

The Pentecostal Church

by Martin Knapp

A genuine New Testament Church is characterized by its unworldliness, conversion, and obedience to God's will, and is marked by its sanctification, faithfulness, and loyalty to Christ.

Scripture: Psalm 89:18, Psalm 122:6, Isaiah 28:16, Isaiah 61:3, Matthew 16:18, Matthew 18:15, Acts 2:47, Acts 20:28, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 3:15, Ephesians 4:11, Philippians 3:20

Topics: "Church Unity", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Martin Knapp preaches about the true nature of the Church of Christ, emphasizing the importance of being a part of a genuine New Testament church built on the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. He highlights the distinction between a Pentecostal Church, led by the Spirit and faithful to God's Word, and sham churches controlled by unconverted individuals and worldly influences. Knapp urges believers to seek, support, and magnify the true Church, appealing to its members to pray, feed, and love the Church, while maintaining unity, loyalty, and unwavering commitment to Christ's teachings.

Transcript

There are few subjects concerning which there has been more confusion than that of the Church. Satan has taken advantage of this fact, and made the most of it. In order to help dispel the fog which settles down upon the subject, the following truths must be borne in mind:

1. That no body of unconverted persons, no matter by what name called, ever was, or ever can be, the Church of Christ or any part of it.
2. That the fact that a body of such persons may have the names of a few regenerate or sanctified people upon its rolls, does not constitute it a New Testament church, any more than a few sweet apple trees in a thorn thicket would constitute that field a sweet apple orchard.
3. That a body which was once a branch of the Church, but whose ministers and members have backslidden, is not the Church, even though it bears its name, any more than the bed of a river is still a river, when its waters are dried up.
4. That observance of baptism, the Lord's Supper and other forms of public worship, do not in themselves constitute a church, any more than boys playing at war constitute an army.

5. That religious activity and deeds of benevolence, fairs and festivals, mission contributions, etc., fail to constitute a church, for all of these things, and many like things, may be done by people destitute of salvation (I Cor. xiii.)

6. That fine places of worship, and elegant furniture, and eloquent religious orators and artistic music do not constitute a church, for it exists with none of these things, and these things often exist under its name, but totally destitute of its nature.

7. A body of converted and even sanctified persons, if officered and controlled by unconverted men and manipulated in the interest of the world, is not the Church of Christ any more than the State of Ohio would be a Union State, even though many of her sons were loyal, if her offices and government were controlled by traitors. The Jewish Church, betrayed by its leaders, forfeited divine recognition as a Church, though many devout persons were within its fold.

8. A building with a steeple, and pulpit and pipe organ, does not constitute a Christian church, for all of these might be the accompaniments of even unbaptized infidelity and worldliness.

9. That society of "nice people" does not constitute a church. If so, many secular societies would be churches, as they are full of "nice people," as the world measures. The Greek word translated "church" is indicative of its true nature, meaning "the called out." People who have come out from the world and worldly ties and associations, been regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost and accepted God as their Father, Jesus as their Saviour, and have received or are ready to welcome the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier, are the only material out of which Christ's Church can be built. Any body of persons which claims to be a Scriptural church, without meeting this primal condition, is a fraud, and guilty of the spiritual crime of sorcery, the punishment of which is declared in Rev. xxi. 8.

A common dodge of the enemy is to organize a worldly club, or to transform a body of God's people into one, engaging in all sorts of worldly deeds, and then if any individual with spiritual sight protests and warns, upbraid him with being "disloyal to the Church" and if one has love and courage enough to unmask the fraud, to impale him on the sharp spikes of cutting criticism. The lightning bolts of God's truth, which leap from Pentecostal skies of Scripture revelation upon these hypocritical shams, will doubtless be considered "sacrilegious" by the class of sanctimonious Pharisees who accused Christ of blasphemy and of devil possession, because of kindred lightning leaping from Him upon their heads. But modern hypocrites are just as snugly housed behind their mock religions, as were the ancient, and only bolts of lightning will break their influence upon souls they have deceived.

