

STUDIES IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Volume II *Ecclesiology*

Compiled by
Stanton W. Richardson, M A.
St. Paul Bible College, St. Paul, Minnesota
Fourth edition, Revised in 1969, printed in United States of America

Format revised by Rev. Richard W. Rutherford, M.C.M., M.Div. Revisions were to: (a) Scale the 8.5 x 11 format to 7 x 8.5. (b) To divide Volume Two into four sections: Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology. (c) To create consistency in margins, indentations and outline numbering. All content concerning theological study is unchanged.

PREFACE

The following study was compiled as a result of the need for a class-room handbook in Biblical Theology. It was compiled by Stanton W. Richardson, M A. while teaching at the St. Paul Bible College.

Dr. Richardson recognized the fact that many good works had been written on Christian Doctrine. Yet, some were not suited for Bible College use because of their complexity and depth. Still others did not seem to come up to the level demanded by Bible College students.

Dr. Richardson also recognized the impossibility of covering such material thoroughly and completely within the given time restraints. However, this text should serve as a guide in the various studies in Biblical Theology and that the guidance will always be directed to the Holy Scriptures.

Dr. Richardson noted that these studies did not necessarily constitute the official statement or theology of the then St. Paul Bible College. They were merely compiled by him for class-room use.

The American Standard Version of the Bible was the original reference throughout these Studies. It was Dr. Richardson's desire that The New American Standard Version replace the ASV in these studies.

It was Dr. Richardson's prayer that "every student who uses these Studies will always endeavor to permit the Word of God to be the final authority, and that the convictions of this writer will not be adopted unless such adoption comes as the result of a study of the Word of God for himself."

Rev. Richard W. Rutherford, M.C.M., M.Div.
Omaha, Nebraska, 1998
Printed in United States of America

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Notations concerning the test:

Notations concerning the research paper:

Topic: _____

Text(s): _____

Purpose: _____

Motive: _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS
concerning
ECCLESIOLOGY

I. ECCLESIOLOGY IN GENERAL	6
II. THE MEANING OF THE TERM “CHURCH.”	6
III. NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CHURCH.	7
IV. THE RELATION OF THE KINGDOM AND CHURCH TO ISRAEL.	8
V. THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH.	9
VI. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCHES.	12
VII. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH.	17
VIII. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.	22
IX. THE DESTINY OF THE CHURCH.	27

SURVEY OF WORK

This text is compiled so as to cover one unit's work. The study given is not intended to be exhaustive. At best a text like this will serve as a guide to further study of the Bible and other writings on theology.

Ecclesiology is the study of the Church or the Body of Christ. Yet, as Dr. Richardson notes, "Ecclesiology and Eschatology have become very closely related subjects during the last two generations. One cannot hold to certain teachings with regard to the church (ecclesiology) without such teachings vitally effecting his views towards last things (eschatology). An attempt will be made in these studies to understand the various views with regards to both."

I. ECCLESIOLOGY OR THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH IS AN IMPORTANT DOCTRINE AS SEEN IN A GENERAL STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. We are told that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25; Matt. 13:45-46); that the primary purpose of God for this age is the building of the Church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 14:23); that Paul considered it his greatest sin that he had persecuted the Church (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13); and that this apostle suffered many things for the Church (Col. 1:24).

II. THE MEANING OF THE TERM “CHURCH.”

A. Old Testament Usage.

1. The word “church” is not found in the Old Testament. The word that has most nearly the same meaning is the word “assembly,” found in Lev. 4:13; *“And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly . . .”*

2. The Hebrew word for assembly means to call or to assemble, and is used not only for the act of calling itself, but also for the assembly of called ones. In this sense, Israel is called a church, an assembly, because called out from among the other nations to be a holy people. In spite of the similarity of meaning of the “assembly” of the Old Testament to the ekklesia of the New Testament, we cannot rightly call Israel the church.

B. New Testament Usage.

1. The word “church” in the New Testament is used in two senses: in a universal sense, and in a local sense. Our study uses the term primarily in its universal sense.

2. Two Greek words in the New Testament give us the meaning of the “church.”

a. ekklesia. According to Thiessen this term means simply, “a body of called out people, as in an assembly of citizens in a self-governing state.” The word is found 114 times in the Greek New Testament.

b. kuriakon. This word, from which we derive our English word “church” means “belonging to the Lord.” This word is found only twice in the Greek New Testament. - 1 Cor. 11:20 and Rev. 1:10. In the former we have the “supper of the Lord” and in the latter, “the day of the Lord.”

C. Definition.

1. Observing the usages above we come to the following definition. The church therefore is a group of people called out from the world and belonging to the Lord, However, Paul tells us that all believers have been baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), and that believers are the “born again” ones, or the ones begotten by the Spirit(1 Pet. 1:22-2~), we might come to more adequate definition of the church.

