

Introduction

The Water Baptism and the LORD's Supper are biblical ordinances that are being practised in most of the Christian churches, although the administration of them is being done in different ways. But the original way of the first church was lost in the course of the church history. For years the church historians and reformers were debating and fighting over it, using the same Word. But they were not able to reach an agreement, and the differences remained. They are not in conformity with the practices of the early church to which we have to return.

Of the first Christians we read, "*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine ...*" (Acts 2:42). They recognised that the apostles were called by the LORD and had access to the mysteries pertaining to the Kingdom of God. After His resurrection the LORD remained with His disciples "*until the day in which he was taken up, after he, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen; to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*" (Acts 1:2-3). We are glad to know that He spoke about all the things pertaining to His Kingdom. HE was the One who gave the commission. On the day of Pentecost He sent His Spirit upon them and revealed precisely what should be done and how it should be carried out according to the perfect Will of God .

Paul was not with them from the very beginning. He first had his "theological study", but after his conversion he preached the same gospel and the same doctrines as the other apostles did. By direct revelation he made the journey to Jerusalem fourteen years later to compare with the other apostles to see, whether what he preached was in agreement with them. Otherwise, he feared that he should have run in vain (Gal. 2:1-2).

The Book of Acts and the epistles testify the perfect harmony in the teachings, as well as with the four gospels and the Old Testament. Therefore, everything that is left to us by the apostles is pure doctrine and practice. We don't deal here with the opinion of Peter or Paul, but with the direct revealed Word and Plan of God. Even today that is the only valuable measuring rod whereby everything should be proved.

Once the LORD asked His disciples "*Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, LORD. Then said he unto them, Therefore, every scribe who is instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is an householder, who bringeth forth out of treasure things new and old*" (Mt. 13:51-52). At all times the LORD was using men whom He had called for specific purposes in His kingdom. They didn't present theological knowl-

edge, as they were instructed in the heavenly school. They spoke according to the heavenly wisdom which was hid to the wise of this world. His messengers have always received both, His Word and His Spirit. So they had the clarity and the revelation of His Will and knew the correct application thereof. An unfailing sign for this is that their preaching and practice are in complete agreement with all the Holy Scriptures. Our LORD and the apostles had only the Old Testament at their disposal at that time. Repeatedly, they made references to it. In the New Testament, we find 845 quotations from the Old Testament.

Preachers of the gospel today carry a great responsibility before God. Everyone who ministers in the Kingdom of God should have the courage to compare with Paul and the other apostles whatever he teaches and practices. If it does not agree with the original proclamation and practice, then there is something wrong somewhere. If Paul found it necessary to compare his teachings with the doctrines of the apostles to make sure that he was not ministering in vain, how can anyone of us then neglect to do this? Of everything which originally comes from God we find imitations and forgery that will not compare with the original.

In the message to the church of Ephesus we read, “... *and thou hast tried them who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars*” (Rev. 2:2). This judgement was possible, because the listeners were comparing what was preached to them with the original apostolic teaching. Those Bible believing Christians noticed that these gentlemen were only claiming to be apostles, but were actually liars, because they preached not the pure divine message as the early apostles did.

In the first church, there was no uncertainty about the Water Baptism, the LORD’s Supper, and the rest of the teachings. The LORD had given clear advice of how those things should be administered. Therefore, He could say about those whom He would send, “*He that heareth you, heareth me*” (Lk. 10:16). We need to show forth how Baptism and the LORD’s Supper are being described in the Holy Scriptures. With the LORD’s Supper, the Foot Washing is also connected which we also shall briefly see in the light of God’s Word.

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BAPTISM

First we shall deal briefly with the water baptism. The LORD commissioned us to baptise, and therefore, baptism is being administered in the Christian denominations. The church history, of course, shows forth the deviations from the original teaching and practice of the same. In the first church, there was only one form of baptism. Today we have various ways by which baptism is being practised.

The Word addressed to the believers in Ephesus is still valid for any believer at any place today, “*One LORD, one faith, one baptism*” (Eph. 4:5). In reality, there is only one LORD, namely God, only one true faith, the scriptural faith, only one baptism – that was practised by the apostles.

In this exposition, we wish to answer the following questions: What does baptism mean? Why is it administered? Who can be baptised? and finally: How is it practically done?

The Necessity

At the beginning of the New Testament, John the Baptist preached, “*saying, Repent; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Mt. 3:2). Our LORD repeatedly mentioned John and his ministry. In Lk. 7:29-30 He says, “*and all the people that heard him, and the tax collectors, justified God, being baptised with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised by him.*” Even Jesus Christ went to the River Jordan to be baptised by John the Baptist, saying, “*Permit it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*” (Mt. 3:15).

Right in the first sermon, Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, he told the inquiring multitude, “*Repent, and be baptised, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 2:38). Baptism is not left at the discretion of the individual, but rather is necessary to show the obedience of the believer. Whosoever acknowledges the redemption work and accepts Christ by faith and thereby receives justification, will have to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Peter shows the necessity of the baptism in the example of the ark of Noah, as it is found in 1 Pet. 3:20-21, “*... when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, in which few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water; the like figure unto which even baptism doth also now save us ...*” The flood destroyed all except those who were in the ark. There were only a few who took heed to the preaching

of Noah. Only a handful believed the message of that prophet and went in with him.

We could ask why Peter uses the example of the ark in connection with the baptism of the believers. If one truly believes, he will do what the LORD had said and will be baptised into Christ. He is our ark, the only place of refuge and safety. In Him alone, we will escape the pending judgements of God. Salvation comes to us by believing in Jesus Christ. The believers then act in obedience to the Word and are being baptised in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ. If anyone does not follow according to the divine order, he or she manifests openly unbelief and disobedience towards God and His Word, and in such a case one does not come into Christ, who is the ark of safety. When the great flood comes, many who claim to be Christians will find themselves outside and be lost.