One of Satan's shrewdest tricks is to mask his generals as ministers and his army as churches, and thus by his "sorceries" seek to deceive the whole earth. However, the Scripture marks of Christ's true Church are such that the simplest saint, with open Bible and open eyes, may see the difference between the genuine and the counterfeit. The following are some of the characteristics of a genuine New Testament Church:

It is an unworldly Church. It has renounced the world and all its ways and works, and is free from all complicity in worldly schemes. Its buildings, furniture, singing, ministry, finances, mission work and members conform to God and not to the world. A church controlled by worldly men and a worldly policy, given up to carnivals, concerts and carnality, has ceased to be a church of Christ. If it will not repent and be converted, the true believers in it should transfer their presence and support from the apostate harlot to some living branch of the true Vine. Upon such sham churches and people the Pentecostal declaration,

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity to God?" leaped with death-dealing fury. The following clipping from a secular paper is a sample from multitudes which might be cited illustrating the apostasy of "so called" churches, and the reproach which their treason foists upon the cause of Christ: "A pious fraud. Ladies beat the world in getting up attractive church entertainments. They held one a few nights ago, and advertised as a feature of it a "Swimming Match," between two young ladies. The house was crowded of course. When the "Swimming Match" was reached on the program and the curtain raised two ladies were seen on the stage with a stand between them. On the stand was a wash bowl of water; and on the surface of the water was a lucifer match floating or swimming. The audience was hit in the center of its risibilities, and screamed and roared with laughter." Thus Samson shorn of his locks grinds corn for the Philistines, while some of them laugh, others mock, hell rejoices and angels weep.

It is a converted Church. The Epistles addressed the churches as being "in Christ" and in God the Father, and the members as "sanctified" and "saints," terms that millions of worldlings in the churches today actually despise, and which can no more be applied to their character than gold to rust. That Ananais and Simons crept in can not be doubted, but they were shot off like water from a red-hot stove. The first Pentecostal Church was composed of the one hundred and twenty who gathered at the upper chamber for the express purpose of receiving the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier. They were not disappointed, but received Him, were fully sanctified, and transformed into such enthusiastic, demonstrative, world forsaking, sin-destroying dynamite for God, as would be unwelcome in the proud, aristocratic churches of our day. These, and the multitudes converted under their ministry, constituted the first Pentecostal Church. What a rebuke to apostate preachers who substitute church-joining and rites for regeneration, and pack the so-called church with poor deluded worldlings who have not given up their sins. A practice which leads ministers to omit the call for penitents and the altar of prayer, and substitutes the uplifted hand, the signing of a card, or joining of the church, for the experiences of salvation, in the light of Pentecost, is as black treason as the fall of Lucifer, yet practiced on every side. True churches are composed of genuinely converted members.

Its membership is enrolled in heaven. "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel" (Heb. xii. 22-25). Its records are kept on high, and its attendants are angel hosts and departed saints.

It is a sanctified Church. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 12). Sanctification is the daily attire of Christ's Bride. In regeneration she puts on this robe, in entire sanctification it is cleansed from every stain. Hence the apostle addresses the churches as the sanctified, and at the same time prays that they may be sanctified wholly. All true church members are sanctified in part, and either long for or possess entire sanctification. The howl and the growl which rises from some sources against sanctification prove the crowd from whence they come to be a pack of wolves that fear the fire, instead of Christ's true Church, of which that fire is the very source of light, life, love, victory and power.

It is a faithful Church. The oft-repeated definition that the "Church is a body of faithful men in which the Word of God is preached and sacraments duly administered," is a good one, and between the lines declares in type of vivid lightning that a body of unfaithful men, where the Word is not faithfully preached,

aping as a church, is a sacrilegious humbug.

It is an obedient Church. Christ commanded it to tarry at Jerusalem until entirely sanctified, and though on the very ground where human hyenas were still howling against them and their Leader, yet its members tarried, men, women, and children, until the promised power came, and it became the storm-center of a salvation cyclone which transforms sinners into saints, and sweeps them up to be with Him forever, and whose sin-exposing, fraud-detecting lightnings have been the terror of the Judases, Caiaphases and Ananias of all the ages.

