

The Bible, Church, Body, Kingdom and Family, or Household of God

As there has been so much written on the above subjects, and so many different opinions expressed, I'm sure no one can offer any legal objections if I should write a few thoughts and give a few Scriptural references bearing on the same. Some teach 1) that when we are converted, we then become members of the Kingdom; and some, 2) that we are born into the Church; while others teach 3) that when we are baptized with the Holy Ghost, we are members of the Bride.

The latest teaching that has come to my notice, from the pen of a noted writer in a Pentecostal paper, is that 4) we are baptized (by the Holy Ghost) into the Church, and that the Church is the Bride. The same writer teaches that people are born into the Kingdom and baptized into the Church by the Spirit, and that the Bride, the Church, and the Body are all one and the same, and the terms are used interchangeably.

These are all interesting themes, and worthy of consideration, but to give an exhaustive discussion of each one separately would require more space than can be allotted at this time. And to fully understand these subjects is not so important any way as to have a real and full experience of salvation and know it. While there are various opinions expressed by word and pen regarding these terms and their relation to each other, yet, the facts remain the same, and no strain can possibly produce any variation.

If people are born into the Church, then Jude was mistaken about certain men CREEPING in whom he said were ungodly men (Jude 4), and Paul when he declared false brethren were brought in (Galatians 2:4). If people are born into the Church, Paul was certainly mistaken again when he gave orders to the Church at Corinth to gather themselves together and put away from themselves that wicked person (I Corinthians 5:4; 13). If they are born into the Church, they will have to become unborn to get out of it, and the members of the Church themselves will have no more to do with putting them out than taking them in. Such teaching is erroneous and inconsistent and contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

The same writer that unhesitatingly declares it is wrong to teach that we are born into the Church, teaches that we are baptized into the Church when we receive the baptism of the

Holy Ghost. By such teaching, the writer asserts that no person can be a member of Christ's Church without having the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and gives as a proof text, I Corinthians 12:13, that says, 'born into the kingdom, baptized into the body, the Church.' If this teaching is correct, then Paul was wrong when he wrote, 'Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth,' and in the first verse of chapter three said, 'And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ,' and follows by saying in the third verse. 'For ye are not carnal.' These were in the Church of God, and had not yet received the baptism of the Holy Ghost to put them into the Church. Facts are very stubborn; people's teachings do not change the blessed old Book.

The same writer affirms that the Church is the Bride and the Bride is the Church. If this is true, then the Church now must be something different from what it was in John's day, or else a backslidden preacher or pastor has the power to divorce and cast out of the Bride one who is espoused to the King. In III John 3:9-10 we read, 'I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes...casteth them out of the church.' If the Church and the Bride are one and the same then it would do to have it read thus...Diotrephes casteth them out of the Bride.

Honest, sincere, and humble people can readily see the inconsistency of such teaching. This is the time when more theories and false teachings are going to be exposed and the false teachers themselves put out of the ring. Honest, sincere men and women are studying for themselves now as never before.

We are truly living in 'perilous times', and a time when it is a matter of the greatest importance to be humble and sincere before God, for we are liable to be misguided and lose our rewards, if not our souls. It is no wonder that Peter wrote thus: 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. And account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures to be their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. (II Peter 3:14-17)'

This warning given by Peter should be carefully considered and heeded in dealing with the theme now before us. Truly Paul has written things hard to be understood and he himself says, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (I Corinthians 2:14)'

It is not my purpose to merely be a critic; although, it is possible to know that some things are wrong and yet not be able to make them right. A certain man had a watch which would not keep time. One watchmaker after another examined it, pronounced it perfect, but none of them could tell why; until one cunning watchmaker counted every cog on every wheel and found that one wheel had one cog less than the proper number. Although we might see that there is something wrong with the watch, how few will take the time and trouble to count every cog in every wheel of the watch. We can see that many teachings given by men are erroneous, but how few people will take the time and trouble to count every cog in every wheel that regulates Scripture so it will run correctly.

The terms at the head of this chapter are in God's great plan for the redemption of man and His eternal glory as the wheels are to the watch. One cog less than the proper number, just in one wheel, made the watch of no value. Paul and Peter, John and Jude have made no mistakes, but how few, who claim to be teachers, will take the time to consult each writer on a subject before venturing some kind of an opinion. It is of the utmost importance that we, who are teachers, should count every cog in every wheel before venturing to give out teaching, lest we sometime find ourselves perverting Scripture.

It is a fact and people had just as well acknowledge it, for it will be proven sooner or later, that the true Bible Church has been so covered and hidden with the debris of creeds and theology that not until they count every cog in every wheel are they able to know what the Church of God really is, to say nothing about the Bride, which is to be even more perfect than the Church.

You will notice that I have now intimated that the Church and Bride are not the same. I will call your attention to a few facts that you will observe as such very readily. The Bride is one, the Church is one, the Kingdom is one; the family or household is one. God, the Father, is One. God, The Son, is One. God, the Holy Ghost, is One. Every wheel in the watch is one wheel. When the wheels are all geared together properly, and the mainspring and hair-spring properly adjusted and in the case wound up, we call it a watch that is running and marking time.

God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Ghost, has each His function to perform, but these three are One. The Bride, the Church, the Body, the Kingdom and the Family or Household of God, each have their place to fill in God's great and eternal plan, and this plan is one plan. As all the wheels and parts are in the watch, and each part performs its function, so all these elements are in God's plan, and each to perform its function. These terms, the Bride, the Church, the Kingdom, etc., are so geared together and have such a close resemblance that unless one takes the time and pains to count the cogs in every one and knows its exact position in God's great plan, he is liable to put one for the other and the other for that one. The human body is one great machine, but it is composed of skin, bones, hair, arteries, veins, muscles, blood, flesh, etc., but it is one great system and body made by God, Himself. Anatomists have been able to dissect and locate and name every particle of

the human body, but no one person ever discovered and named every particle at his first investigation, neither did one person ever complete the task as it is given in physiology today.

People have been investigating the terms of our theme and placing their opinions on them for years, but it is now high time for them to sit down and count every cog in every wheel or give up the job and quit guessing at it. Paul tells us of a people that will appear in the last days, who will have a form of godliness, but deny the power, ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (John 14:26; John 16:13). As these are the days of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, then it is time to quit guessing about things and really count every cog in every wheel, lest we find ourselves perverting Scripture and wrestling it to our own destruction.

The Bride is clearly set forth in Scriptures, and She is beautiful to behold with Her loveliness, beauty and adornment; but Rebecca, who was a type, did not know that she was to be the bride of Isaac while she was doing the very things that Abraham's servant prayed that the bride should do, but after she had really met the requirements without trying to be the bride, the jewelry was placed upon her. She did not yet know what it meant, until at the proper time when the servant saw she would do, and that she measured up to every requirement

that was in her. The servant then delivered his secret, not only to her, but to her family as well. The whole family was not chosen, but they were consulted. The final settlement, however, was made by her and she said, 'I will go.'

'Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. (Psalm 45:10)' Here is one little glimpse of the bride, 'Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.' Another glimpse, 'she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle work.' Look on her in her beautiful array, 'My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bear her. (Song of Solomon 6:9)' You get a picture of her here, but you must count the cogs or your watch will not keep time. It would make this chapter too long to produce every Scripture, and only a glimpse can be given...

To be continued...