Surely the people might have asked before the flood, “Why must we go into the ark? Where is the water? We believe in God; that should be enough. Everything continues as it was. We don’t need to listen to this preacher.” They did not recognise Noah to be a prophet with a direct commission from the LORD. The countdown was on then, and it is on now. In spite of all the warnings, the people went their own ways and did not heed. Suddenly, the day arrived, the predicted catastrophe broke in upon the human race. Suddenly, the door was shut. Those who were outside perished. Even now, it might look as though everything remains as it was (2 Pet. 3:4), but in the very near future, at the return of Christ, the difference will be made known. God’s hour comes suddenly. The time of grace will be over, and the door will be shut. Those who are inside, will be safe for ever.

In this connection, we can only repeat what was said in the days of old, “*Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation*” (Heb. 3:7-8). Right to the end the promise is valid, “*He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved*” (Mk. 16:16). Who is willing to obey? Real faith is shown in obedience to the Word of God. Faith without the works which are required, is dead in itself and useless. In such a case, it is only a religious confession which has not saved a single person yet. All the Christian teachings amount to nothing. They have to be scriptural and connected with the experiences of the individuals. Our connection with God is through the Word and by the Spirit who brings it to life. Only what comes from Him, takes us back to Him. Hence, the obedience to water baptism is not a ‘may’, but a ‘must’ for every true believer.

The Meaning

Baptism is just an act by which one is led to identify oneself with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. There is no forgiveness of sins in baptism. The person requesting to be baptised rather shows to have received the forgiveness of sins by the shed blood on the cross of Calvary. The Apostle Peter writes like this, "... *The like figure unto which even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ...*" (1Pet. 3:21). The one who is being baptised identifies himself with Christ, realising to be crucified with Him.

Baptism is an act of obedience by a believer following his confession of personal faith upon his Saviour and LORD. As we also read about Philip and the eunuch, that both went into the water. In this manner it is being done in all the Bible believing churches even today. Both, those who baptise and the ones who are being baptised go into the water about to the loins. Before baptising, the one who baptises would say something like, "Brother So-and-so, Sister So-and-so, upon the confession of your faith I baptise you according to the Word of God in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ." The baptism itself is compared with a burial. Thus the person is being laid backwards into the water and is totally immersed, and then lifted up again. The rising out of the water signifies that the same has risen to a new life with Christ. But the new life, of course, does not come by baptism but by the new birth through the Word and the Spirit of God. In any case, if some water is just being sprinkled or poured on the forehead, it should not even be called "baptism", because it's not.

The apostle writes in Col. 2:12, "... *buried with him in baptism, in which also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*" The Scripture does not teach that an infant is born again by the act of pouring or sprinkling – in the contrary: the clear teaching is that people first must hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, receive the Word as the seed into their soul, and have new life brought forth by the Spirit of God. Only then, they should be baptised. The baptism in water does also not automatically signify the receiving of the Holy Spirit. The baptism by the Spirit is a separate experience. It is God's answer to the believer who was obedient in water baptism. In such a case, the person receives the assurance to belong to God.

In Rom. 6:4-5, the apostle summarises the baptism with the following words, "*Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*"

A similar thought is being expressed in his letter to the Galatians, chapter 3:26-27, *“For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ.”* It is not a dry sinner who walks into the water in order that a wet should come out of the water again, no, we are speaking of people who have found grace with God, who are reconciled with Him, who have received the assurance that their sins are forgiven, who are certain that God has accepted them.

The Condition

The fundamental condition for a person to be baptised is the personal faith in the Saviour. Just before His ascension to heaven, the LORD gave a very clear commission, *“And he said unto them, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved’* (Mk. 16:15-16). As we see, first comes the proclamation of the Gospel and not a religious act.

Through the preaching of our reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, people are brought to accept God’s offer of salvation. As it is written, *“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). Such faith wrought by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the listeners must come forth first. There must be an inward “yes” towards God and the acceptance of God’s divine grace in our hearts. A person must first have an experience of salvation, through which one becomes a believer. According to Rom. 8:16 *“the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”* That is the assurance which everyone receives who is justified before God through faith in the finished work of redemption.

After this simply comes the next step, which is baptism. In Acts 2:41 we read, *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptised.”* This happened right after Peter preached the first sermon on the day of Pentecost. It was an overwhelming result. About 3,000 people accepted the divine message, believed God’s Word that was preached to them and took baptism right away. This scriptural pattern existed, as far as the third century went after Christ.

The apostles and other men endued with the power of the Holy Spirit, went out to preach the Gospel. One of them was Philip who had a mighty ministry, which caused a marvellous revival in Samaria. It was there where people also came to belief and were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16).

The evangelist left the revival and was led by the Holy Spirit to join the Ethiopian gentleman who was just reading in the prophet Isaiah 53 (Acts

8:26-39). *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus”* (v. 35). The preaching was based on the prophetic word in which the salvation which God would give to humanity was foretold.

In the midst of the sermon the listener interrupted the man of God and said, *“See, here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptised?”* (v. 36). The condition was met. Philip acted in full agreement with the Word of the LORD and the apostles, and he asked, *“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest”* (v. 37). The answer was spontaneously, *“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!”* What a marvellous conversion!

“And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptised him” (v. 38). Faith came through the preaching, and the preaching from the Word of God. The Spirit moved into the heart of the listener who expressed his desire to be baptised.

Peter was led by a special revelation into the house of the Roman centurion Cornelius who lived in Caesarea. His preaching showed scriptural results as it was in the beginning. We find it recorded like this, *“While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard the word”* (Acts 10:44). We see that the Spirit moves where the Word is being preached. For the believers it behoves to fulfil all righteousness and to do whatever the LORD commanded. The apostle then said, *“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the LORD”* (v. 47-48). Every true minister today will follow the same pattern and every believer will desire to be baptised scripturally, even if they have received the Holy Spirit already. Everything that originates with God remains in continuity without the slightest change.