It belongs to God. "That thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. iii. 15). Some people speak of "my church," as if they were the owners; others of "our church," as if they were its possessors. God owns His Church as really as He does His throne in heaven; in fact, it is His throne on earth. By the threefold right of creation, redemption and preservation, it belongs to Him, and His lightning falls upon all who seek to rob Him of His rights.

His subject to Christ. "And He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 22, 23). As the head He plans for the body, and as the body it is directed by His will. Hence, ecclesiastical organizations which defy His will, whether Popery or dead Protestantism, are no part of His true body. She must be loyal to Him. When cliques, and committees, and counsels seek to come between her and Him, she must resist them as Peter and John did the Sanhedrin, loyal Luther the Papal Diet, and as a true bride would the approach of a treacherous seducer. Loyalty to organization or doctrine must not be substituted for loyalty to Christ. He who allows doctrine, or organization and ministers to usurp the headship of Christ in the Church, desecrates the temple of God by idolatry more inexcusable than that of pagan lands, because in the presence of greater light. In God's true Church His headship is recognized and obeyed.

It's officers should be baptized with the Spirit. "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom ye may appoint over this business" (Acts vi. 3). Here we get a hint that the temporalities of the Church should be in the hands of laymen whom God especially qualifies for the work, and that they should be holy men. A holy ministry and officary is God's design for the Church. If men must graduate at West Point to officer an army, how much more must they graduate at the Pentecostal chamber for the more arduous work of officering Christ's Church? As well put traitors at the head of an army, as worldly officials in the Church. God prefers no church in a place, to one manned by holiness-fighting preachers and worldly officials. When you place an unsaved man on your Board because he is shrewd or influential or wealthy, and set aside men and women full of the Spirit, you insult the Holy Ghost, and advertise to all worlds that you think yourself wiser than God. Better a million fold to fast, pray, preach, and plead with God, until He shall convert and fit such men for these sacred offices as He can use, and whose ministrations He can bless. President Finney began a great revival by disbanding a worldly church, converting the disbanded members, and re-organizing. Men who would denounce a builder for putting decayed timber in a material building, will persist in putting crumbling clay in God's temple, where He has clearly indicated that there should be blocks of gold. Such churches prosper! How can they?

It is a Spirit-led Church. When Stephen was made deacon, and also when Paul and Barnabas were "separated" to their work, the mind of the Spirit was learned, and His will was done. Thus counsels and conferences of the Pentecostal Church seek the Spirit's mind, and learn and do His will, while sham

churches are swayed from other sources and by lower motives.

It is a divinely-defended Church. "For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king" (Ps. lxxxix. 18, A. V.).

"Zion stands by hills surrounded, Zion kept by power divine,"

is a sickening burlesque when applied to the dead, worldly ecclesiasticisms, which parade under the name of the Church; but when applied to God's true people, it is full of beauty, comfort and truth. Hid in the pavilion of God's power and providences, the Bride is kept from "strife of tongues," and no one can touch a hair of her head without divine permission, for her good and God's glory.

It is a holy Church. By its conformity to the will of God, its nonconformity to the world, its freedom from compromise measures, its fire-baptized testimonies, its pointed, loving, inspired rebukes, its passion for Jesus, its love for souls, its self-denial and liberality, and by its judgments upon shams and dishonesty it proves its possession not simply of a theoretical belief in holiness, but that it is in full possession of this priceless jewel.

It is a divinely provisioned Church. God provides for all her spiritual needs. Apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers are given for her regeneration, her edifying, her unity, her protection from false doctrines and crafty impostors, her illumination, her edification, her growth and her perfection in love. "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, 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" (Eph. iv. 11-13). The above named classes of ministers are designed to work together unitedly to this end, and the Pentecostal Church recognizes and welcomes all whom God thus commissions. The objection to Pentecostal evangelism and evangelists which is in the air, was not born nor is it fostered in the real Church of Christ, which is too humble to dictate to her divine Head as to the agencies He shall employ, and too grateful for the blessings thus bestowed to harbor such a spirit of censorious criticism.

