when truly repentant was restored to the fellowship of God’s people. It should be noted that the discipline against this erring brother was carried out in the name of the Lord Jesus, and that he was forgiven in the person of Christ. These facts prove that discipline must be executed by the authority of Christ and in complete accord with His character, and so must restoration.

Punitive (Acts 5:1-11): Ananias and his wife Sapphira died under the hand of God; certain in Corinth also suffered under the punitive measures of divine discipline (I Cor. 11:30).

In the case of the Corinthians there seems to have been two categories: First, “Many are weak and sickly.” This refers to physical illness, and probably implies the possibility of restoration from spiritual declension and recovery to health. Second, “And many sleep.” Here is divine discipline in its extreme form. The spiritual state of some in Corinth had deteriorated beyond recovery so the Lord removed them. He put His children to sleep, but prematurely, under His chastening hand.

The Aspects

Four different aspects of discipline are taught in the New Testament. If these are understood, it will be clear

that there is a progressive application of discipline where there is a continuance in sin.

Self-discipline: Self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23), and is to become a feature of Christian character (II Pet. 1:6). The word "temperance" used in these references would be better rendered "self-control." The will, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is to control our thoughts and our acts particularly toward others.

Self-control is illustrated for us in the practices of the athlete (I Cor. 9:25); but, of course, the Lord Jesus is the perfect example in this as in all other qualities. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again; ... but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2:23).

Individual discipline: By this is meant a discipline imposed upon another by the individual, and is in contrast to that imposed by a congregation. There are two passages which treat this subject, Matthew 18:15-18. II Thessalonians 3:6 and 14.

The wilful erring brother of Matthew 18 is to be treated as a Gentile and a publican, as a stranger and one disliked with whom there is no fellowship or service. It is difficult to accept these words as implying excommunication, especially when they are in the singular persons, "him" and "thee."

This may be the Lord's way of dealing with a maladjusted personality. There are brethren in Christ who do not understand their own limitations and who refuse to admit any incapacities; they can do no wrong; at least, so they think. Where reproof is ignored and reconciliation refused, it is better to be a stranger at a distance than to live in constant conflict. If avoiding the

clash of personalities produces peace, then let us have peace.

The disorderly brother mentioned in II Thessalonians is a brother out of rank (a military term is used here by Paul). He is doing things in his own way and marring the order and precision of the saints. In advocating individual discipline upon this erring brother, Paul does so in the name of the Lord Jesus, that is, by the authority of the Lord Jesus. Excommunication, church discipline, is executed in the name of the Lord. Here the command to discipline a brother by avoiding him, is given by the same authority. Any act of discipline upon another is grievous and should be employed only after admonition has failed, and then, in complete accord with the will of the Lord.

It is possible that the Apostle Paul had this aspect of discipline in mind in his austere attitude toward John Mark (Acts 15:38-41); if so, afterward it brought forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness (Col. 4:10. II Tim. 4:11).

When a brother fails to discipline himself and control his behaviour, he exposes himself to the individual discipline of others who withdraw from him and refuse him their companionship.

Divine discipline: This might be called direct discipline. In one respect, we are always under the training of our heavenly Father. "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. 12:8). Notwithstanding, when one refuses to impose self-discipline or does not heed the discipline of individual Christians, he may experience the direct

discipline of the Lord, for He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth (Heb. 12:6).

There are two examples of this aspect of discipline from which we may learn spiritual lessons; they probably represent two stages of this phase of our subject. The Lord said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you (hath obtained you all by asking), that he might sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

The Lord actually gave Peter into the hands of Satan to teach him a lesson in humility, but in telling him, the Lord predicted a recovery and future usefulness.

The other example is that of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11, and that of the Corinthians in I Corinthians 11:30. There was no recovery for them; they were removed from the scene of testimony and taken prematurely to Heaven.

Church discipline: There are two forms of church discipline, the internal and the external. Let us consider both.

/. The internal: There are three words which might indicate the extent of this phase of church control: "rebuke," "admonish," and "reprove."