In the Holy Scriptures, there is not the slightest hint for any infant baptism or the sprinkling of the children. Whoever tries to justify such unscriptural practices, referring to Lk. 18:15-17, should also read the parallel scriptures in Mt. 19:13-15 and Mk. 10:13-16. Without any shadow of doubt, it is clear that our LORD Jesus only blessed the children who were brought to Him. HE laid His hands upon them and took them into His arms. No reference is ever made about any baptising or sprinkling in that connection. Even today, believing parents bring children into a biblical church to be presented and dedicated to LORD and to be blessed in His Name.

Also the other scripture, which is being wrongly applied to support infant baptism, doesn't say one word about it. When Paul and Silas were put into prison in the city of Philippi, something supernatural occurred. The keeper of the prison was frightened to death, and he came and asked those men of

God, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”* (Acts 16:30-31). Right in the next verse we are told about the procedure *“they spoke unto him the Word of the LORD, and to all that were in his house.”* We realise how precise the order was kept according to the original commission. Before baptism could be administered, the Word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, was preached first, and those listeners believed and after that they were baptised. Of the prison-keeper we read, *“And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptised, he and all his, immediately”* (v. 33). Please notice: First came the preaching, which was heard by all, then they believed, and only after that they were baptised. Nothing is said about infants in that connection.

The way baptism is generally administered today lacks every biblical foundation. That is also confirmed by the church history. This type of unscriptural baptism derives from the era when whole nations were Christianised by force. In such cases everyone in a family, including the infants, was touched by three drops of water on the forehead. Faith was substituted, and godfathers and godmothers were installed of whom the Bible does not speak at all. As we can see, from what we have already shown, the individual must make a personal decision before God. Sad to say that the preaching in the Christian churches of today does not compare with the apostolic pattern, and therefore, does not bring forth biblical results.

The Name

There is hardly another verse in the Scriptures that is so much misunderstood and misused as Mt. 28:19, which reads like this, *“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”* Incomprehensible but still true: in the third century these words were totally misunderstood, and a Trinitarian formula was brought into existence which is still being practised today. No one seems to notice that our LORD spoke about the Name. What is this Name in which we are to baptise? Father, Son and Holy Ghost express the various manifestations of God. But we are to know the Name before we can baptise. A person can be many things: a teacher, a lawyer, a judge, and so forth. One can be father, son, husband – many things. These are descriptions of the offices of that person and have their place, but must be used in the proper connection. But everyone, whether teacher or lawyer or judge, etc. has a name. So it is with God, who is many things and revealed Himself in the Old Testament with the covenant name Yahweh. In water baptism, we need to know His covenant name of the New Testament. In Mt. 28, only the com-

mission was given to baptise in the name in which He revealed Himself as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But the Name itself was not mentioned there.

Now we shall deal with a number of Scriptures where the Name is only referred to. This will be a great help to all those who search and seek for the Truth. In Lk. 10:17 we read, "*And the seventy returned with joy, saying, LORD, even the demons are subject unto us through thy Name.*" Don't we understand automatically that they were referring to the power of the Name of Jesus, even if they didn't speak out the Name? Certainly! At one occasion our LORD said, "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*" (Mt. 18:20). Who would doubt that He meant the Name of Jesus, even if He did not speak it out? In Lk. 24:47 we read "*And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.*" Everyone knows which Name is meant while reading such passages. In Jn. 2:23 we find the statement, "... *many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.*" It is very strange that everyone knows what name is meant while reading such scriptures, except when reading Mt. 28:19! That is strange within itself. It is necessary to seriously think about this.

In the scriptures mentioned so far, reference was made to the Name of the Son, but in the following we shall refer to the Name of the Father. Now we are treading on special ground of God's revelations. The LORD taught us to pray, "*Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name*" (Mt. 6:9). This prayer is repeated by millions every Sunday without anyone even to think or to ask about the Name of the Father which is to be hallowed. In Jn. 12:28 the Son said, "*Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*" What Name was He speaking about? What is the Name of God, who has glorified His Name and will glorify it again? There is only one Name through which we can approach God, that is His own Name.

In His prayer, the Son made again reference to the Father and said, "*I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world*" (Jn. 17:6). Does this refer to any Old Testament Name of God? Certainly not! Whoever paid attention while reading this should have noticed that the Name of the Father is revealed to those who were given to our LORD by redemption out of this world. They are the true Sons and daughters of God. God knows them, and they know God. Now we must bring the matter unto a common denominator. "*Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are*" (Jn. 17:11). It cannot be made any plainer: The Name of the Son is the Name of the Father! Thus we read in verse 26, "*And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it.*" We only deal with one God who has one Name.

To the Jews our LORD said, *“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not”* (Jn. 5:43). What about the Christians of today? Do they receive Him, acknowledging that the Name of the Father and the Son is the same? Blessed is the one who does believe that the Father was manifested in the Son and revealed unto us that Name which is above every name: Jesus – Immanuel – God with us! There is only one personal manifestation of God, which happened in Jesus Christ. There is only one Name of God, which must be revealed to us: that Name is the LORD JESUS CHRIST. In this Name, we have access to the Father and to the throne of grace. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is LORD! God met with us in Jesus Christ, and only in Jesus Christ we can meet with Him. In the light of these few examples, the problem of Mt. 28:19 should be solved. There it speaks about the Name without it being mentioned, and later the titles are left out which belong to this one Name, and only the Name is being used when water baptism is administered.

Apostles’ Doctrine

Now we shall consider the way baptism was performed in the first church. Peter was among those who heard the LORD give the great commission, as it is written in Mt. 28. He was the one to whom Jesus gave the keys of the Kingdom, which means and signifies that he had access to everything belonging to the Kingdom of God. Already before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he stood up in the midst of the 120 and began to place those events according to the Scriptures (Acts 1:15). Right after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost he preached to the masses that had come together. *“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37). Wherever the same gospel and the same Christ is being preached today, the hearts will be touched, the same question arises, and the same answer must be given, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”* (v. 38). This was the first occasion where the great commission was put into practice. Those who believed were baptised precisely according to Mt. 28:19 into the Name of which the LORD spoke.