It is a Hospitable Church. It used "hospitality without murmuring." A great Christian paper says: "One of the most deplorable features is the way in which the laity have ceased to entertain their members; it has a widespread habit of sending deputations to public hotels." Churches which conform to the New Testament model, love the society of their ministers too well to thus banish them from their homes.

It is a united Church. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 28). Baptized into one body by the Spirit of God, there is a divinely imparted unity of faith, of love, and of expectancy of His return and endless reign. Branches of the true Vine, they derive their life and strength from one Center, and unitedly bear fruit for His glory. A clique of divided, laughing, jealous, self-seeking, place-grasping churchlings is no more God's Church than heaven is hell. Such may creep into it, but its heat will soon melt them or make them move out. Barriers of race, and color, and social position have no true place in Christ's Church. Black faces may have hearts whiter than snow, while many a white face has a heart as black as the "outer darkness." High-toned social clubs, claiming to be churches, but throwing stones of criticism and ostracism at saints of God because of caste or color, are among the most stupendous of Satan's frauds which curse the earth today. Respecters and selectors of persons, they are drifting into the merciless whirlpool of divine retribution to certain and fearful doom. What a contrast to the "Body of Christ," in which

there "worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (I Cor. xii. ii, 12).

It is a fruitful Church. Like the tree by the rivers of waters, it brings forth its fruit in its season. Beautiful blossoms of bright and ripened fruit of holy lives perennially abound upon its boughs. Like the banyan tree, it spread, until its converts were found from the tents of the desert to the courts of the Caesars. Pentecostal churches are always fruitful churches.

It is a righteous Church. Unrighteousness is the dirty, ragged uniform in which Satan clothes the members of his sham churches. He who is knowingly wrong in public or in private life, has not upon him the righteous robe which covers every member of Christ's real church. Tricks in trade, neglect of church, business and home obligations, refusal or criminal neglect to right wrongs, all debar from membership in the Church of God, where "judgment must run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Much of the wrong in the world today can doubtless be traced to the lack of discipline in regard to righteousness in the dead and dying churches of the land.

It is a Word-honoring Church. It searches the Scriptures whether these things are so. It does not look to a worldly pastor to see how easily it can live, but to the Word of God to learn how right it can be. It seeks, obeys and rejoices in the Word of His grace which is "able to build up," and "give an inheritance among the sanctified." Hence it is saved from censorious wildfire, fanaticism and kindred perils, which subvert people who ignore God's Word, and substitute dreams, visions, impressions, desires, carnal counsel and fancies instead.

It is a divinely-made Church. "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved" (Acts ii. 47). Only God can unite a person to His church, and He unites only saved persons -- positive proof that church-named crowds of unsaved people are no part of the Church of Christ, and that the farce of substituting baptism or church-joining for coming to Christ is a delusion and a snare. Sham churches coax people to unite with them. True churches point them to Christ, who alone can initiate into His body.

It is a universal Church. "From whom every family in heaven and on earth is named" (Eph. iii. 15). It consists of the regenerated in all climes and conditions above and below, living and dead. Its members are dead in many diverse communions, but all have the marks of celestial birth and citizenship. They all love each other, and will soon be gathered in a grand, final, inseparable family reunion with their Father and their Elder Brother in the mansions being made ready for their eternal habitations.

It is a persecuted Church. "For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus, and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved" (I Thess. ii. 14-16). The devil hates true Christians and true churches full of Pentecostal power and activity. Hence if he can not silence them he always marshals all his hosts against them. He is too wise a general to waste his ammunition on paper men. The reason sham churches do not draw his fire is that they are his allies, and he has nothing to fear from them. But in every age Pentecostal churches have been persecuted churches. If you think this is not true get the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire, sanctified wholly, and lead an aggressive campaign in which sinners are genuinely regenerated and believers entirely sanctified. Hold after-services persistently and definitely for these purposes. Persevere until upon the Church the Holy

Ghost comes down and the people weep, and laugh, and shout with Pentecostal joy. All who are doing this know by experience the truthfulness of this paragraph.