1. "Rebuke": This word means to chide with or to set a weight upon; literally it means to put a person under pressure because of his misconduct. Those that sin are to be rebuked before all that others may fear (I Tim. 5:20). While, according to the immediate context, this may apply more directly to elders who fall, elsewhere it has a more comprehensive coverage. It is applied to vain

talkers (Titus 1:10-14), to purloining servants (Titus 2:9-15), and has a place in general ministry.

2. “Admonish”: To admonish is to remind one of his former good behaviour and urge an adjustment in doctrine and practice to conform to those standards that have been forsaken. The disorderly brother is to be admonished (II Thess. 3:15). The heretic is to be admonished at least twice before finally being rejected (Titus 3:10). To reject in this sense means to deprecate, to avoid.

3. “Reprove”: This word means to convince a person of his error. John the Baptist reproved Herod over his illicit relations with Herodias. He actually silenced Herod on this matter, and that is why Herod feared and respected John.

It has been suggested that this is what Paul meant when he wrote to Titus about deceivers, especially from the circumcision, “Whose mouth must be stopped” (Titus 1:11). There is no better way of closing a man’s mouth than by quietly and firmly showing him how incorrect his talk is. He may outwardly resent this but knows it is right.

//. The external: It has been scripturally affirmed that basically there are two sins for which Christians may be excommunicated from the church, moral evil and doctrinal error. The two passages which respectively cover these are I Corinthians 5:1-13 and I Timothy 1:18-20. These two sins have been called leprosy of the feet and leprosy of the head. Inasmuch as the place of the leper, until the day of his cleansing, was outside the encampment of Israel, even so, the place of the moral leper is outside the fellowship of the saints. It is only

through repentance and forgiveness that he is restored to the Lord and the confidence of the Lord's people (II Cor. 2:4-11).

The Benefits

There are many benefits for the one upon whom the discipline is imposed. Thereby he may be arrested from dishonouring the Lord, from harming his own reputation, from distorting his personality. Through discipline, he may be brought back into fellowship with the Lord, and restored in spiritual vigour and testimony.

There are also benefits for those who know about the act of discipline. Biblical discipline results in several blessings.

Reverence: The act of extreme discipline upon Ananias and Sapphira resulted in a reverential fear of God among both saved and unsaved. We read, "Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things" (Acts 5:11). Holy reverence was stimulated by this act of solemn and direct divine intervention.

Cleansing: The words of the Apostle Paul to the saints at Corinth certainly imply this: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump" (I Cor. 5:6-7). The excommunication of the impure man cleansed the church of corruption.

Fear: Discipline is a strong deterrent against sin. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Tim. 5:20). This may imply being afraid of sin or being afraid of the penalty of sin. It matters little which, public discipline is a deterrent against evil among saints.

Forgiveness: Although the Christian is in himself the example of full forgiveness, he needs to be constantly taught that he is to forgive even as Christ forgave him (Col. 3:13). Of the incestuous person mentioned in I Corinthians 5 and II Corinthians 2, Paul wrote, "Ye ought rather to forgive him" (II Cor. 2:7).

Renewal: The word of our Lord, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother" (Matt. 18:15). To gain a brother is not to triumph over him, but rather to win him back to all that is involved in Christian fellowship and friendship.

Fruitfulness: What is said of direct divine discipline, undoubtedly is true in every respect where it is accepted as from the Lord. "Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). One must experience godly exercise in order to derive real benefit from any aspect of discipline.

May each one learn from the Word of God how he ought to behave himself in the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth!

At the close of a worship meeting one Lord's Day morning, an elder ministered on the standard of morals among Christians. After his short address, with broken voice, he told the congregation of the fall of his own daughter and her fiance. The young couple were disciplined and married. For over six months that elder took no public part in the church. Eventually, the young couple were restored to fellowship. Some months later when the congregation was giving gifts to another couple about to be married, they duplicated the gifts

and on the same occasion showed their full forgiveness by remembering the first couple as well.

Tests on This Chapter

1. What does the English word discipline mean?
2. Define the word scourge.
3. Name at least three purposes of discipline.
4. Give an example of preventative discipline.
5. Give an example of corrective discipline.
6. What is meant by individual discipline?
7. What is meant by individual discipline?
8. What form may internal discipline take?
9. Name two aspects of church discipline.
10. What sins require excommunication from the church?
11. What are some of the benefits of discipline?