Anyone knows the difference between a title and a name. The argument that the words of Jesus are of greater importance and carry more weight than those of the apostles does not appeal to a God-fearing person. Anyone who is born of God will believe in the absolute inspiration and total infallibility of the entire Holy Scriptures. If anyone reads a contradiction into God’s Word, he should rather believe that this contradiction is in his own

head, but not in God's Word! We are so overwhelmed to see how the Spirit led the apostles to carry out the great commission.

We already mentioned previously that people believed in Samaria and were baptised. The news about this revival reached Jerusalem. In connection with this we read, *"Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptised in the name of the LORD Jesus"* (Acts 8:14-16). The emphasis lies on the fact that they were baptised in the Name of the LORD Jesus. Is it very strange? Maybe not!

In the house of Cornelius, it was Peter who commanded those who believed to be baptised in the Name of the LORD (Acts 10:48). We can see the overwhelming continuity throughout the New Testament teaching about water baptism. There is no theologian who could deny this, because the Word of God itself testifies about it. Paul even went as far as to say, *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"* (Gal. 1:8).

Everyone will have noticed that baptism in every case was administered in the Name of Jesus Christ. The apostles understood what the LORD had said and commissioned precisely. They did everything exactly according to the Master's instruction. The commission must be read slowly, carefully, and also prayerfully, *"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."* Now, Father is not a name, neither is Son or Holy Ghost a name. These are the descriptions of the different manifestations of the same God. The apostles were taught by the LORD Himself, even throughout the forty days after His resurrection. HE spoke about all the things belonging to the Kingdom of God, and of course, baptism is one of the main teachings. They recognised the Name in which God manifested Himself as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. That is the Name in which true believers are baptised. They did exactly what they were commissioned. At least they could differentiate between titles, which are in connection with the various manifestations, and the Name given for our salvation.

Now we shall turn to Paul whom the LORD had chosen as a special vessel by a direct revelation of Jesus Christ. How did he baptise? When he came to Ephesus he found twelve disciples who only knew about the baptism John administered. Then he instructed them in the plan of salvation and straightway there was a biblical result: *"When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the LORD Jesus"* (Acts 19:5).

Everything should be established on at least two or three witnesses. We have taken into consideration what happened in Jerusalem, in Samaria, in the house of Cornelius and also in Ephesus; we realise, whether Jews, Samaritans, or Gentiles, whether Peter, Philip, or Paul were preaching, everywhere the baptism was administered in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ.

As we already mentioned, there cannot be a contradiction in the Holy Scriptures. The Spirit of God will never give two or three different revelations on the same subject. God chose His own men in that first generation. Whether it was Peter, Paul, or other men, they preached the same Gospel and baptised in the same way. This was done in complete harmony with the testimony of all the Scriptures. Who would dare to suggest that those men who were walking with Jesus and Paul who met the LORD in the bright shining light misunderstood the LORD and were baptising wrong and thereby introducing heresy into the New Testament church which was just inaugurated? Even such a thought is nothing short of blasphemy.

We shall hear Paul again, as he writes to the Romans, “*Know ye not that, as many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death?*” (chapter 6:3). Here he includes himself with those who were baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ. How were you baptised? There is not one incident recorded in the Holy Scriptures, where one person was ever baptised in a Trinitarian formula using the titles of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. This fact needs to be considered very seriously.

All who were called to the ministry and filled with the Holy Spirit had the same understanding, the same doctrine, the same faith, the same baptism, etc. All were in perfect harmony with the LORD, His Word, and each other. Not one of them has recited Mt. 28. They knew that it was said in the singular and not in the plural, “... *baptising them in the **name** (not in the **names**, but in the **name**) of the Father ...*” Our LORD did not continue to say, “and in the Name of the Son, and in the Name of the Holy Ghost.” There is only one mentioning of **the Name**, and that is in the singular. They believed that God manifested Himself as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And they recognised the Name which goes with these three manifestations. They were men who lived in direct fellowship with God. They were under no theological influence, nor did they give their own interpretations. They had the divine revelation.

If anyone will only take the letter of Mt. 28 without the revelation, then verse 19 will just be repeated without understanding what the object of the commission actually is. Mt. 28 and Mk. 16 refer to the last and great commission of the LORD, which we find carried out in the Book of Acts. That is the forever valid standard and the only scriptural pattern, as long as the church of the living God exists.

For example, if a teacher would set a problem before the pupils, he certainly would expect the answer, the result, and not the repetition of the mathematical problem. Should a teacher say, "How much is 3×3 ?" and the answer would be, " $3 \times 3 = 3 \times 3$ ", then anyone would know that something is wrong, because the answer was not given. When it comes to baptism even teachers repeat the problem and don't give the answer. Instead of doing what the LORD said, they repeat verbally what He said. Only if we do as the apostles did, we have the confirmation that the same LORD has called us to preach the same gospel. The apostles and teachers of the early church understood the commission and carried it out according to the perfect revelation of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God that we do have the written testimony with us. We only need the same illumination by the same Holy Spirit that we could see how the apostles saw, teach what they taught, and baptise the way they baptised.

This exposition is clearly outlined in the Holy Scriptures. Everyone should take it seriously. Often two things look alike, but they are not the same. They might seem to be close together, at the same time they could be as far from each other, as heaven is from earth. We must not deny the Name of the LORD. To the church of Philadelphia it was said, "*... for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my name*" (Rev. 3:8). What about all the believers who sing so lovely about the Name of Jesus, who use that Name in their prayers, who preach about that Name so mightily, and then when it really comes to the showdown, they deny that Name and do not want to be associated with it in baptism? Common understanding will tell us that something is wrong somewhere in such a case.