2. The church, consists of all who have been called out from the world, have been born of the Spirit of God and have by that same Spirit been baptized into the body of Christ, thus belonging to Him and subject to His dominion and authority.

III. NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CHURCH. The following list of names and descriptions is given by C. Raymond Ludwigson, Prophecy, p. 52:

- A. **“My church.” Matt. 16:18.**
- B. **A spiritual house. 1 Pet 2:5.**
- C. **A holy priesthood. 1 Pet 2:5.**
- D. **The temple of God; a holy temple; 1 Cor. 3:17; Eph.2:21.**
- E. **The Body of Christ. 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:24.**
- F. **The bride of Christ. Eph. 5:27, 31, 32.**
- G. **The fulness of Christ. Eph. 1:23.**
- H. **A glorious church. Eph. 5:27.**
- I. **The church of The living God. 1 Tim. 3:15.**
- J. **The pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Tim. 3:15.**
- K. **The church of the firstborn. Hebrew 12:23.**
- L. **The Church of God. 1 Cor. 10:32; 15:9; Gal. 1:13.**
- M. **Churches of the saints. 1 Cor. 14:33.**
- N. **The habitation of God. Eph. 2:22.**

IV. THE RELATION OF THE KINGDOM AND CHURCH TO ISRAEL.

A. **The Kingdom.** The redemptive activity and rule of God among men. It is the realm in which men experience the blessings of This rule. (Col. 1:13).

B. **The Church.** - See Matt. 16:18,19

1. The Lord purposed to bring into being a new people, called the Church.
The church would take the place of the old Israel who rejected both his claim to Messiahship and His offer of the Kingdom. Jesus promised Peter on this occasion to give him the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

2. What were the keys?

a. See Luke 11:52 - The scribes had taken away the key of knowledge. The key of knowledge which would open the door into the kingdom of God had been entrusted to the Jewish leaders. The key was the correct understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures as they pertained to Christ and the Kingdom. Such understanding would have led to their acceptance of both the Messiah and His kingdom. See also Romans 3:2 (oracles).

b. See Matt 21:33-43.

(1) God had entrusted his vineyard to Israel. They 'cast out everyone, even his son. See verse 43, "*Therefore I tell you the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*"

(2) This "nation" is to be the church. See I Peter 2:9 - "*a holy nation.*"

C. **Relation of the Kingdom to the Church.**

1. The Kingdom is the rule and realm.

a. The church is the fellowship of disciples of Jesus who have received the life of the Kingdom and are dedicated to the task of preaching this gospel of the Kingdom.

b. This redemptive activity of God which was first through Israel is now working in the world through the church of Jesus Christ.

2. The church is the fellowship of believers who have received the life of the Kingdom.

- a. They in turn preach the gospel - the good tidings of the kingdom.
- b. Those who receive the good tidings of the kingdom are loosed from their sins - Those who reject go on being bound - bringing true the saying of Jesus in Matt 16:19-20.
- c. The church is not the kingdom of God although they are in the kingdom.
- d. The church is a priesthood (Rev. 5:9,10); a priesthood today - a kingdom tomorrow when they reign with Christ.
- e. God's kingdom creates the church and works in the world through the church.
- f. The kingdom of God which in the Old Testament dispensation was manifested to Israel is now working in the world through the Church.
- g. There is but one people of God - those in the kingdom. The people of God in the Old Testament belonged to the kingdom but we do not refer to them being in the church. The church began on the day of Pentecost as seen under "The Founding of the Church".

V. THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH.

A. **There is much confusion today concerning the founding of the church.**

1. Many hold to the idea that the Church is simply "spiritual Israel" thus having its origin in the Old Testament.
2. While there is a connection between the saved of all ages (John 10:16; Rom. 11:16, 24), Christianity is a new wine poured into new wine-skins (Matt. 9:17).
3. Even though the Roman Catholic Church has attempted to continue the Levitical system of the Old Testament in their observance of the mass and their holding to the sacramentarian view of the ordinances, the Church of Jesus Christ holds no place for such.

B. **We note first therefore the time of the founding of the church.**

1. Time of the Founding of the Church.
 - a. After Jesus heard Peter's confession of faith (Matt. 16:16), He said, "*Upon this rock I will build my church.*" (Matt. 16:18).

b. Hence, the Church of Jesus Christ was evidently future when he was upon earth. There is nothing to indicate that the church was founded during his earthly ministry, thus making its beginning still future at the ascension.

