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"Called-Out-Ones"

"Ek-klesia"...the Church, or, Assembly

H. C. Willis

"Hid Treasures found in the Greek New Testament"

The word "ekklesia", nearly always translated "church" in the Authorized Version of the Bible, was originally a heathen word, and meant a lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those who possessed the right of citizenship for the transaction of public affairs (Trench, "Greek Synonyms").

When Paul claimed to be a 'Roman', he meant that he possessed this citizenship, and although he was a Jew, and a citizen of Tarsus, he was also a 'Roman citizen' and had the right to take part in any assembly (ekklesia) of Roman citizens, as well as having other privileges. As far as we know, Peter or John had not this citizenship, and the Chief Captain of the Roman soldiers in Jerusalem told Paul that he obtained this citizenship 'with a great sum'. But Paul could reply, "But I was born free." It was a very great privilege to have this citizenship.

When the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek, this word "ekklesia" was used to translate the Hebrew word meaning the 'congregation' of Israel, and so, in this way, prepared the word for use in the things of God; and when the Lord Jesus began to tell His disciples about the Church that He was about to build, He himself chose this word to describe it (Matthew 16:18, 18:18). These are the only places in the Gospels where we find this word, but it appears many times in Acts and over and over again in the Epistles and Revelation.

The first time it is used in the New Testament (Matthew 16:18) is very striking: "On this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Many times have they sought to do so, but they have never succeeded. As we have seen, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself chose this word to describe it; so we should give the more earnest heed to seek to learn the lessons that He would teach us through it.

You will notice that the word 'ek-klesia' is made up of two words: the first is 'ek', which is like 'ex' in our word

'exit', and means 'from, out of, away from.' The second part of the word is 'klesia', which is from the word 'kaleo', meaning, 'I call'. Indeed, one may recognize the root of our English word 'call' in it. So, the whole word means, "called-out-ones", with the emphasis on 'called'. Paul wrote to the assembly at Rome, "ye also are the called of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:6), and he tells them they are "saints by calling".

The one who called out the citizens in a Greek city to the assembly was the herald, 'ho kerux', and this is the very word that the Holy Spirit uses for the one who heralds, or proclaims, or preaches, the Good News, the Gospel. We see this in 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11: "I have been appointed a herald (kerux). The one who preaches the Gospel is truly a Herald of Glad Tidings; sent out by the Lord Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, he calls people unto Christ, who makes them free, calls them out from this world, and makes them citizens of Heaven, and they become part of the Church, or Assembly of God.

But you will recall that in a Greek city, not all had the rights and privileges of the 'ekklesia', the assembly, but only those who were free citizens and had not lost their citizenship; these only formed part of that assembly. And so it is today in the assembly of God. Only those who are citizens of heaven (see Philippians 3:20) belong to this assembly, and these heavenly citizens are free ("Ye are called unto freedom." Galatians 5:13).

But, sad to say, there are today, as in days of old, those who have lost their right to openly be part of that assembly as it is gathered unto Christ the Lord. Sin has come in, and like the man in 1 Corinthians 5, some have had to be put away from that assembly. (That is not to say that they cease to be a part of the spiritual church of God but only of the local, visible aspect of it).

How wondrously this word 'ek-klesia' describes the true church of God today: called out by the herald of the gospel, called out from the world, for the one who answers this call is no longer of the world, even as Christ their Lord is not of the world (John 17:16); gathered together unto the One we love, our Lord Jesus Christ; and so we form part of the Assembly, or Church of God.

'Assembly' is a better translation of 'ek-klesia' than is 'congregation,' for congregation has in it the meaning of 'to congregate, or come together, of one's own voluntary will'; whereas, 'ek-klesia' emphasizes the call that brings them together, God's own call through the herald of Jesus Christ our Lord. In Acts 19, we find this word translated three times as 'assembly' in our Authorized Version.

But notice further: there was but one Roman Empire, with the Emperor at its head, and you may see

that Paul's Roman citizenship was recognized without question, regardless of the place in which he claimed it. Whether Philippi or Jerusalem, it made no difference. The one Roman Empire linked together into one every Roman citizen in the whole Roman Empire (Acts 16:27 22:25-28). Even so, there is but one true Church of God, with the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head, and every true believer in the Lord Jesus, everyone who has heard the call of the herald and obeyed, belongs to that Church, or Assembly of God, regardless of place and race and language. They all form one body with Christ the Head. As there was but one Roman Empire, so there is but one Church of God (Matthew 16:18, Ephesian 1:22, 5:23, and other scriptures). And just as the Assembly of Roman citizens in any one city was recognized equally as representative of the whole Roman Empire, the Roman Empire in miniature, perhaps we might say, so the Assembly of true Christians in any one place represents the whole Assembly of God, the world over. And every true

believer in the Lord Jesus in any one place belongs to the Assembly of God in that place, even though he may not realize this nor obey the call that calls him to that assembly.