What about all the big evangelists who use the Name of Jesus to cast out devils, to pray for the sick, to perform miracles in that mighty Name, and then when it comes for them to decide to be baptised in that Name which they use so much then they reject and they even fight against it? With their lips they testify how wonderful the Name of Jesus is, and in reality they have not recognised the Name themselves, and they are not ready to bear the reproach of the Name of Jesus. Of such people the LORD already spoke in Mt. 7:22-23, "*Many will say to me in that day, LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*"

This scripture speaks of people believing the full Gospel. In one way they are participating of the blessings promised and given to the church, on the other hand they remain in the unscriptural and traditional teachings. They are not ready to consider a scriptural correction. Should not everyone be willing to accept whatever the Bible says? But it needs courage to take a

stand on God's Word and rather deny the traditional, denominational and unscriptural baptism practice. We have to identify ourselves in baptism with the death of Christ, if we wish to be identified with Him in the resurrection of a new life (Rom. 6:3).

Discerning of Spirits

It is necessary to touch on something very important. In the traditional churches of today we hardly find the teaching about a true conversion and a new birth. Even though this terminology is being used, the experience itself is lacking. But also in the circles of those claiming to believe the full Gospel, the fundamental teachings are not being carefully checked. How is it possible that Bible teachers and trained theologians missed to see how the real scriptural baptism should be administered? If no person was ever baptised therein using the formula of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, why don't the servants of God take correction? They practise a baptism which was invented and introduced when the Roman Catholic Church came into existence. Sad but true, even since the days of the reformation, all the churches which came into existence began to use the same unscriptural baptism right down to this time.

Most people may be surprised to know that the same formula in the "Western World" is being used in occult, spiritistic practices, as it is being called the three high names or the sacred formula which is even used in witchcraft by the mediums who make contact with the spirits of the dead. The same formula is used when the oath is taken to join some of the lodges. Those who are in doubt while participating in them, feel a little better when they hear the formula "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Even while practising witchcraft they think it must be of God, because this formula is so well-known by them, as they heard it used so much in the church. Whether in black or white magic, whether by using the so-called "Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses" everywhere the same formula is being used.

If one speaks to those people about such practices, their answer is, "This cannot be wrong, because it's done in the Name of God." No, never! Only that which is done in the Name of Jesus, is actually done in the Name of God. All the other things are of Satan, who is the god of this world. Our LORD has nothing to do with all the evil practices like table tipping, fortune-telling with cards and so on, divination, palmistry etc. They are forbidden in His Word. But because they are done under the religious cloak with that formula, people are being deceived into it. What parts have the occult practices, spiritism, etc. with the true act required in God's Word in common?

Since when do servants of God and instruments of Satan say the same? Since when is Satan's kingdom coming in the midst of the Kingdom of God?

All must face the question whether it is the same when two do the same. Some are astonished, perhaps even dumb-founded when they hear of people using this formula, doing all sorts of things. But when the same formula is being used for a so-called "baptism" and other religious practices, they find it all right. In the New Testament, everything that we receive from God and everything that happens takes place through the power of God in the Name of Jesus. Therefore we read in Col 3:17, "*And whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the LORD Jesus.*"

Now we know that no prophet and no apostle ever used any formula, but the Name of which the Saviour spoke in baptism. In my brochure "God and His Plan with Humanity" it is clearly shown that the one true God was manifested as Father, Son and Holy Ghost with the one Name **LORD Jesus Christ**. Mt. 28:19 is the absolute truth and so is Acts 2:38 and all the other scriptures. We only need to understand God's Word the right way. Satan has misused and misinterpreted the Word of God, right from the beginning. He succeeded in deceiving the people in a most religious way through a wrong baptism. It is actually a deception. When he came to the LORD he said, "It is written ..." But our LORD replied, "It is also written ..." Satan just took the Scriptures out of context and applied it falsely. The same is being done with the commission to teach and baptise. Satan has blinded the people, that they should not see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:4-6). The name of which the Saviour spoke remains hidden to them.

The whole Christian world is kept in darkness and ignorance. Where do we find true scriptural faith today? Who heeds to the call according to Rev. 18:4 to come out of the religious Babylon of this time? Who has eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a heart to understand? Who can differentiate and discern between the true Word of God and all the man-made interpretations? God always separates light from darkness. Who has the courage to take instructions, to believe, and practise what God's Word says? All the spiritual things cannot be made known by flesh and blood. One cannot teach the other. Everyone is personally responsible towards God and has to make his own decision.

Finally, a word of admonition. All who wish to be in glory should know this, that God has overlooked the time of ignorance, but now reveals His perfect will through His perfect Word. He expects everyone to believe in Him and to act according to His Word. We must forsake all unscriptural doctrines, even if we lose our popularity and our friends. We must be willing to return to the original Bible teaching, pattern and practice.

In Acts 3 we read about the promise that God would send a time of refreshing and also that Christ would remain in heaven until the time of restoration of all things would come. In verse 19-21 we read, “... *when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD and he shall send Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the age began.*” Very clearly it states here that Christ remains in glory until the time of refreshment and the time of the restoration comes. In plain language, this means that now at the end, before the second coming of Christ, all things must be restored in the church of the living God to its original state.

All Christians who believe in the second coming of Christ have heard the preachings about this subject. In fact, many do expect the return of Christ to be imminent. Why then don't they realise that this should be the time in which God wishes to restore all things and give a time of refreshing from His presence? The LORD and Saviour has only one interest, and that would be His concern for His people, the redeemed who make up the body of Christ. The church of Jesus Christ must be founded on God's Word. The biblical baptism and all the other teachings and practices, as they were done by the apostles, are part of the restoration. Paul writes in Eph. 2:20, “... *and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone ...*” The LORD will build His church until she is completed and He can return to take her home. But first we must be brought back to the original teachings and practices. Then the LORD will come and take us to glory.