2. We posit here that the Church was founded on the day of Pentecost.

This seems to be clear from a number of things.

a. John the Baptist prophesied that they (the disciples and others) would be baptized by the Holy Ghost (and with fire in two records) Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

b. Jesus repeated the prophecy just before His ascension (Acts 1:4-5) and added that it would take place “*not many days hence.*”

c. Peter implies such a baptism took place on the day of Pentecost (Acts 11:15-17).

d. Paul states quite definitely that by “*One Spirit were all baptized into one body . . .*” (1 Cor. 12:13). When he mentions the body he evidently is referring to the church.

e. That he means the “church” is seen from the fact that he links the “body” with the “church” in the same chapter (1 Cor. 12:28, 29). Furthermore, Paul states in Eph. 1:22, 23, that Christ has been made “*head over all things to the church, which is his body . . .*”

f. Thus we conclude that if the Baptism of the Spirit occurred on the day of Pentecost it followed that the Church was founded on the same day.

g. NOTE: We do not agree with ultra-dispensationalists who hold that there was a “church” for the period of the Acts which is not the church today. They hold that the present Christian Church began when the book of Acts closed (Acts 28:23-31).

3. The Foundation of the Church.

a. The Problem.

(1) The Roman Catholic Church, on the basis of Matt. 16:18, teaches that Peter is the “rock” on which the Church is built.

(2) The footnote to this verse in the Douay Version says: “So that by the plain course of the words, Peter is declared to be the rock, upon which the Church was to be built: Christ himself being both the principal foundation and founder of the same.”

(3) Contrary to common belief, this comment regards Christ as “the principal foundation;” but though this is admitted theoretically, practically the emphasis is placed on Peter as the foundation.

(4) But this is improbable. We must not let the convenience of religious controversy determine our interpretation, but neither must we ignore the consensus of Biblical writers on this subject.

b. *“Upon this rock will I build my church.”* THE ROCK IS CHRIST.

(1) In the first place, note that we have here the word petra, not petros. The former Greek word occurs sixteen times in the New Testament; eleven times it means a ledge of rock, and five times it is used metaphorically and refers to Christ (Matt 16:18, Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 10:4; 1 Pet. 2:8).

(2) Could Matt. 16:18 be an exception? Thus Jesus said, *“Thou art Peter (petros-literally, 'a little rock') and upon this rock (petra) I will build my church.”*

(3) In 1 Cor. 10:4 the “rock” (petra) is said to be Christ.

(4) Note that Peter himself used that term of Christ (1 Pet 2:8 comp. vv. 4-8).

c. Objection to this view.

(1) To the objection that this view makes Jesus speak of Himself in the third person in Matt.16:18 we reply, that He clearly does this in John 2:19, where He speaks of Himself as a temple. Those who heard Him say this, either did not understand His meaning or did not want to understand it, for they misquoted Him before Caiaphas (Matt. 26:61).

(2) THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM.

(a) Nor does the granting of the “keys” to Peter present any difficulty. We must observe that Christ gave him the “keys of the kingdom of Heaven,” not of the Church (Matt. 16:19).

(b) Peter did open the door to the Jews and proselytes on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius later on (Acts 10). These two times in which Peter took the initiative would seem to fulfill the conditions of this promise.

(3) BINDING AND LOOSING.

(a) As for the authority to bind and loose (Matt. 16:19), it should be noted that Jesus later gave the same authority to all the disciples (John 20:22,23, a stronger statement than that in Matt. 16).

(b) It is clear that Jesus merely meant the authority to declare people saved and forgiven on the basis of the fulfilled conditions to these blessings, that is, whenever an individual had fulfilled them.

d. Founding of churches.

(1) It is needless to say that the foundation of the universal Church should also be the foundation of the local Church. It is sadly true, however, that some local churches have been built upon a man, and many upon denominational traditions.

(2) Faith in Christ on the part of the individual is not always made the condition to membership, though that would be required if Christ were recognized as the foundation of that Church. His work of vicarious suffering on the Cross, His word, and His Spirit must be the basis on which the local church is built, if it is to be Scripturally founded.

VI. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCHES.

A. **The fact of Organization.**

1. There have been individuals and groups of believers who have taught that the Scriptures give no warrant for our present-day organized churches. It is held that believers should get together, observe the Lord's Supper, study God's Word, and cooperate in Christian service without anything resembling a formal organization.

2. But that this is an extreme view of the matter is clear. There are indications that very early in Jerusalem the Church must have had at least a loose kind of organization, and there is conclusive evidence that soon thereafter local churches were definitely organized.

B. **Organization of the Church in Jerusalem.**

1. That there must have been a simple organization even in the Church of Jerusalem is evident from a number of things.

a. The believers adhered to a definite doctrinal standard (Acts 2:42, cf. Eph.2:20).

b. They met for spiritual fellowship (ibid).

c. They united in prayer (Acts 2:42; Matt. 18:19-20).

d. They practiced baptism (Acts 2:41).

e. They observed the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42, 46).