The Scriptures speaks of "the Church of God which is at Corinth," or "the Church of the Thessalonians." This does not mean there are many Churches of God, independent one of another, but each individual church is representative of the whole. In 1 Corinthians 15:9, Paul tell us, "I persecuted the church of God." He persecuted the church (or, assembly) at Jerusalem; but then he tells us, "I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts 26:10-11). Here we may see that all the true Christians in Jerusalem and those in the strange cities, all together formed "the church of God." It is but one 'ek-klesia', only one Church, and every blood-bought soul throughout the whole world is part of that one church.

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What is popular now will be of very little value at the judgment seat of Christ, and what is little valued now will be richly rewarded then. The tables will be turned exactly. It is a great matter to be in God's way of reckoning here and now. It is the only thing that will come out as true gold hereafter.

The most of Christians seem to settle down into money-making schemes for their own supposed profit as if the chief end of man was to have and enjoy personal comforts.

Donald Ross

Healthy Self-Judgment

James Brown

When God saves a soul, He finds that person in his or her own unique period and station in life. Furthermore, He will only save a soul when that person is humbled and willing to yield to the gospel's claims upon him/her to receive the Word of God as the Holy Spirit has applied it to their lives. If one is converted as a youngster, the tightening and deceptive effect of sin, or Satan's strategies to gain a momentum of success over

the mind, and the world's cold, clammy hand have not yet had enough time to shape a hardened character, or perhaps a cynical, distrusting outlook. People saved in early childhood will generally not struggle with sin to the extent of someone saved much later in life who has experienced the slavery of sin, possibly for decades. As such, these differences can affect how each person deals with the sobering fact that "in my flesh dwells no good thing" (Romans 7:18), whether we're saved or not.

Forgiveness of sins in a believer is twofold. Firstly, there is the need to be washed, that one-time regeneration mentioned in Titus 3:5. This is salvation (Acts 4:12, 1 Corinthians 1:18), being converted (Matthew 18:3) or being born again (John 3:3, 7 and 1 Peter 1:23). This is the starting point for every believer. When we trust Christ, God pardons us once and for all, changing our eternal status from being hell-bound (John 8:21) to heaven-bound (John 14:1-3) and our relationship with God from being at enmity with Him (Romans 8:7, Colossians 1:21) to being at peace with Him (Romans 5:1).

Secondly, after we are saved, there is, as taught by the Lord Jesus in John 13:10 in the washing of the feet of his disciples, a cleansing aspect necessary to maintain fellowship. John remembers this in his epistle 60 years later as he writes about walking in darkness and in light in 1 John 1:6, 7. But he then clarifies the need for cleansing in a believer's walk so that he might remain in the practical experience of light. That is through confession of sin to the Lord in verse 9 as the means of forgiveness and cleansing in order to maintain a believer's walk with God, which is happy communion or fellowship with Him. Sin interrupts that fellowship and must be judged and confessed to the Father in the name of the Son as is proper for all manner of prayers. Note that we need not ask for forgiveness as is commonly taught in Christendom. We are told only to confess the sin(s) and the Lord takes over from there, guaranteeing both forgiveness and cleansing. If only we could leave it there!

Let's consider the operation of the Holy Spirit for a moment as told out in John 16:8. He is in the world to convict of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Certainly, we understand from the words, "in the world", that He is first there to bring guilty sinners to repentance along those lines. But He is also the Person of the Godhead who aids saints in our quest, like David to, "Hide thy word in my heart that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). Of course, this would necessitate a proactive help from the Spirit Who was permanently sealed in us (Ephesians 1:12-14) when we believed on Christ for salvation. But we also must conclude that He convicts believers of those three things listed in John 16:8 to bring us to repentance so that we confess our sin(s). And here is where many of us, including the writer, can sometimes find ourselves trapped. We confess, yet our fellowship with God still does not seem repaired. The

peace we should enjoy once we tell our Heavenly Father all about it seems to be postponed as we continue to rehearse our infractions. Read on.

As a believer, when I sin, there comes a heaviness, a shame, an uneasiness that will stay with me until I confess my sin. The Holy Spirit will not allow me to commit sin with impunity. As a warning, if one can sin willfully without a twinge of conscience appeal, they would have very good reason to question the validity of their profession of faith in Christ. Sin is abhorrent to God and, by His Spirit, He grants us a new lens we never had before the new birth to see more clearly how heinous it really is...in me!