No one should take this exposition concerning the baptism lightly. If God is merciful to us, we will see the necessity to adjust to whatever God requires in His Word, and voluntarily we shall desire to be baptised in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ. In that way, we break that old yoke that was placed upon all denominations and was spiritually binding all who are baptised into a triune formula. Whosoever is of God will hear and do according to the Word of God. Blessed is he that takes this advice seriously, because it is necessary for our preparation to be ready when Christ comes. HE will give the promise and He will also fulfil the same.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Before entering into the subject about the LORD's Supper, we must deal with the subject of Passover. The natural in the Old Testament foreshadows and merges into the supernatural reality of the New Testament.

The Passover even today is one of the most important feasts in the Jewish congregation. To the Israelites, the LORD said that every family should kill a lamb, eat the flesh and put the blood on the door lintel, left, right and above (Ex. 12). The threshold should not be painted with blood, so that nobody would ever step upon it.

The Hebrew word "pesach" means to spare or to pass by. While all the first-born sons of the Egyptians were killed by the angel of judgement, the first-born sons of Israel were spared, for the LORD had said, "*And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt*" (Ex. 12:13).

The blood of those lambs was shed for an atonement for their sins. It was also a sign for their protection during the time of the judgement. In all the houses of the Egyptians was weeping and mourning, because the dead were everywhere. But in the houses of the Israelites there was absolute security. God's wrath could not enter, because a lamb was killed in their stead. They could go out free. The same applies to the redeemed. They cannot be touched by the terrible judgements of God, when His wrath breaks forth upon the unbelievers. The blood of the lamb of God is our atonement and our protection. Paul writes to the church, "*For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us*" (1 Cor. 5:7). Also the prophet Isaiah says, "... *the chastisement for our peace was upon him ...*" (chapter 53:5). Through His death we were reconciled; through His blood our sins were atoned for, and we received eternal life.

The LORD commanded through Moses that this day of the Passover, which marked also the exodus, should be commemorated in a special way, "*And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever*" (Ex. 12:14). From verse 26-27 this is again confirmed, "*And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.*"

In the same way, the LORD's Supper is in remembrance of our redemption. It is to be held until the LORD returns (1 Cor. 11:26). In one way we look back to the great day of reconciliation, on the other hand we are look-

ing forward to the glorious day, when all the redeemed will meet the Redeemer at the great supper in glory. While inaugurating the LORD's Supper, He said, "... *this do in remembrance of me*" (Lk. 22:19). While taking part in the LORD's Supper we remember the finished work of redemption and know every time we participate afresh, that we were redeemed when Christ, our Saviour, shed His blood on the cross.

The lamb which was slain as a substitute was to be eaten with unleavened bread. Therefore we read, "*Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel*" (Ex. 12:15). This order had to be observed and they had to do it accordingly.

The inauguration of the Passover was directly before their deliverance and their exodus from Egypt. The LORD's Supper was inaugurated during the Passover the LORD held with His disciples directly before He went to be crucified, whereby the church was redeemed. "*And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat of it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God*" (Lk. 22:14-16). In verses 7-13 we are told that our LORD sent Peter and John, giving them this advice, "*Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.*" When they arrived at the owner's place, they told him, "*The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest room, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?*"

In Mt. 26:26 we read, "*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*" The LORD was physically present, when He took the bread into His hands and spoke these words. In His hands was not His literal body, but the unleavened bread, which was baked and prepared according to the prescription given for the Passover.

Wherever the LORD's Supper is being celebrated in a biblical way, a bread should be baked without leaven. This bread is being blessed under prayer. Then it is broken into many small pieces, and all participate and take the broken bread. While the believers take of the bread, they acknowledge and know that the body of Christ was beaten and bruised for them. They know He was crucified for them. They also recognise that they were purchased with the price of the shed blood. They are now owned by God and make up His body.

The apostle Paul writes, "*For I have received of the LORD that which also I delivered unto you, that the LORD Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said,*

Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you (please note the words ‘for you’): *This do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the LORD’s death till he come*” (1 Cor. 11:23-36)

Paul could say, “*For I have received of the LORD ...*” He was instructed by the LORD Himself how the LORD’s Supper should be kept. He refers to the words of our LORD, when he installed the LORD’s Supper according to the gospels, as it is written.

In Lk. 22:20 it says, “*Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*” In the cup was wine. The blood of the new covenant, which was to be shed, was still in His veins and not yet shed on the cross. There is also no mentioning of the changing of the elements into the literal body and blood of Christ. Neither our LORD nor His disciples were drinking literal blood. In fact, our LORD made this statement, “*I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.*” Bread and wine represent the body and the blood of Christ, but they remain bread and wine. HE referred to the new covenant and the new testament, which would come into effect at the moment of His death.

Christ also does not offer Himself afresh every time communion is served. According to Heb. 10:12, He offered Himself once for all and sat down on the right hand of God. The participation of the LORD’s Supper gives the believers the special opportunity to realise every time before God what really happened through the sacrifice of the body of Christ and through the shedding of His holy blood. Every child of God will have to search the heart, before participating in the LORD’s Supper. Whenever we find something which doesn’t please God, we confess it and lay it on the altar, believing the blood had made all things well. We feel the sufferings of our LORD and His dying on the cross with inner pain, as it was for our sake. This humbles us, if we think about it, that such a high price was paid for our redemption by our beloved Redeemer. According to the Holy Scripture, He went with His blood into the heavenly sanctuary and put it on the throne of grace, and thereby brought eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12).

A covenant was made at the moment the blood was shed on the cross. The day of salvation began. Again, we need to compare the Old with the New Testament. In Exodus 24:6-8 it is written about the book of the covenant and also of the blood of the covenant, with which the people of the covenant were sprinkled. Jesus said, “*For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*” (Mt. 26:28). With that, He meant His pure, holy, and divine blood which was to be shed, and

not the wine that was in the cup. HE established the new testament. We are the people of that new covenant and have a direct access and connection to the book of the new covenant.