They are rejoicing Churches. They "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and counted it all joy that they were permitted to be co-sufferers with the heavenly Bridegroom. Defective and spurious churches can not do this, but shirk duty and repine at censure and opposition.

It is a praying Church. When opposed, perplexed and persecuted, it prayed until the powers of darkness were shaken; until prison doors burst asunder, enemies were conquered, chains broken and Satan defeated. This is the mightiest weapon in God's true Church. It knows how to fly to its knees and "lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting," and bring down Omnipotence to fight its battles. Its prayer-meetings are places of power, and it has no need of church kitchens except to feed the poor. Its prayer of faith heals the sick, delivers the tempted, converts the sinner, sanctifies and edifies believers, removes mountains of financial embarrassment and divides Red Seas of seeming insuperable barriers. Sham churches are destitute of this power of all-conquering prayer. The true church flies to its knees when assailed, a weak church stands still with fright, a sham church resorts to controversy and compromise. Prayerless men are powerless men. Spiritual power comes not so much from a learned pulpit as from a church upon its knees.

They are thoroughly organized Churches. Under the Holy Ghost they were equipped and organized for conquest. Each person had his proper gift utilized for the good of the entire body. Women divinely called, preach, and prophesy, and witness, while the unlearned in human lore are wise in the things divine. God chooses the weak things to confound the mighty, and the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are. The human body and an army are divine types of the church of Christ -- both perfect in their organized capacities, subject to a controlling head, each function or division working in organized unison with all the rest. No organization is a scheme of the devil to prevent the mighty, resistless onset upon His kingdom, which united, organized effort brings.

It is a loyal Church. Loyal both to its divine Leader and to His appointed agents. It welcomed, obeyed and supported them. It was a stranger to the stingy disloyalty which refuses to liberally sustain the Gospel ministry; and gave not grudgingly but from a glad heart and with a willing mind. A professed church which is disloyal to God has no claims on the loyalty of believers. It must be loyal to God and His Word, and disloyal to all that is contrary thereto. If a man can not be loyal to Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, the Word of God and the church of which he is a member at the same time, it is proof that something is wrong with his church.

It is an exile Church. It was born from above, and is a pilgrim and stranger in this world. Its home is in heaven; its rest is not here. It is not conformed to the fashions of this world. Like a missionary among barbarians, who retains the customs of his own country, expecting to return, so the Pentecostal Church, like its Divine Redeemer, retains the customs, fashions and laws of the royal family of which it is a member, instead of those of the traitorous world, in which it for a little time has its mission.

It is a working Church. It is a total stranger to the dead works of the day which have been so widely substituted for Christian labor. We hear of no hospital being built professedly for the glory of God -- really for the praise of some rich man; no aid societies to stitch shoddy garments to be sold to the highest bidder to lessen the assessment on rich members; no lecture bureaus and musical rehearsals, broom drills and crazy-quilt socials, etc. These shameless bastards were not yet born. Her works were prompted by faith in

Jesus and executed out of pure love for Him. This led the Pentecostal Church barefooted to climb thorny steeps, descend into serpent-infested ravines, and brave heat, cold, penury, fire and sword, to become "all things to all men that it might save some." It is just the same today.

It is a witnessing Church. A stream of testimony broke forth at Pentecost that, like a mighty Amazon, flooded the entire world. At home, abroad, in private and in public, among friends or foes, the members of that Church ceased not to speak forth the power of Jesus to fully save. There is no record of any Pentecostal preachers attempting to suppress the fire-baptized witnesses. One sure mark of the dead condition of many churches today is their dumbness. In backslidden churches there are many substitutes for primitive testimonies. Scripture quotations, commenting on the preceding sermon, political harangues, talking about trials and tribulations, expressing desires and resolutions, exhortations, etc., have been allowed to take the place of witnessing to the power of Jesus to save from sin, and of the Holy Ghost to fully sanctify; but God detects and rejects the cheat, and none are deceived but its perpetrators. A dumb church on the subject of experimental salvation is a dead one, no matter how aggressive s he may be on other lines. Spiritual lockjaw is a certain sign of spiritual death. A Pentecostal experience always brings the blossom and fruit of a Pentecostal testimony.