But here's where Satan likes to insert himself, seeking to rob the saint of joy. God saved me later in life, at nearly 40 years of age. Satan has plenty of ammunition to use in terms of reminding me about a mountain of sins, many of them quite embarrassing and repulsive to reconsider, some committed before I was saved, others afterward. If I were to dwell on them too long, I may unwittingly fail to enjoy the benevolent peace and protection given by the Holy Spirit as my Intercessor (Romans 8:26) and the Lord Jesus Christ as my Advocate (1 John 2:1-2) and fall into Satan's miserable arena. On my own, I am no match for the accuser of the brethren. Speaking from experience, he chews me up on one side and down the other. Perhaps the reader knows something of this self-destructive experience. Instead of the healthy self-judgment God expects me to engage in before partaking of the emblems each week (1 Corinthians 11:27-32), I begin to rehash not only what sin had just recently plagued me, but now I'm responding to Satan's ability to interfere with my mind. Instead of showing me all the kingdoms of the world in an instant, he shows me all the evil I've ever done in my life. It crushes me, and he knows it. In this frame of mind, I'm swimming in a cesspool of a despairing, morbid guilty conscience whereby Satan has me checkmated indefinitely. I can't see anything but the enormity of my sin. Should you ever find yourself in such a situation, rest assured, the Holy Spirit does not add affliction or torment with His conviction of sin in our minds. Such an oppressive thought pattern comes strictly from Satan. And if he has taken such a concentrated aim at you, he very likely believes that you need to be neutralized, since presently, he may see you as a real asset in the kingdom of God and His people, which is contrary to all that Satan desires.

So, is there a solution? Yes. And this might seem harsh, since the last thing we want when we're down as low as what I've described is to hear someone tell us to knock off the self-pity and man up. First of all, remember, King David fell into such states of mind. His sins were not only more than the hairs of his head but were also so heavy that he couldn't look up (Psalm 40:12). Paul understood fightings without, but also fears within (2 Corinthians 2:5). Great men and women of faith knew

failures and felt them too. But what they all had in common is that they got up again and resumed flight. They were raised up (Proverbs 24:16) by God. They didn't raise themselves up. Be advised, you are not alone in having experienced a period, even periods of grave depression associated with the abiding sense of indwelling sin. But if old sins that have long since been forgiven by God still rise up to bite you, get into your Bible, even a Nave's Topical Bible if you have one, and find all the verses that will show you the grace, the mercy, the kindness, the compassion, the love and forgiveness that God grants His own. That pestering voice of Satan who wants to take you by the scruff of the neck and rehash your sinful past should quiet down. Overcome Satan's evil with God's goodness. Take heart in the Lord's promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). It's always the Lord who raises us back up when we're emotionally crushed by our overly-critical self-judgment. Count on it and be pulled out of that valley!

It is only by sacrificing the truth and character of God that His Word can be made popular to an ungodly world. When His Christ was here, although His every word and act was perfect, the world hated and at last murdered Him. Do you think that you are any wiser than He was, or that you will succeed in conciliating the world that hated Him?

Donald Ross

Men of God: Isaac

"The Lord Appeared unto Him"

"In Isaac shall thy seed be called"

(Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7; Heb. 11:18)

Alan Davidson

He was promised before he was born. His birth, though long delayed was miraculous. He was Divinely named before his birth as being in the line of an "Everlasting Covenant" (Genesis 17:19). His life was marked by submissive obedience; the place of his sacrifice upon the altar was called, "Jehovah-jireh" (Genesis 22:14). In a figure (type) he was received again from

the dead (Hebrews 11:19), to take a wife of his father's providing.

Isaac lived longer than Abraham or Jacob whose lives stand out prominently in the Genesis record. Of Isaac, much less is revealed and there are years of his pilgrimage about which the Bible is silent. His character was quiet and passive yet he was a vital link in the chain of Divine promise.

Repeatedly God is pleased to be called; "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob". The value of meditations on the story of Isaac is that he is a beautiful portrait of the mind of God pointing forward to the Child born and the Son given. The inspired writers of the Bible are guided to only give us accounts of brief public exploits for God in the lives of men of faith. These men come to know God in their private lives before the public demonstrations of the power of God working with them. Public service is necessary, work for God is good; but all too often godliness and spirituality is buried in the graveyard of our activity. When life is over, what counts before God is Christ-likeness. Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). In this vital lesson, there is much to be learned from the portrait of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit in Isaac, the son of promise.

THE PROMISED SEED

The first book of the Bible is the book of beginnings. Mankind still spends enormous time and finance trying to find the beginning and origin of things. Instead of probing black holes in space or big bangs of theory, all is revealed in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". The origin of the grass of the earth or the tree yielding fruit is repeatedly said to have, "The seed in itself" (Genesis 1:11-12). God made promise of the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15; to the serpent the LORD God said; "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (He) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel". Thus God prophesied the future of mankind, the line of faith down the long corridors of time ultimately fulfilled in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The two lines are developed in the chapters of Genesis; the fruits of God will always be attacked by Satanic forces of evil.

The seed holds the *Secret of Life*. The promise of life to Eve, and to Abraham was as the sand of the seashore and the stars of the sky. The Lord Jesus is the *Source of Life*; "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). Believers, have found in Him the *Substance of Life*; "I give into them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:28). This has been brought about by His *suffering*, death and resurrection; "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand" (Isa. 53:10).