- f. They kept account of the membership (Acts 2:14, 41; 4:4).
 - g. They met for public worship (Acts 2:46).
 - h. They provided material help for the needy of their number (Acts 2:44-45).
 - i. The Apostles were the ministers in this Church, but they soon added the seven men of Acts 6:1-7 to take care of the ministrations to the poor.
 - j. On the day of Pentecost they were assembled in “*the upper room*” (Acts 1:13; 2:1), wherever that may have been; but more usually they seem to have met in some home of a Christian (Acts 2:46); though for some service apparently they still visited the temple (Acts 2:46; 3:1).
2. All these factors indicate the beginnings of organization in the Jerusalem Church.

C. Organization of Local Groups into Churches. There are besides the example of this first church, many other indications that the Scriptures teach the propriety and necessity of organizing local groups of believers into Churches.

1. Paul, when retracing his steps from Derbe on his first journey, “appointed for them elders in every church.” (Acts 14:23).
 - a. The original indicates that this was done by a show of hands and not by apostolic authority.
 - b. He definitely asks Titus to “*appoint elders.*” (Tit. 1:5).
 - c. In the Church at Ephesus there were “*elders*” (Acts 20:17), in the Church at Antioch, “*prophets and teachers*” (Acts 13:1), and in the Church at Philippi, “*bishops and deacons.*” (Phil. 1:1).
2. Secondly, they had stated times of meeting.
 - a. We are informed that the disciples met on the “*first day of the week,*” immediately following Christ's resurrection (John 20:19,26).
 - b. In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul instructs the readers to lay by them in store as the Lord has prospered them on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2). That is, on that day the collection was to be taken.
 - c. On Paul's last journey to Jerusalem he stops at Troas and meets with the disciples there on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
 - d. And in the Revelation John tells us that he was in the Spirit on the “*Lord's Day*” (1:10).

3. They regulated church decorum (1 Cor. 14:34) and exercised church discipline.

a. Jesus had given instructions that in the case of a believer who refused to bow to private admonition, the dispute was to be referred to the church for discipline (Matt. 18:17).

b. Paul requests the Corinthians most definitely to exercise church discipline (1 Cor. 5:13). He gives similar instructions to the Church at Rome (Rom. 16:17).

c. In 3 John 10 we are told that Diotrephes acted high-handedly in church discipline. Here again organization is presupposed; for it is necessary to draw the line in such matters between those who may vote and those who may not.

4. They raised money for the Lord's work.

a. Writing to the Corinthian church from Ephesus, Paul says that he has already given orders to the churches of Galatia, and then gives them instructions to contribute to the collection for the saints (1 Cor. 16:1,2). They are to give systematically (on the first day of the week), proportionately (as each may prosper), and purposefully (for the saints).

b. In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians he urges them to give liberally (2 Cor. 8:7-9; 9:6) and cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7). He commends the Macedonian churches for their great liberality in this connection (2 Cor. 8:1-5) and urges the Corinthian Church to follow their example (2 Cor. 8:6-9:5). In his Epistle to the Romans he tells of the offering which he is taking to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-28).

5. They sent letters of commendation to the other churches.

a. This was done when Apollos left Ephesus and went to Corinth (Acts 18:24-28).

b. It is also implied in Paul's sarcastic question, whether he will have to bring letters of commendation when he returns to Corinth (2 Cor. 3:1).

c. Rom. 16:1,2 is probably a sample of such a letter with regard to Phoebe.

d. Insofar as this practice grew, it must have become necessary to ascertain the mind of the church as to who was worthy of such a letter.

(1) Organization is to be presupposed in such a procedure.

(2) The Council at Jerusalem rendered a decision with reference to the conditions on which Gentiles might be admitted into fellowship (Acts

15:22-29). This, too, presupposes an organization of some sort or other.

D. Officers of the Church.

1. An organization implies officers.

a. Everything was very simple at the beginning, but there were at least three distinct offices in the early churches.

b. Partly this evidence comes to us by way of reference to the officials of churches and partly by way of the teaching concerning the appointment and duties of the officers.

c. If the early practice is to be our guide today, then there are to be in the churches the following officers:

2. Pastor, elder, bishop. These three terms denote one and the same office in the New Testament.

a. In Acts 20:17,28 the “*elders*” of the Church at Ephesus are said to have been made “*bishop*,” over the flock, with the purpose that they should “*feed*” (shepherd) the church of God. Here we have the term for “*elders*,” “*bishops*,” and “*pastors*,” all used of the same men.

b. In 1 Peter 5:1,2 the duties of a “*pastor*” are assigned to the “*elders among you*.” That is, the two were one and the same.

c. Both John (2 John 1-3) and Peter (1 Pet. 5:1) were apostles, and yet they call themselves “*elders*.” (2 John 1). Surely, this did not imply an office inferior to that of pastor or bishop.

d. In Tit. 1:5-9 the terms “*elder*” and “*bishop*” are used interchangeably.