It is an uncompromising Church. It had no alliances, public nor secret, general or individual, with the world, the flesh or the devil. Its members did not "renounce the vain pomp and glory of this world" with their lips, and then attire themselves in the height of worldly fashion, and thus belie the vow in their lives. Yet just such public religious lying as this is constantly occurring under the cover of the sacred rite of baptism. We read of but one Ananias and Sapphira in the early Church, but their blood seems to be the seed of a fearful harvest.

What hollow, hypocritical mockery! Baal thus offers incense to Jesus Christ, where His professed ministers officiate! When some holiest soul protests and points to the wrong, his voice is drowned in all uproar of protests and excuses such as rival the commotion which the town clerk at Ephesus was unable to hush. None of its ministers officiated at the secret rites of worldlings. No modern "Diana of the Ephesians" cry of party politics, social influence, or popularity could cause them to veer one iota from their fidelity to the principles of Christ's kingdom.

The worldly compromise methods which today are a fixture in many churches for raising money and for entertaining and amusing, were then all unknown. Imagine Paul putting a leading pagan upon the Official Board because "he would be a great financial help," and give the church "social standing." Modern worldlings who are resisting the light of the Gospel as it now shines are a millionfold worse than were the honest pagans of that age, yet modern methods give them church membership and official position on every hand.

Truly, the Pentecostal constitution is violated and God displeased, and His curse rests on such a combination. Imagine Peter joining some worldly society to "extend his influence" and get help or protection should he or his family ever "come to want." Yet, would-be modern Peters are doing the same far and wide. But they differ widely from Pentecostal Peter, in that they are destitute of his zeal for God, his spirit of self-sacrifice, his assurance of salvation, his endowment of the Holy Ghost, his power to heal the sick, and to bring down revivals of flaming fire in the proud Jerusalems where so many of them have their appointments.

What apostle in the Pentecostal zone ever announced a "Necktie Social," or "Singin' Skule," or "Crazy Social" at the opening or close of one of their discourses, and followed the announcement with the "hope that it will be liberally patronized"? Yet how frequently professed apostles of our sleeping churches do this. How few have the conviction and courage to say "No," and teach their people the difference between Satan's shams and God's gold. One must be dead indeed to dare to do such a thing.

In many places it would cause a volcanic eruption which would land the preacher away in some backwoods Carmel, where he would be tempted to feel that he was the only one not bowing the knee to Baal, and where his auditors would largely be mosquitoes, ticks, and pine stumps, unless God should interfere, and, as with Paul at Iconium, bear His faithful servant to some fairer field of usefulness. We hear of no members of the Pentecostal churches who gave more time and money to worldly orders than to the Church, for they were not conformed to the world, but were transformed by the renewing of their mind to prove the perfect and good and acceptable will of God.

Hence "No compromise" was stamped by the Spirit on every Pentecostal Christian's brow. That seal is not stamped there in lodges, nor theaters, nor at church frolics, though quickly lost at these places, but at the altar of prayer, in the secret place of the Most High, under the burning seal of the Pentecostal baptism.

The members of the Pentecostal Church were all baptized into one body. They were all bound together with the golden bond of love. Celestial fire had burned out the dross of carnality so that there was no foundation within their hearts upon which to build sectarian walls. The Paulites and Johnites and Peterites were too insignificant a minority of unsanctified members to start a new denomination, so no iron walls of separating creeds had yet been reared. [The meaning of this statement seems rather hard to grasp. Apparently he means that carnal factions that identified themselves with different leaders in the early church were in the minority. -- DVM] Faults and individual differences were all buried deep beneath the flowery sod of perfect love. This was the Church as launched from the Pentecostal harbor. It soon was corrupted so that even in apostolic times, divisions, such as have led to the sects of this and preceding centuries, appeared. All were exhorted to be "of one mind," and at Pentecost this mighty miracle was wrought, a token of God's will and power to His people in His Church forever. What a sad comment on this privilege and requirement is the laughing factions into which Satan has split the churches of the present day.