Isaac was the seed promised to Abraham. "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (Genesis 17:19). Isaac was "persecuted" by Ishmael. "As Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit" (Galatians 4:28-29). Abraham was called by God to offer up Isaac on Moriah. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Hebrews 11:17-18). Following Abraham's surrender of the one who was most precious to him, God again repeated His promised relative to the seed, making a covenant of richer blessing and greater multiplication of his seed. "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:17-18).

These promises to Abraham, through Isaac as the promised seed, merit detailed quotation, as the covenant extends to the unlimited blessing of the Gospel. Paul writes, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). As the apostle is inspired to point out, four hundred and thirty years before the law was given, God was giving a beautiful picture of justification by faith in Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

THE TIME APPOINTED

"And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah, as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him" (Genesis 21:1-2). Twenty five years had lapsed between God's promise of a son (Genesis 12:3), and the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:2). In this he is a beautiful type of God's only Son. "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Isaac was born contrary to nature. Sarah, "Was delivered of a child when she was past age ... Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead" (Hebrews 11:11-12). "He considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Romans 4:19). The name "Isaac" means "he will laugh". Sarah laughed with incredulity. Abraham's laughter was of faith. At his birth there was joy in the house. He was circumcised the eighth day. Abraham made a great feast at his weaning.

Before the birth of Isaac celestial beings visited the tent of Abraham with the news; "Sarah thy wife shall have a son" (Genesis 18:10). The question was asked: "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:14). At the birth of John the Baptist, the angel said; "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

When Joseph found Mary to be with child, he sought to put her away privately. The angel of the Lord said, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:19-20). Mary said, "He that is Mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His Name" (Luke 1:49). When the Lord Jesus was born the host of heaven rejoiced saying; "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

As with Isaac, so with the Lord Jesus, Satan attacked the promised seed. "He that was born after the flesh (Ishmael) persecuted him that was born after the Spirit (Isaac)" (Galatians 4:29). Likewise, Herod sought, "The young child to destroy Him" (Matthew 2:13).

"JEHOVAH-JIREH" (Genesis 22:14)

Close fellowship with God involves severe tests. The entire transaction upon Moriah was between the father and the son. Isaac was now a mature young man. God said, "Offer him there for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:2). Unhesitatingly they set out for the place together. "They went both of them together" (Genesis 22:6,8). Why is this statement repeated twice? Why was there no resistance from Isaac? "Where is the Lamb?" (Genesis 22:7). God had said, "For I know him (Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD" (Genesis 18:19). Isaac willingly lay upon the altar. He allowed his limbs to be bound. They would for "slay", is used in the offerings, to plunge the knife into the victim's neck. This submission was not just a natural act of obedience to his father. Abraham literally intended to carry out God's word and for three days he considered Isaac to be as good as dead. On Moriah, father and son were together entering into the will of God. They were getting to know God in one of the clearest figures of Calvary found anywhere in Scripture. This is one of the mountaintops of the Old Testament which reveals Jesus, the Son of God. "Thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest" (Genesis 22:2). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Romans 8:32).

Dear fellow believer, let us bow in holy wonder and worship. They left the young men with the ass, the transaction was solely between father and son. For three hours on the cross, no human eyes beheld the agony. Isaac carried the wood. "And He (Jesus) bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where

they crucified Him..." (John 19:17-18). There was no resistance of any kind by the son, "both together", perfect agreement, complete submission, as in the Garden, the Son said; "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Abraham believed God who had already performed a miracle in the birth of Isaac. In order to fulfil His future promise concerning Isaac, Abraham believed in death and resurrection. "Accounting that God was able to raise him (Isaac) up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:19). "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh". The word "Jireh" means "to see ahead". The Lord Himself said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and He saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56).

"TAKE A WIFE UNTO MY SON ISAAC" (Genesis 24:4)

In the Bible record there is no reference to any deeds of Isaac, between Genesis chapter 22 – the sacrifice of Isaac upon the mountain – and his reappearance to meet his bride (Genesis 24:62). "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her" (Genesis 24:67). In Genesis chapter 22, Isaac is seen in obedience to his father; as a result he learned submission to God's will. In Genesis chapter 24, we read how Isaac took a wife of his father's providing.

In this chapter we again see the continuation in type of the Lord Jesus Christ. In His first coming into the world we read; "Thus said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:9). As the Lord spoke of returning to the Father, He said; "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). Like Rebekah, we journey through the wilderness, laden with the riches of Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, looking for the Savior, Whom having not seen we love. His desire and our longing is to be with Him in glory, as the wife of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

"O! the blessed joy of meeting
All the desert past!
O! the wondrous words of greeting
He shall speak at last!
He and I together entering
Those bright courts above;
He and I together sharing
All the Father's love."