3. Deacons.

a. Vinet says: “The word deacon has received a special meaning; but it was at first general; and it designated without distinction any minister of the Gospel (1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 6:4; Eph. 3:7; 1 Tim. 1:12; Col. 1:23)” (Pastoral Theology, p. 28). This special meaning is found in Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim.3:8-13.

b. It is probable that the seven men chosen to minister to the poor widows of the early church in Acts 6:1-6 are to be regarded as the first “*deacons*”, but this is not certain. It is significant that deacons must have the same high spiritual qualifications as bishops. It seems also to be evident that deacons helped in the spiritual work of the church as well as in the material.

4. Deaconess.

- a. This seems to have been a distinct office in the primitive church.
- b. Phoebe of the Church of Cenchrea is called a “deaconess,” (Rom. 16:1, cf. v.12).
- c. It is possible that 1 Tim. 3:11 also alludes to this office; for there is no indication in the original that v. 11 speaks of the wives of the deacons.
- d. Possibly Phil. 4:3 also may refer to deaconesses.

E. Government of the Church.

1. Since these subjects belong more properly to the province of Pastoral Theology, no exhaustive investigation of any of them is undertaken here. A few words seem however, to be necessary for the purpose of completeness of treatment.

2. Apart from the hierarchical system of the Roman Catholic and the Greek Catholic Churches, there are three basic types of church government today: The Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Congregational.

a. Episcopal. The Episcopal type is the government of the church by bishops, in reality, by three distinct orders of ministers: bishops, priests, and deacons.

b. The Presbyterian. The Presbyterian is the government of the church by presbyters. It usually provides for the following courts: the session, the presbytery, the synod, and the General Assembly. There is but one order in the ministry, namely pastors, ruling elders or elders, and deacons. Both pastors and ruling elders take part in the meetings of the presbytery, synod, and General Assembly.

c. Congregational. The Congregational vests all legislative authority in the local church. District and general organizations are merely advisory in power and instituted simply for the purpose of cooperating in missionary work.

3. CONCLUSION concerning types of Church Government.

a. Pardington says: “While there are suggestions of Episcopal and Presbyterian government (Acts 20:17, 28; 14:23; Titus 1:5), yet there are indications that the Congregational form of government prevailed over the other two.” (Outline Studies in Christian Doctrine, p. 340).

b. The following facts would seem to point in this direction:

(1) Each church elected its own officers and delegates (Acts 1:23, 26; 6:1-6; 15:2, 3).

(2) Each church had the power to carry out its own church discipline. (Matt. 18:17,18; 1 Cor. 5:13)

(3) The Church together with its officers rendered decisions (2 Cor. 8:19).

(4) They sent out missionaries (Acts 13:2-3).

c. There is, however, some ground for interpreting the Jerusalem Council as illustrating the presbyterian type of government.

(1) Lingle says in Presbyterians: Their History and Beliefs, p.16: "If the church at Antioch had been entirely independent it could have settled this question for itself, and with such men as Paul and Barnabas present it was abundantly able to do so. As a matter of fact the Church at Antioch referred this question to a church council at Jerusalem . . . Note well that it was composed of apostles and elders. It must have looked a good deal like a Presbyterian Synod or General Assembly. Note also that this council composed of apostles and elders, after full deliberations, settled the question authoritatively, and that the Church at Antioch and other churches accepted its decisions."

(2) The same writer also refers to 1 Tim. 4:14 as a further proof of this type of government, where Timothy is said to have been ordained by the "presbytery" (*ibid*).

(3) We are not aware of any Scriptures that seem to support the Episcopal type of government, though the Episcopal churches think they can find justification for their type of organization.

VII. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH.

A. We may define an ordinance as an outward rite appointed by Christ to be administered in the Church as a visible sign of the saving truth of the Christian faith.

1. Some have preferred to call the ordinances "Sacraments," the word used by the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England and some Episcopal churches. There is a distinction made between the two terms, however.

a. We think of an ordinance as a rite which derives its sacredness from the authority that ordained it, whereas the word sacrament has the connotation of possessing a sacredness due to something in itself.

b. In order to avoid giving any encouragement to sacramentarianism we prefer the word ordinances. We should bear in mind also that neither the word ordinances nor sacraments is found in the Bible.

2. The New Testament prescribes two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

B. Baptism.

1. Teaching in the Scripture as to its practice. That baptism is an ordinance which is of perpetual obligation in the church is evident from a number of facts.

a. Christ asked to be baptized (Matt 3:13-15) and approved the practice of the ordinance by the disciples (John 4:1-2).

b. Christ commanded his disciples in the Great Commission to teach and baptize all nations (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16).

c. The Apostles and early disciples taught and practiced baptism, (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 13, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:47; 16:15, 33).