It is an expectant Church. "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20). "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Col. iii. 4). "And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I. Pet. v. 4). As an enraptured bride anticipates her wedding day and the constant presence and communion of the bridegroom, so she looks forward to a like joyful consummation. Now He dwells in her heart by faith, but then both heart and eyes shall behold Him. Now her love for and sympathy with Him is limited by infirmities, but then with perfect mind, soul and body she shall be like Him, and able to love Him, and serve and delight in Him as never before. So, while she "occupies until He comes," preparing herself and others for His appearing, she, as He commanded, is constantly looking for His return. Satan has made a desperate effort to steal this robe from the Church, but is being defeated, Sham churches dread to meet Him in their ragged, dirty robes, and so deride His coming. Pentecostal churches rejoice in the "glorious hope of His appearing."

It is a victorious Church. "Upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18). Triumphantly overcoming opposition from traitors within and earth and hell

without, it is destined to sweep on from victory to victory, until "every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed."

It is a blood bought Church. "Which he purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). At an infinite price He purchased its freedom by shedding His own blood upon the cross, and thus demonstrated His love for it, and by His glorious resurrection His power to make it like Himself.

It is built on a firm foundation. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. xxviii. 16). The Church of Christ is built upon Himself. Hence no storms can shake it, and no earthquakes can cause it to move. Every lie forged against it by the devil and his false preachers shall be "swept away," and all its foes, like so many drowning rats, shall be flooded out of their hiding places. During the coming "overflowing scourges" of the Tribulation, when the wicked shall be trodden down under its awful castigatory judgments, it divinely delivered, shall rest unmoved upon its divine foundation.

It shall be blessed with inspiring revivals. "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: they all gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be carried in the arms. Then thou shalt see and be lightened, and thine heart shall tremble and be enlarged: because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee" (Isa. lx. 2-6, also balance of chapter lx.) The Pentecostal Church is a revival Church. The revivals of this period will doubtless continue to multiply until the Rapture, and sweep over the earth in cyclones of converting, sanctifying power all through the millennium.

It shall have universal dominion. "For that nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isa. lx. 12). This prophecy is not yet fulfilled. There is not a nation on earth that serves Christ's Church, nor even recognizes His Kingship. Such are doomed, and must make room for those which shall delight in righteousness.

It is a comforted Church. "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that be might be glorified" (Isa. lxi. 3). Thus God comforts it with His abiding presence and protection, and with the promise of glorious victory over all its foes, culminating in the participation in the coming millennial kingdom, and eternal possession and joint ownership with Christ of the celestialized earth, and administration of the universe.

From the foregoing facts it is evident that there is a great chasm between the Church as pictured in the New Testament, and many organizations which go by that name today. The following are some of the differences:

Every church may have unworldly members, but they do not control it. Sham churches are controlled by them. True branches of the visible Church acknowledge Christ as the supreme Head, the Holy Ghost as His Executive, and the Word of God as their Guide: Sham churches substitute committees, conferences, cardinals or popes in the place of Christ, ignore the Holy Ghost, twist Scripture to suit creeds and substitute the opinions of men for the Word of God. The first is a conservator of Holiness and Bible truth, the latter a cage of "unclean birds," whose stench pollutes the air, and who fly with its errors to the uttermost parts of the earth. The first is born from above; the second, from below. One is a life-boat to save men; the other, a death-trap to decoy and destroy men. The first arrayed in white will reign with

Christ forever; the second, whether in the form of popery or of her fallen Protestant daughters, He will consume with the "Word of His mouth, and by the brightness of His coming." Sham churches are open for fairs, festivals and frolics, but closed to Pentecostal Revivals! They seek and support manpleasing servants instead of God-pleasing ministers. They prefer essays and lectures to sermons on sanctification. They glory in their social position, rather than in Jesus Christ, and magnify culture and a college curriculum above experimental salvation. Such are a stench in the nostrils of God, and snares through which Satan is peopling hell with victims. The Pentecostal Church, unlike much that is called church today, was not a social club, or dress parade, or amusement bureau, or a restaurant, or a literary association, but God working through His people to save and edify. So called churches which do not this are dead, while they profess to live. Their hypocritical pretension will be unmasked at the judgment, where their faithless officers and members must meet the God whose trust they have betrayed, and the lost souls they have deceived.