(Trans. – E. Frances Bevan (1827-1909))

The whole of the infinite resources of the eternal God are at our disposal and for us so that instead of being weak and easily swayed by the things around us, we ought to move and sway everything for God.

Donald Ross

Denominationalism

Robert Surgenor

A little church history is helpful to our understanding of the present state of the professing church in our day. Notice first the various denominations that exist with a brief description of their beginning and practices.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Denominationalism began when in AD 107, Ignatius, a convert of the apostle John, told the saints to look upon their bishop as the Lord Himself. Clerisy had already begun to form in God's assemblies! With the apostles gone, practices began to deteriorate rapidly. Soon the word "Christian" was applied to all who made a profession of Christianity, and the need of personal conversion became less and less important.

Toward the end of the Second Century the baptism of infants was condoned and soon the false doctrine of baptismal regeneration was embraced. Multitudes were introduced into the assemblies that were never born again. The Church, on the whole, lost its identity as a living organism became a visible organization with a hierarchical government. Clergy and laity became normal. Next, there was the development of the episcopal office, going beyond the limits of the local company.

The truth of the autonomy of the local assembly began to fade away as "Metropolitan Bishops" came on the scene, ruling over extensive territories. It was in the 2nd Century that a "Bishop" became distinct from an elder. He assumed authority over churches in a district with assistance of presbyters, appointed by him over each church. In various countries, churches were divided into ecclesiastical provinces called "dioceses." Rural churches came under the supervision of "City Bishops." Over them were "District Bishops" for subdivisions of provinces. The simple scriptural order of assemblies functioning independently under the guidance of the Holy Spirit gave way to an ecclesiastical organization, calling itself "The Church."

Origen (born in Alexandria in 185), a spiritual man of great insight, was greatly concerned with the departure and gave witness to the spiritual nature of the Church. Because of his spiritual conviction, he was excommunicated by Demetrius, "Bishop of Alexandria," and thus the truth was stilled and error flourished. During this period many of God's assemblies remained aloof from the departure, thus finding themselves gradually disengaged from the "Catholic Group" whose episcopal government they refused to recognize.

As the hierarchy developed, pagan beliefs and practices were gradually incorporated into the Catholic system. The Mass was substituted for the Lord's supper, the worship of Mary was introduced along with the celebration of Lent, Easter, and Christmas. The veneration of relics, the rosary, the sign of the cross, the doctrine of

purgatory, prayers for the dead and the introduction of images were but a few of the unscriptural things introduced into "The Church."

After the introduction of "Metropolitan Bishops" we find five distinct "Patriarchs" introduced. Situated in Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople, these men ruled over all the "churches" in their district. John of Constantinople aspired to be chief among the five "Bishops." He was rebuked by Gregory I, the "Bishop of Rome," who stated that the title of "Universal Bishop" was a "profane title." Three years after his death, emperor Phocas conferred this title on Gregory's successor, Boniface, thus bringing the papacy into existence in A. D. 606. The "Bishop of Rome" now assumed all authority over the Church on earth. "Catholic" means "universal" and this group ruling from Rome considered herself the spiritual universal ruler of the world, hence the name "Roman Catholic."

All five Bishops embraced the Nicene creed and were sacramental and ritualistic, claiming clerical ordination inherited by succession from the apostles. However, the Eastern Church was Greek and the Western Latin in language and in thought. Paganism became so prominent in Rome that the churches of the East became antagonistic to the West. Finally, the pope excommunicated Photius, "patriarch of Constantinople" and Photius excommunicated the pope. The pope remained head of the "Western Church." The four "patriarchs" of the Eastern Church remained "orthodox," each one ruling his own diocese. With the growth of the Eastern Church, a new "patriarch" was added for Moscow. Consequently we have the "Greek" and "Russian Orthodox" churches today.

It is also very interesting to note that when Babylon (the cradle of idolatry) fell, the pagan high priests were given asylum in Pergamos. For this favor, they conferred upon the king the title, "Pontifex Maximus," which in Latin means, "Chief bridge builder," one who spans the gap between mortals and Satan. This title had previously been Belshazzar's and his predecessors. When Seleucid's King Attalus III died in B. C. 133, by his request the kingdom went to the Roman Republic, and with it the title "Pontifex Maximus." When Constantine left Rome, the bishop added this to his many titles. It can be seen on the Vatican today in large letters, proclaiming that the pope is the true successor of Belshazzar, the high priest of heathendom.

During the middle ages we find the rise of the Waldensians, Paulicians, Bagomills, and Albigenes. In A. D. 1220, monk Dominic triggered a "holy inquisition" against these people with barbaric deeds beyond description. Millions were tortured to death for their refusal to bow to the dictates of the Roman Catholic Church.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The movements of Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic priest, commenced as a result of the ministry of John Wyclif, lecturer at Oxford University. Wyclif denounced

Rome's corruption and also translated the Latin Bible into common language. Luther was converted by reading the Holy Scriptures. From the "Reformation" that he commenced on October 31, 1517, Lutheranism was recognized as a state religion in 1529. Luther made publicly known that he did not want his followers to identify themselves with his name. Contrary to his wish, his followers did that very thing.