2. We might also note here that Paul is not decrying baptism in 1 Cor. 1:12-17, but is merely expressing his satisfaction in not having baptized more of the Corinthians, since they would probably have taken that fact as a further ground for a Pauline faction in the church.

3. The Meaning of baptism.

a. Baptism is a symbol or sign of the believer's identification with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21). A symbol is a visible sign of something that has taken place which is invisible. By identification we mean the act or state of being in the same relationship with a person as the person himself.

b. The breastplate of the High Priest (see Ex. 28:15-30) serves to illustrate the matter of identification. Placed on the breast-plate were twelve stones on which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Ex. 28:21). As the High Priest performed his service the twelve tribes, or all Israel, were identified with him. What the High Priest did, the children of Israel were doing by their identification with him.

c. Likewise baptism signifies that the believer has already been identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. Because he has been so identified with Christ, the believer, in water baptism, testifies to these truths by following the command to be baptized. We remember, however, that water baptism does not affect or bring the identification into reality, it presupposes it.

4. The Recipients of baptism.

a. Only those who have believed that they are crucified, buried, and risen with Christ should ask for baptism. After Peter had explained Christ's death, burial and resurrection and ascension into glory, the people asked what they should do, "*Repent and be baptized,*" was his reply (Acts 2:37-38). Their repentance would lead to the remission of sin and the incoming of the Holy Spirit, thus they became fit candidates for baptism.

b. That we have just said also indicates that baptism should follow salvation, not precede it. We bury only the dead, and only those who have been buried can arise to newness of life. Commenting on Col. 2:11-12 Ironside says: "Here it is clearly taken for granted that all who are rightly subjects of baptism have been raised with Christ 'through the inwrought faith of God' as some would translate it. Not that this is true of all the baptized, but it is God's order -- not man's confusion that is in view. According to the divine pattern the baptized are a company of people who are actually circumcised with the circumcision made without hands -- that is, have seen the end of the flesh (as before God) in the cross, and now stand on resurrection ground." (Baptism: What Saith the Scripture? p.25). Again, he says: "The divine order is ever that of Acts 18 above mentioned, 'hearing, believed and were baptized'" (op.cit., p. 33). See Acts 18:8.

c. The Scriptures also indicate that instruction (Matt. 28:19), repentance (Acts 2:38), and faith (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 18:8; Gal 3:26,27) should precede baptism.

5. When should a believer be baptized?

a. The Scriptures do not teach that there need be any extended time lapse between the time one believes that he is identified with Christ in the death and resurrection of Christ and the time he is baptized.

b. New believers should be instructed to "*observe all things which I have commanded you,*" (Matt 28:20), and baptism was included in those commands.

c. Time may be required for instruction to the new believer but we are not to mistake this with the false conception that Christian growth is necessary before baptism can be administered. If baptism finds its meaning in identification then baptism may be administered any time after the recipient affirms acceptance of that truth.

C. The Lord's Supper.

1. Purpose of the Lord's Supper.

a. We are expressly told that the Lord's Supper symbolizes our Lord's death: "*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death, till he come.*" (1 Cor. 11:26).

b. In other words, in the observance of the Lord's supper the Church reminds itself and the world of the fact that Christ died. Since the mere fact that He died would have little meaning, it is certain that the proclamation also includes a setting forth of the significance of His death.

c. The ordinance is, therefore, intended to keep alive in the Christian the thought of Christ's vicarious sacrifice, and to impress the world with the need of such a sacrifice for sin.

2. Conditions to participating in the Lord's Supper.

a. All who have been regenerated by the Spirit are eligible to participate in the Lord's Supper but more particularly, those who are members of His body. Those who have been regenerated have also been baptized into the body by the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

b. Paul explained to the Corinthians that the "*cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?*" (1 Cor. 10:16). His concern was that the Corinthians should realize that they were in the body of Christ and that this was sufficient ground for their participating in the Lord's Supper. This is evident in Paul's exhortation that each participant examine himself as to whether or not he is qualified to partake of the supper (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

c. The whole import of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 was that they had lost the meaning of participation in the Lord's Supper by their schismatic way of eating in their separate cliques. Participation in the Lord's Supper was a communion of the whole body and therefore if they were members of the body, they should all eat together and by "*waiting for one another*" (1 Cor. 11:33) when they came to eat they would rightly show that they were members one of another in the body of Christ. The practice was that they who were of Apollos would eat the Lord's Supper by themselves, those who were of Cephas by themselves; those of Paul in another place, and those of Christ in another. Paul is saying, you are all members of the body, the Lord's Supper is a communion of the body, therefore participate as a body, not as a set of individual groups.