The following duties and privileges fall to all who are true members of the Church of Christ:

Do not despise it. "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this?" (I Cor. xi. 22). Men who despise it by spurning all organization, or by foisting upon it their ungodly lives, or by feeding it upon poison doctrine, or seeking to fill it with unsaved people or disgracing it by worldly amusements and comic entertainments, are guilty of a gross insult both to the King of kings and His espoused bride. Its enemies are warned.

"If any man defile [margin, destroy] the temple of God, him will God destroy." The temple of God here indicates souls both in individual and Church capacities, and people who by neglect, or false doctrine, or persecution thus "destroy," thereby invite the lightning bolts of divine retribution.

The believer's privilege and duty in regard to Church relations is plain. God will show His own what to do under all circumstances if His will be earnestly sought. If you belong to any branch of Christ's true Church, serve Him faithfully there. If you belong to some sham communion that is professing to be His Church, but is not, if you can not effect a change, then identify yourself with some true branch of the living Vine. God wants His people to waste no time nor money in supporting Satan's shams. Pray, counsel with wise, experienced, faithful children of God, who know all the facts, and if your way is completely committed to God, "He will direct your steps." Beware, however, lest Satan, because of carnality and counterfeit coin identified with His true people, should on that account cause you to discard it. A vessel with traitors on board, yet manned by true men, is vastly different from one owned and controlled by them. The crowd who decries all organization and ostracizes all who will not join it, lacks at least one of the main marks of the true Bride. Each member under God must decide his own course of action. If he is not to judge, who then is to do it? The hireling pastor? The worldly official members who guard the spurious church? Such judgment is one of the prerogatives of every free moral agent, which neither church nor state has a right to wrest from him. Men apply this principle individually to political parties, and on the same principle they should to churches. He who would rob of this right is a self-constituted pope.

Magnify it. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6). True church members thus pray for and plan for and prefer the prosperity of the Church above their "chief joy," gladly sacrificing their own personal preferences for her good. Sham members selfishly sacrifice her interests for personal profit or promotion.

Appeal to it. "And if thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican" (Matt. xviii. 15-17). It is the duty of the Church to thus settle differences among its members which they can not adjust in the manner described above. To ignore this commandment and fly to worldly courts is wrong.

Feed it. "Feed the church of God" (Acts xx. 28). Ministers are thus intrusted with its sustenance. He who feeds it poisoned or diluted food, or starves it, does so at both its peril and his own.

Pray for it. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. cxxii. 6). True Church members pray for the highest prosperity of the Church, not simply for its material prosperity, but that, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," its "salvation may go forth as a lamp that burneth."

"For her my tears shall fall,

For her my prayers ascend;

To her my cares and toils be given,

Till cares and toils shall end."

Love it. "They shalt prosper that love thee" (Ps. cxxii. 6). Christ so loved the Church that He gave Himself for it, and its members possess a kindred love. As His Father sent Him into the world, so sends He them.

"With stately towers and bulwarks strong,

Unrivaled and alone,

Loved theme of many a sacred song,

God's holy city shone.

"Thus fair was Zion's chosen seat,

The glory of all lands;

But fairer, and in strength complete,

The Christian temple stands.

"The faithful of each clime and age

This glorious Church compose;

Built on a rock, with idle rage

The threatening tempest blows.

"Fear not; though hostile bands alarm,

Thy God is thy defense:

And weak and powerless every arm

Against Omnipotence."

-- Harriet Auber

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