THE REFORMED AND PRESBYTERIAN

Zwingli (1484–1531) and a French theologian named John Calvin (1509–1564), observed that Luther was not ready to go far enough in rejecting Catholic doctrines. They repudiated baptismal regeneration and the presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and cup of the Lord's supper. Consequently, in Switzerland, this group was named "Reformed" because of their antagonism to Roman Catholic doctrines. In France, they took the name of "**Huguenots**," while those in Scotland were called Presbyterians because of the scriptural form of government they adopted, namely, a government by elders. Even though in this three-named group, there was no visible hierarchal, or episcopal system seen, yet clergy and laity remained. There was also a synod (general council) appealed to for questions pertaining to church discipline or doctrine. Thus, the autonomy of the local assembly was, in reality, denied. The "**Anglican Church**" materialized as a mixture of the Lutheran and Presbyterian systems, retaining more of the Catholic doctrines. It taught that one is grafted into the body of Christ through the rite of baptism.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

In reality, this movement could be well termed "the Catholic Church in England." Known also as "The Episcopal Church in England," it was established during the reformation. King Henry the 8th had people burned for their adherence to the pope. His successor, Edward the 8th, embraced the evangelical faith; the Anglican prayer book was introduced; Queen Elizabeth took the throne and the protestant position was secured in England. Thus the pope was repudiated and that of the sovereign asserted. This religious group is named after its origin – England. The "**Episcopal Church**" the U. S. A. is an offspring of the "Church of England."

THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Known simply as "brethren," many independent Christian churches repudiated infant baptism, also union of Church and state. In the Netherlands, Menno Simon sought to build up these churches. Consequently they took Menno's name upon them, calling themselves "Mennonites." In 1632 they signed a "Confession of Faith" in Dortrecht, Holland. As could be expected, a Catholic monastic attitude characterized them, for their founder, Menno, prior to his conversion, had been a Roman Catholic priest!

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Some of Menno's followers moved to England and in 1605, John Smyth formed the first British "Baptist Church." The unscriptural practice of clergy and laity was maintained. Ordained and salaried pastors ruled over congregations with the title of "Reverend," a title given only to God Himself; "Holy and reverend is His name" (Psalm 111:9).

God's form of government in a local assembly is theocratic, while the Baptist system boasts of a democratic form of government, each member having a vote in matters of discipline and the appointment of officers within the local group. These various "Baptist churches" are grouped according to what "convention" they are linked with. The autonomy of the local assembly and the priesthood of all believers is taught, but due to the humanly engineered system these things are not practiced in their entirety. Vigorously opposing Rome's method of baptizing (sprinkling), this movement correctly insisted on immersion – thus the name "Baptist."

THE QUAKERS

In the 17th Century, George Fox taught intimate personal communion with Christ. The sole guiding principle was what they termed "inner light," or, "inner voice." Conversion never entered into the picture. Rules and practices that ignored Scripture prevailed. Children were brought into the "Society of Friends" by natural birth. Baptism and the Lord's supper were not practiced and the gospel was not preached. The name "Quaker" was applied in derision in 1650 by a judge to Fox, who bade the justice (the judge) to tremble at the Word of the Lord.

THE PURITANS

In an effort to purify the Church of England, in 1662, this group produced what is known as "The Act of Uniformity," requiring all ministers to declare before their congregation their acceptance of the "Book of Common Prayer." Ultimately, this movement merged with the "Independents" (Congregationalists). Infant baptism was retained. From the "**Congregationalists**" there emerged another group called the "**Unitarians**."

THE METHODIST CHURCH

This movement was the result of a religious club formed at Oxford University in 1729. John Wesley, an Anglican clergyman, was converted through the Moravians presenting to him the gospel. Later in life, while in London listening to a reading of Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, the truth of justification by faith gripped his soul. Expressing his newly-found beliefs, he was driven out of the Anglican Church and consequently organized groups for prayer and the study of the Scriptures. These groups were known as "Societies." Wesley was known for having a distinct method for everything he did. He was extremely methodical, hence the name "Methodists."

Like all man-engineered movements, the societies soon degenerated into a tightly knit organization with an autocratic rule.

THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Mainly autonomous, this movement commenced in the U. S. A. This movement is composed of several associations, the largest group of all being termed, "**The Assemblies of God**." Emotionalism characterizes the movement. Conversion for many is nothing more than an emotional, exciting experience, such as being "knocked down," supposedly by the Spirit, or seeing a "vision" or "light." They hold to the continuance of the sign gifts given at Pentecost, hence the name "Pentecostal." An atmosphere of excitement prevails in many of their gatherings, forming a basis for their religious enthusiasm. Thankfully, some groups are subdued and quiet, and there is a true love for the Savior. However, in groups where an atmosphere of excitement prevails that forms a basis for their religious enthusiasm, communion with Christ through feeding quietly on God's Word is virtually nonexistent. Women take the lead in most activities and God's command for women to remain silent in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12) is denied. Doctrines regarding the reception of the Holy Spirit are grossly twisted and the truth of the eternal security of the believer is generally denied. Some groups place undue emphasis on the gifts of tongues, which was introduced into the movement in 1901 by Agnes Ozman in Topeka, Kansas. This sign gift of tongues apparently ceased upon the completion of the Scriptures and the passing of the apostles. The J. W.'s, Mormons, Roman Catholic Jansenists, the Shakers, and certain monks in Tibet still hold to the doctrine of tongues.

THE FINAL APPRAISAL

Thus, represented in all of these man-given names we have:

- (1) **The Roman Catholic Church**, so named because of the location of their headquarters and their insatiable desire for universal rule.
- (2) **The Lutheran Church**, named Lutheran because of their founder's last name.
- (3) **The Reformed and Presbyterian Church** named thus, because of the reforms of their doctrines from that of Rome and because of the particular form of government within the movement.
- (4) **The Church of England**, named after the country of its origin.
- (5) **The Puritans** named this because of their effort to purify the Church of England.
- (6) **The Quakers** given this name because of a jesting judge retaliating to a rebuke from the founder.
- (7) **The Methodist Church** named so because of a quirk in their founder who insisted in having a schedule and method for everything he did.

(8) The Mennonite Church after Menno, its founder's first name.

(9) The Baptist Church called this because of a strongly held doctrine. baptism by immersion.

(10) The Pentecostal Church named so because of its false notion that Pentecostal days can be revived among us.

What a picture of total confusion! What a picture of departure from the truth and dishonor to our Lord! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," is the warning and promise of God (2 Corinthians 6:17). How thankful those should be who have been taught the truth and have come out from the sin and confusion of religious Babylon. How different are the scriptural names given to local assemblies, than the names given by man to denominational groups.

Notice the Biblical names given to a scripturally gathered assembly.

(1) The Church of God (13 times in N. T.)

This denotes its origin. It is of God.

(2) The Churches of Christ. Because it is a place where His Lordship is acknowledged.

(3) The Churches of the saints, because of the status of those within. They are holy ones.

(4) The Churches of Galatia, Judaea, Asia, called this because of their location.

(5) The Churches of the Gentiles. So named because they were mostly composed of Gentiles.

"PLYMOUTH BRETHREN" - 1800s

Today there are gatherings that function solely by the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These gatherings take no denominational names, but simply gather together in the authority of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture is clear that it is the people that are the church, not the building. The church has ears, the church speaks, the church worships. One can hardly picture a building functioning in such a manner, yet people will point to a building and exclaim, "Look at that church." It is not a church, but simply a building. In denominationalism, the farther a religious group is from the truth, usually the greater their emphasis is on their building. This can be seen especially in the Roman Catholic movement. Great emphasis is put on their elaborate and ostentatious buildings. Saint Peter's, in Rome, being the supreme example.

The early church assemblies met in homes. It wasn't until around 240 A. D. that Christians began to gather together in buildings. Today, Christians not associated with denominationalism, usually meet in plain buildings called gospel halls. The reason for the name being that the structure is a hall where the gospel is proclaimed. Through the dark ages, much was lost among Christians relative to the scriptural way of conducting a local assembly. Even the truth of the rapture of the Church was lost and not revived until a few high

ranking Christian men of the day met together. They were feeling uncomfortable about denominationalism, a clerical hierarchy, and other unscriptural practices in their "churches." The most well-known meeting was in Dublin, Ireland in 1827 when John Nelson Darby joined this group. He taught that the rapture of the Church would occur before the tribulation, and that during the tribulation God would turn again to deal specifically with Israel. Until Darby's time, Christians believed that the church was a continuation of Israel, and some other denominations believed that the church replaced Israel.

Large groups that followed Darby's teaching formed also in Bristol, London, and Plymouth England, hence the name Plymouth Brethren. Associated with these groups were William Kelly, J. G. Bellet, C. H. Mackintosh, John Grant, George Muller, Robert Chapman, Henry Craik, and Anthony Groves. Today these groups are divided into several companies, all of which are known as "Exclusive Brethren."