3. The Significant Nature of the Lord's Supper.

a. The element of the bread is significant in that Christ likened it to his body (Matt. 26:26). But further than that, it was His body "*which is broken for you,*" (1 Cor. 11:24), which gives the true significance in that eating the bread shows our first relationship to Christ today which is a death relationship. The bread is the death symbol. In baptism the believer is confessing his identification with Christ's death in his initial entrance into the body of Christ, while in eating the bread the believer shows his continued participation in that death. The death of Christ and the death relationship of the believer with Christ is thus "proclaimed" or "shown" and kept salient until the Lord returns.

b. Likewise the element of the wine is significant in that it pictures the communion in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). The wine is the life symbol in that "*the life of the flesh is in the blood.*" The blood of Christ was given so that man might live. It meant death to Christ but life to man. Hence, as long as we drink the cup we show his death while at the same time we show that this blood was the blood of the new covenant (Matt. 26:28) thus giving man the life of God and all of its enjoyment.

4. Conclusion.

a. In conclusion may we say that the Lord's Supper is a memorial service, a time of remembrance, as Jesus said, "*this do in remembrance of me.*" (Luke 22:19).

b. It is a time of fellowship for believers as seen in 1 Cor. 10:16, Luke 22:19, Matt 26:26-28.

c. The Communion Service should be a time for participation, a participation of believers one with another sharing with Christ his death and his life.

d. Finally, the Lord's Table should be a time for hope. Jesus said that he would not drink with them again until he could drink anew in the kingdom (Matt. 26:29, while Paul said, "*As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death, till He come.*" (1 Cor. 11:26). Thus we are to keep alive His vicarious sacrifice by eating periodically at the Lord's Table "*until He come!*"

VIII. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

A. To Glorify God.

1. So fundamental is this duty that if faithfully performed there will also be the carrying out of the other purposes of the Church. We glorify God by worshipping Him (John 4:23-24; Phil. 3:3; Rev. 22:9).

2. Crannell defines worship thus: "Honor, reverence, homage, in thought, feeling, or act, paid to men, angels, or other spiritual beings, and figuratively to other entities, ideas, powers, or qualities, but specifically and supremely to Deity" (I.S.B.E. s.v. ,Worship).

3. The substance of the thought in the Hebrew and Greek words is to prostrate, render homage, venerate, hold in awe, serve religiously.

4. We also glorify Him by prayer and praise, Ps. 50:23: "*Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth me.*"

5. More particularly do we glorify Him by living a godly life.

a. John 15:8: "*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.*"

b. Tit. 2:10: "*that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*"

c. 1 Peter 2:9: "*that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*"

B. To Edify Itself.

1. Paul tells us that God gave to the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, "*for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him, who is the head, even Christ: from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.*" (Eph. 4:11-16).

2. Clearly, this means the indoctrination of the members of the Church, in order to their standing against the heresies around them.

a. This is a building up in Christ (Col. 2:7). The public church' service is intended to do this (1 Cor. 14:26); but the individuals are also by private devotions and Bible study to build themselves up in the most holy faith (Jude 20).

b. Paul warns against the use of improper materials in erecting God's spiritual temple (I Cor 3:10-15).

c. Perhaps we may summarize the thought of this paragraph thus:

(1) The Church is to indoctrinate its members,

(2) develop the graces of the Christian life in them,

(3) and teach them to cooperate with one another in the service of Christ.

C. To Purify Itself.

1. Christ gave Himself for the Church, "that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:26-27).

2. There is a purging that the Father performs (John 15:2), chiefly through divine chastening (Heb. 12:10; 1 Cor. 11:32).

3. There is a purging that the believer should perform (1 Cor. 11:28-31; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 John 3:3).

4. There is also a purging that the local church is asked to attend to.

a. The early Church practiced church discipline, and the present-day Church is not excused from this duty (Acts 5:11; Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:6-8,13; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; Tit. 3:10,11; 2 John 10).

b. Divisions, heresies, immoralities, etc., are mentioned as causes for discipline. Only of the true church will it be said in the day of Christ's return: "*His wife hath made herself ready.*" (Rev. 19:7) But the local church is to be as close an approximation to the true Church as possible. In this day of laxness and looseness in church life this doctrine needs to be anew emphasized.

D. To Educate its Constituency.

1. We have seen above that God's gift to the Church of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, is for, "the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering." (Eph. 4:11-12)

2. Jesus directed in the Great Commission, not only that men should be made disciples and be baptized, but also that thereafter they should be taught "to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them." (Matt 28:19)

3. There can, therefore, be no doubt as to whether the Church should carry on a program of teaching and training for its own Sunday-school and young people's work. Many local churches have been entirely too slow to see the need for such a training, and as a result their Sunday-schools and young people's societies have not won the young for Christ nor held them for the Church. Surely, in the above instructions are included also the preparation of the Church's ministers, theological professors, and missionaries.