Paul writes, *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread”* (1 Cor. 10:16-17). These two verses are very rarely used and in fact, many might not even know that they exist. But they express the most profound truth found in the LORD’s Supper. They show us the church as the body, as the living fellowship of the saints who assemble in the Name of Jesus. They are the result of the redemption work of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who offered Himself in His body for us. The bread which we use in the LORD’s Supper, in one way, speaks about the body of Christ which was crucified, on the other hand, it refers to the church which makes up that unity of the body, existing of many single members.

The body of Christ was beaten and wounded but not broken, as it is written, *“For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And, again, another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced”* (Jn. 19:36-37). We deal here with the mystery of Christ and His church. Through the redemption she has become His body – all who are reconciled and redeemed and have received the forgiveness of their sins. Paul writes, *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ”* (1 Cor. 12:12). Here is a great mystery. Christ has only fellowship with the members of His body. Of Him we read, *“And he is the head of the body, the church”* (Col. 1:18).

Just as our natural body is one unit, but exists of many members which are connected and directed through the head, so it is with all the members of the body of Christ. *“For by one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit”* (1 Cor. 12:13). It is noteworthy that: not through water, but through the Spirit He works in all who believe in Jesus Christ and are biblically baptised. Then they are placed through the Spirit into the body of Christ. All redeemed, who are in this divine unity make up the body of the LORD and recognise Him as the head and submit to Him in all things. They feel with every member, they rejoice with those who are rejoicing and suffer with those who are suffering, because 1 Cor. 12:26 says, *“And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”* If this is not so with you, then consider your relationship with Christ.

In this connection we cannot deal with the various ministries of the members in the body of Christ. But Paul makes the following statement, *“But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body”* (1 Cor. 12:18-20). In verse 27 he summarises it with the following words, *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”*

The apostle gives the warning to the believers to search their hearts before participating in the LORD’s Supper, *“But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself not discerning the LORD’s body”* (1 Cor. 11:28-29). All who belong to the body of Christ acknowledge that He took upon Himself our judgement, our sin – everything was placed upon Him. Those who believe in this total redemption and forgiveness also forgive one another, as God forgave them in Christ. Not one puts something unto the account or holds anything against another member. We must discern the body of the LORD. In this case, it speaks of all the members who are completely redeemed, justified, sanctified and are part of the perfect, blameless body of Christ which is without spot or wrinkle. They see each other in Christ and through Christ, they see one another as God sees them: sinless and perfect. They don’t know one another according to the flesh, but rather after the spirit.

As the bread is prepared without leaven, the church must also be free of everything that is part of a traditional, unscriptural teaching. The LORD Jesus used the terminology of the leaven to point out the wrong doctrines of the religious leaders in His day. HE said, *“How is it that ye do not understand that I spoke not to you concerning bread, but that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they that he bade them not to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees”* (Mt. 16:11-12).

Paul also refers to the leaven and applies it into the spiritual realm. He writes in 1 Cor. 5:6-8, *“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened. For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”* Whoever partakes in the LORD’s Supper testifies before God and the people that he is free from all such things which are mentioned here, and in the new life and in the truth he is established. This must have actually happened, and the life must bear the fruits of that testimony. Words alone will not be enough. The experience will have to be there.

In Rom. 11 the apostle refers to the complete justification and sanctification of those who belong to His church. These things were made available when Christ died on the cross. The apostle writes, *“For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches”* (v. 16). Christ is the first fruit, and those who belong to Him are part of the same; He is the first-born, and all who are born of the same seed of God make up the group of the first-born. HE is the root of this new vine, and the true believers are the fruit-bearing branches according to Jn. 15. As in nature, the branches receive the life through the juice that comes up from the roots into the vine, but then bear the fruit of the vine, so it is with all who are born of God. They do not join into something, but they are the result of it, and they carry God’s life in them, and therefore partake of the divine nature. In this connection, Peter writes, *“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love”* (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Here we don’t only deal with a doctrine or a knowledge, but this is the divine result and the fruit of the redemption work which is the true believer. The requirement is this, *“But, as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life, because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear”* (1 Pet. 1:15-17).

Clarification

Because of unscriptural tradition many believe in the actual changing of the two substances into the blood and the body of Christ. If that would really happen, that would be awful. Who could imagine, that one would eat the holy body and drink the holy blood, and then have those things take their natural course? Even the thought is nothing less than blasphemous. That is absolutely excluded.

Just as the Jews misunderstood the words of Jesus, because they did not recognise their spiritual application, so it is now with the Christians. In that day, the multitude was under the impression that our LORD was asking them to act contrary to what the law said, when he made the remark, *“He who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life”* (Jn. 6:54). Every Jew knew what was written in Lev. 17:10-12, *“And whatsoever man there is of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, who eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for*

the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourneth among you eat blood." Because of this the Jews acted the way they did after Jesus spoke about eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

The two natural symbols point to the spiritual. God cannot forbid to drink blood in such a strong way, and then even request His followers to do it. Everyone that takes of the bread and wine testifies that he is redeemed through the sacrifice of the body and through the shedding of the blood. It is in remembrance of that great event. Redemption and forgiveness do not come by partaking of the LORD's Supper, it just happened on Calvary. Through the LORD's Supper it is only to be remembered what actually had taken place.

In Jn. 6, we read about the miracle with the multiplying of the bread, when thousands were fed. The next day people came to the LORD and He said to them, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the food which perisheth, but for that food which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you"* (Jn. 6:26-27).

