

25. Q. What other special designation is given to the Apostles in the New Testament Scriptures?
26. Q. What is the signification of the term "ambassador"?
27. Q. How were the Apostles specially qualified for the work they were sent out to do?
28. Q. For what purpose were the gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the Apostles in such great measure?
29. Q. Did the Apostles have any successors?
30. Q. What, firstly, did God do through the Apostles?
31. Q. What, secondly, did God do through the Apostles?
32. Q. What, thirdly, did God do through the Apostles?
33. Q. What, fourthly, did God do through the Apostles?

Lesson Forty-Two

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:13-20; Acts 2:37-47.

Scriptures to Memorize: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

34. Q. What do we mean by the Christian Institution?
 - A. By the Christian Institution, we mean the Institution divinely established and appointed for the worship and service of God through Jesus Christ, throughout the Christian Dispensation.

Rom. 12:1—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service."

1 Cor. 6:19, 20—"Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body." 1 Pet. 2:5—"ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Eph. 2:19-22, "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each-several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." Heb. 10:25—"not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh."

35. Q. What is the Christian Institution?

A. The Christian Institution is the Church of Christ.

Eph. 3:21—"Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever." Acts 20:28—"the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." Heb. 11:23—"the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven."

36. Q. What is the derivation of the word "church"?

A. The word "church" in its derivative sense, means literally "whatever belongs or pertains to the Lord."

The word **church** (English), **kirk** (Scotch), **kirche** (German), is but a corruption of the Greek word **kuriakos**, and means, primarily, **belonging to the Lord**. This word was at first most likely used as an adjective for the purpose of defining the noun **ekklesia**, which among the ancients, denoted an assembly of any kind. It was only natural, therefore, that the Greek Fathers should have combined the two original words, in order to more clearly indicate the Church

of Christ as "the assembly of the Lord" or "the Lord's assembly."

37. Q. What, then, is the Church of Christ?

A. The true Church of Christ is the body of obedient believers under the New Covenant who belong to God through Christ.

(1) The true Church takes in all who are in Christ. Rom. 8:1—"there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." 2 Cor. 5:17—"if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." Gal. 3:26, 27—"For ye are all sons of God through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ." To be in Christ, is to be in the Church of Christ, and vice versa; for the Church is the body of Christ. (2) It will thus be seen that the Kingdom is a more comprehensive term than the Church, in the fact that it takes in those elect of God who cannot, in the very nature of the case, belong to the Church; such as (a) the saved of all preceding dispensations; and (b) the innocent and irresponsible, including infants, of all dispensations. Eph. 4:8—"when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive." Mark 10:14—"Suffer the little children to come unto me . . . for to such belongeth the kingdom of God."

38. Q. Did the Church of Christ exist in Old Testament times?

A. No. There was no such institution as the Church of Christ in Old Testament times.

The institution of worship in the Patriarchal Dispensation was the Altar. In the Jewish Dispensation, it was the Tabernacle, the Temple, and the Synagogue, in succession. These institutions were forerunners of the Church, and, in certain respects, were typical of it. But the Church of Christ itself was not established in either of the Old Testament Dispensations. To speak of the Hebrew Theocracy

as the "Jewish Church," as some do, is unscriptural and misleading.

39. Q. Was the Church of Christ established in the time of John the Baptizer?

A. No. John's ministry was to the Jewish nation, and under the Mosaic law.

40. Q. Did Jesus Himself establish the Church while He was on earth?

A. No. The personal ministry of Jesus Christ was under the Old Covenant and, likewise, under the Mosaic law.

The personal ministry of the Incarnate Word was under the Law of Moses, to which He rendered a faultless obedience. By His death on the Cross, He abrogated the Covenant of Law and ratified the Covenant of Grace. Col. 2:14 — "having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us; and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross."

41. Q. When was the Christian Institution set up?

A. It was set up on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, A. D. 30.

(1) The word church is found only twice in the Gospel narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, viz., (a) in Matt. 18:17, where Jesus describes the procedure that is to be followed in effecting reconciliation between brethren; and (b) in Matt. 16:18, where Jesus says: "Upon this rock I will build my church." It will be noted that in this last-quoted text Jesus Himself refers to the Church as yet a thing of the future. He says: **will build**, not **have built**; thus precluding all such notions as, that the Church was established in the time of Adam, Abraham, or Moses, etc. This statement also disproves the theory that the Church was established in the time of John the Baptizer, for John had already been beheaded when these words were spoken. Moreover, the Scriptures teach clearly that the personal