E. To Evangelize the World.

1. The Great Commission directs the Church to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8).

2. The Scriptures do not direct us to "convert" the world, but to "evangelize" it.

a. By this is meant that the Church is debtor to the whole world, that is, that the Church is under obligation to give the whole world an opportunity to hear the Gospel and to accept Christ.

b. We know that not all the world will accept Christ; but the Church is duty bound to give the whole world an opportunity to know about Him and to accept His salvation.

c. God is today calling out from among the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14ff.), and He does it through the Church and by His Spirit. This is to go on until "the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in" (Rom. 11:25). No one knows when that will be; but that is the definite objective of Christ in which the Church is to participate.

3. Evangelization begins in a study of the needs (John 4:28-38; cf. Matt. 9:36-38), and so every Church should study missions.

a. It finds expression in:

(1) missionary intercession (Matt. 9:38),

(2) missionary contributions (Phil 4:15-18),

(3) the sending of missionaries (Rom. 10:15),
(4) and in going forth to the mission fields (Mark 16:15; Acts 13:1-U).

b. Heber rightly claims: "Can we, whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high, Can we to men benighted the lamp of life deny? Salvation! O Salvation! The joyful sound proclaim, till each remotest nation has learned Messiah's Name."

F. To Act as a Restraining and Enlightening Force in the World.

1. Jesus said, the believers are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." (Matt. 5:13-16)

a. By their influence and testimony they hold back the development of lawlessness (cf. 2 Thess. 2:6,7).

b. God holds back judgment because of the presence of the godly among the wicked (Gen. 18:22-23), and when the number of the righteous is small and the time for judgment has come, He takes the righteous out of the midst of the ungodly before He sends the judgments (Gen 19:12-25).

c. By their testimony they are to make known God's requirement of man and the need of repentance and regeneration. To this end God has made His people the custodians of His truth (2 Cor. 5:19; Gal 2:7; 1 Tim. 1:11).

2. With them men are always to find the truth concerning God and spiritual things, should they have a desire to know these things.

a. But more than that, the Church is to hold forth the word of life to the world (Phil 2:16) and to contend for the truth (Jude 3).

b. There are few worldly communities that realize the true worth of the people of God in their midst. It has, however, often been said that not many of the ungodly would want to live in a world where there are no churches and no Christians.

3. This corroborates the opinions of the worth and purpose of the Church in the earth today.

G. To Promote all that is Good.

1. While the believer is to separate from all worldly alliances (2 Cor. 6:14-18), he is yet to support all causes that seek to promote the social, economic, political, and educational welfare of the community. Paul says: *“So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.”* (Gal. 6:10). Here we note that we have a primary duty toward fellow-believers, but that we also have a duty toward the rest of the world.

2. In this day of social service it is necessary to be clear as to the place of this ministry toward the world.

a. Jesus’ practice is the best example to follow.

(1) He always subordinated physical and other material help to the spiritual.

(2) He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, though His principal mission was never lost sight of (Acts 10:38-43).

b. We should devote ourselves to social service on the same principle on which a man picks up sharp nails that he finds in the street on the way to his work.

(1) It is one thing for him to devote his entire time to ridding the street of nails, and another to remove such nails as he can without interfering with his main task.

(2) That is, his work of reformation must be definitely subordinated to his work of evangelization.

3. So also in the case of philanthropy.

(1) The Christian should make all his benevolences bear testimony to Christ.

(2) Jesus may have fed the five thousand as a humanitarian act; but He certainly did it primarily as a testimony to His own power and Deity. Clearly, He went to dinners and suppers in order to testify to the truth. It appears that He healed the man born blind in order to win his soul (John 9:35-38).

(3) In other words, the Christian must make all his good works testify to Christ.

IX. DESTINY OF THE CHURCH.

A. The church is to be united to Christ in marriage at His Second Coming. (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7)

1. This can only mean that she will be brought into the most intimate relation with Him.

2. The idea of fellowship and of co-ownership are involved in the conception. (Rom. 8:16,17).

B. Furthermore, as the bride of Christ the Church will reign with Him on earth. (1 Cor. 6:2,3; Rev.1:6; 3:21; 20:4, 6; 22:5). Having suffered with Christ in the day of His rejection, the Church will reign with Him in the day of His glorification (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

C. And finally, the Church will be an eternal testimony to God's wisdom and goodness. (Eph 3:10,21). Her very presence with Christ will speak of His grace and power in saving and keeping her in the midst of an evil generation.