THE "GOSPEL HALL" MOVEMENT - 1859

Apart from this work altogether, another movement of God began in 1859 with a "revival" in Scotland. Out of that famous revival emerged Donald Ross, Donald Monroe, John Smith, and others who saw from the Scriptures the truth of gathering unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:20). They rejected the practice of a clergy and laity, salaried ministers, and many other doctrines held by the so called "churches" of their day. They saw the truth of the priesthood of all believers; the observance of the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day, employing one cup and one loaf of bread; and the need of baptism by immersion, before applying for fellowship in a local assembly. Also taught were the truths of headship, thus the silence of sisters in the gathering and a covering to be worn on their heads. The absence of instrumental music was taught, also a scriptural government of overseers, instead of a one-man ministry as seen in the denominations.

It wasn't long before the clergy became enemies of their converts and sought to destroy their work, but the new movement was of God, and it prospered. In 1872, Donald Monroe and others came to Canada and saw scriptural assemblies planted, the first one being in Park Hill, Ontario. Donald Ross went to Chicago and Kansas City, where through his efforts assemblies were formed. John Gill went to Boston, Massachusetts, and John Smith went to Cleveland, Ohio.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF "CHAPELS"

In 1912, a conference was held in Warminster, Ontario. During that conference a man from Scotland, named Robert McMurtal rose and ministered on "the open table." His belief was that Christians were to gather in assembly capacity on the ground of being in the one body of Christ, rather than gathering solely on the authority of the Word of God. Speakers following McMur-

tal's proclamation, rose and contradicted his teaching, but it was to no avail, for many received what had been taught. Chapels were soon formed, as a result of McMurtal's teaching.

Today (2010) God's assemblies still carry on God's testimony. The "Plymouth Brethren" (exclusive brethren) are totally distinct from the Christians that gather in gospel halls and chapels. There is no going back and forth between them. Since the "chapel movement" was a breaking away from those who gather in gospel halls, the connection is closer than with the "Exclusive brethren." However, assemblies that adhere strictly to the Scriptures hold no connection with the chapel movement, the reason being doctrinal differences.

As the Lord's coming nears, deterioration can be seen in God's assemblies. What was said of the church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22), can be applied to some assemblies. They have slowly drifted from the principles practiced in former days, and the sad thing is, they do not seem to realize it. However, all is not "doom and gloom," for, thank God, there are testimonies worldwide that are still maintaining a faithful testimony for God. The characteristic of the church at Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13) is in them. They have a little strength, that is, their numbers are small, and they have kept His Word. They have treasured it up in their hearts. It is the theme of their thinking, and they treasure it above gold. Also, they have not denied His name. They are loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ and all that He is.

False professors abound everywhere. Christendom is full of them. They are in every denomination, and sad to say, even in some of God's assemblies. However, God also has His blood-bought people everywhere. They are scattered and can be found in many denominations. Some denominations have a higher degree of saved in them than others. This paper has not dealt with cults, such as the Mormons and the J. W's. All cults deny the deity of Christ, and do not contain any Christians. If you are a born again soul, a Christian seeking a scriptural gathering of God's beloved people, functioning as a scriptural assembly (church), then by all means contact us for help.

OUR LORD'S DESIRE

In closing let me quote part of our Lord's high priestly prayer concerning His own. "That they all may **be one**; as thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may **be one** in Us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). It is sad that within the Church of historic Christianity there have been wide divergences of opinion and ritual. Certainly the many denominations seen today do not project the thought of unity. However, there is a unity in one particular sense. Let me explain. When you meet a denominational stranger, he might be a Baptist or a Pentecostal, or some other denomination, and you converse with him, something happens. You soon discover that both of you have some-

thing in common, you have Christ as your Savior. A warmth immediately develops, and in respect to salvation, Christ, and heaven, there is a oneness. Merrill C. Tenney states; "Jesus did not pray for absolute unanimity of mind, nor for uniformity of practice, nor for union of visible organization, but for the underlying unity of spiritual nature and of devotion which would enable His people to bear convincing testimony before the world."

Thank God the day is approaching when all of God's redeemed people will be raptured at the voice of Christ. Then, and not until then, will His people be united as one, in every aspect of the word. Paul relates to this when writing to the Ephesian saints. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). What a glorious morning that shall be! All differences gone! All tears wiped away! At last, at home with the Lord in His own likeness! In view of this, we that are His own can exclaim, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).

Accepted and Secured

Joel Portman 06/25 Tune: "The Glory Shines Before me.."

**Our blessed God and Father
We stand before Thy face;
Redeemed and cleansed completely,
Accepted by Thy grace.
Thy love provided for us,
Salvation through the blood;
That grace that sought and keeps us,
Will bring us home to God.**

**We feast upon our Savior,
His blood's upon the door;
We're satisfied completely,
What could we ask for more?
As pilgrims we are going,
To our eternal home;
We share in His great victory,
O'er sin and o'er the tomb.**

**That glory shines before us,
Its brightness lures us on;
This world that now has known us,
Will be forever gone.
We rest upon His promise,
We know His Word is true;
Says, "I'm away to glory,
I'll come again for you."**