ministry of Jesus was under the Law (Matt. 5:17-18); hence the Church, which is distinctly a New Testament institution, could not have been established until the Old Covenant had been abrogated and the New ratified and established by the death of Christ. (2) Beginning with the book of Acts, therefore, and throughout the rest of the New Testament Scriptures, the Church is alluded to repeatedly, and always as an established and functioning institution. As a matter of facts, Acts of Apostles is the history of the establishment, direction and expansion of the Church, under apostolic preaching and guidance. (3) It is quite generally admitted today that the Church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost, A. D. 30, when the Holy Spirit descended in fulfilment of promise, when the Gospel was proclaimed in fact for the first time and sinners were first accepted into covenant relationship with God, through Christ, on the specific terms and conditions of the New Testament. (See Acts, ch. 2.) Acts 2:41—"they then that received his word were baptized; and there were added unto them (literally, **added together**) in that day about three thousand souls." Cf. Acts 2:47—"And the Lord added to them (literally, **added together**) day by day those that were saved" (literally, **those that were being saved**). This language clearly describes the incorporation of the body of Christ, the Church. From this time on, in the book of Acts and in the Epistles, the Church is invariably referred to as an established and functioning institution.

42. Q. What positive proof have we that the Church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost, A. D. 30?
- A. The fact that the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost, A. D. 30, to incorporate the Church, to indwell it and vitalize it, and to enter upon His work of realizing and consummating

God's Plan of Redemption for man, is the final and positive proof that the Church was established on that day.

(1) If the Church existed prior to the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, as described in the second chapter of Acts, it was a lifeless institution; as dead, in fact, as the body of man was, which Jehovah God formed of the dust of the ground, before He breathed into it the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). For it was on this first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord, that the Spirit descended for the purpose of incorporating, vitalizing and indwelling the body of Christ. The language of Acts 2:41-47, as shown above, clearly describes the **forming of the body**, i. e., the incorporation of the Church. Where there is Spirit, there is life; hence the true Church is not an organization, but an **organism**. That is, it is a body of obedient believers in Christ, **vitalized** by the indwelling and abiding presence of the Spirit of God. (See John 7:37-39, Joel 2:28, Luke 24:45-49, Acts 1:1-8, Acts 2, etc.) From these facts it is obvious that there could not have been any church in existence, in the New Testament sense of the term, prior to the advent of the Holy Spirit, on Pentecost, A. D. 30.

(2) The first thing the Holy Spirit did on that day was to bestow His gifts and powers in baptismal measure upon the Apostles, thus qualifying them for the work that Christ Himself had called them to do. The next thing the Spirit did, on that day, was to reveal the facts, commands and promises of the Gospel, through their preaching. The last thing He did was **to form into a body** the three thousand persons who heard the message on that day, who accepted its facts, repented of their sins, and submitted to Christian baptism. The Spirit's work on the day of Pentecost was threefold: (a) the qualifying of the Apostles for their task, (b) the revelation of the Gospel, with its facts, commands and promises; and (c) the incorporation of the Church of Christ. (3) Note the following summation of facts with

respect to the inauguration of the Christian Institution: "First, as a new covenant, it was ratified by the blood of Christ; as a testament, it was not a binding force while the testator lived; as a kingdom, it was not established until the King ascended and was crowned; as a church, its history shows that it was not organized while Jesus lived on earth; as the great salvation, it only 'began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.' Finally, as the gospel, it was founded on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and was not preached until these facts had transpired" (Phillips, *The Church of Christ*, pp. 131-132).

43. Q. What, then, was the day of Pentecost, A.D. 30?

A. It was the birthday of the Church of Christ.

(1) The point should be emphasized here that Christ Himself, through the instrumentality of His Apostles guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit, established His Church. In advance of its actual beginning, he said: "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). This Church had its inception on Pentecost, A. D. 30, at Jerusalem: and its history under the preaching and guidance of the Apostles is related in the book of Acts. (2) So, while the world thinks in terms of the Roman Church, of Luther's Church, of Calvin's Church, of Wesley's Church, etc., let us make it our special business to call attention to the fact that **our Lord Himself established a church**; that the church which He established is the true Church, the Church which He purchased with His own precious blood (Acts 20:28). (3) This Church was, and is, neither Greek Catholic, nor Roman Catholic, nor Protestant, nor a denomination of any kind whatsoever. It is Christ's Church, His body, the Church of Christ; the only Church authorized by the Scriptures. (4) Let us give ourselves unsparingly, therefore, to the great task of restoring and reproducing this Church in its original simplicity and purity, according to the pattern

laid down in the New Testament Scriptures. This is what we mean by "the restoration of primitive Christianity, its laws, ordinances and fruits."

44. Q. What do we celebrate on the seventh Lord's Day after Easter each year?
- A. We celebrate the anniversary of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church of Christ.

It is our conviction that the anniversary of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, should be observed annually with appropriate doctrinal messages, especially by those congregations which advocate the restoration of New Testament Christianity. Pentecost should be an outstanding day in the Christian calendar.

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON FORTY-TWO

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