HE spoke about bread, about food, about eternal life, and the crowd remembered how the children of Israel were fed in the Old Testament. That is why they cried, *"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat"* (v. 31). Jesus connected to this point and said to them, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, LORD, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst"* (vv. 32-35). That is a very clear answer. There is no private interpretation needed. In the same way we eat natural bread to live physically, we need to be part of Him who is the bread of life, if we wish to live eternally.

The LORD Jesus presents Himself unto us as the living bread which came down from heaven and gives to the world eternal and divine life. HE emphasises this thought in the following verses, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat of it, and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"* (vv. 47-51).

That is the gospel! HE has been sacrificed in the body of His flesh that we would be redeemed from our body of flesh and receive eternal life. Heavenly bread is not baked on earth, and divine food does not come from man's hand. The LORD became the sacrifice. HE was crucified that all who believe in the finished work of redemption would receive eternal life and also be fed spiritually. HE is the bread of life. We are partakers of Him in the Spirit. As He became one of us, we are brought back into His kingdom and are made part of Him.

The Jews argued amongst themselves and asked, "*How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*" (v. 52). Today the Christians also argue instead of taking the LORD's Supper in simplicity and with grateful hearts. We see the Lamb of God which took away our sins and shed His blood for us. That blood was our atonement, and therefore, He had to be sacrificed upon the altar. In Christ was God's life, through His death, that life was set free and could come back upon all who were redeemed by Him.

The speech of our LORD was directed towards His suffering and dying. We have to recognise the spiritual and divine participation with God, which was given to us through Jesus Christ who was crucified for us. Through the new birth, we become sons and daughters of God. Paul writes like this, "*For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*" (Eph. 5:30). Earthly speaking, no one is flesh of His flesh or bone of His bone. In the natural, we are all from Adam. But spiritually speaking, we are part of the new creation which originates with Jesus Christ, our LORD. As the redeemed, we are brought back into the fellowship with God. We have His life, which is eternal life, in our souls. To the carnal mind, all this is foolishness, and therefore, people have their own thoughts when they read God's Word. Spiritual things must be understood spiritually.

The LORD Jesus is many things: He is the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Living Bread, the Light of the world, He is the Resurrection – He is everything to us. Through Him, we are placed back as sons and daughters of God. But Jesus never explained the Word, He only spoke it; He acted accordingly, and everything belonging to Him was fulfilled. Therefore, He could say, "*My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work*" (Jn. 4:34).

Whosoever partakes in the LORD's Supper must be ready inside to do the Will of God, as it is revealed to us in His Word. We have to have a personal relationship with God. In that way, we can truthfully say, "*My food is to do the will of Him who redeemed me.*" We receive God's Word, and we receive Christ, the living bread that came down from heaven. His blood redeemed us, because it was shed to be our atonement.

Jesus said, "*This is that bread which came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall*

live forever" (Jn. 6:58). After that special speech His disciples said, *"This is an hard saying. Who can hear it?"* (v. 60). Even those who followed the LORD had their own ideas while listening to His speech. Very clearly, He spoke of Himself as the bread that came down from heaven. But He saw how helpless they were, and therefore, said in verse 63, *"It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."* Only from the above, comes light and revelation of what the LORD had said. His speech about eating His flesh and drinking His blood caused many to follow Him no more. The argument about this goes on even today. It is written, *"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."* Then said Jesus unto the twelve, *"Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, LORD, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God"* (vv. 66-69). The same testimony will have everyone who does follow Jesus Christ. Whether they understand what He said or not, they believe Him, they trust Him, they obey Him, and they follow Him, and then the time comes when things are made clear.

Let us summarise the thoughts about this topic: The redemption work happened once for all on the cross of Calvary. All who receive it by faith partake in the LORD's Supper to remember that great day and work on Calvary. According to the number that participates, the size of the bread is baked – of course, without leaven, as previously stated. Then the bread is being lifted up before the congregation, is prayed over and is blessed in the name of the LORD. Then it is broken, and all participate and eat thereof. If something remains left, then a few eat the rest, so nothing is wasted.

Then the cup with the wine, which has to be from red grapes only, is also lifted up before the congregation, prayed over and blessed in the name of the LORD. All who took of the bread then take of the cup as well. It is all being done in remembrance that our LORD gave His body and shed His blood.

The LORD's Supper must be administered in the way He said. If this is not done, the true service quickly slights into self-made idolatry and that which is being called "faith", in reality, is the opposite. Paul writes, *"Ye cannot drink the cup of the LORD, and the cup of demons; ye cannot be partakers of the LORD's table, and of the table of demons. Do we provoke the LORD to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?"* (1 Cor. 10:21-22).

He might have thought of the scripture of Lev. 17, when God said how the sacrifices were being offered. In verses 3-7, it clearly states that sacrifices which are not pleasing to the LORD were not given unto Him. We read, *"... the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace offering*

unto the LORD. And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for the sweet savor unto the LORD. And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever unto them throughout their generations.”

God gave the order and precise instructions, how and what should be done. The Israelites were convinced that they were sacrificing unto the LORD, but they did things according to their own imagination. Then He let them know clearly that only such sacrifices count with Him, which are brought at the place He ordained and in the way He required it. Everything else was done unto the demons.

Whosoever is part of God’s people, cannot do what he or she likes. It has to be done according to the Word of God, if it is to be done unto Him. Otherwise, if our own imagination comes into the picture, then demons have their way. This is also true about the LORD’s Supper. Paul, as the apostle with special light, has clearly spoken about it. He did not want the believers to be under the influence of demons and still partake at the LORD’s table.

In the apostle-time, there were no arguments about the LORD’s Supper. The LORD Jesus had given the order, and the believers did accordingly in all simplicity. That is why the Scriptures say, they continued with the breaking of bread. We can also read in Acts 20:7, *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread ...”*

From the wording “breaking of bread”, we understand that the emphasis at the LORD’s Supper was on the bread and on the breaking of the bread accordingly, as He had done it Himself and commissioned His disciples to do the same. From the days of the apostles, we read in Acts 2:42, *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

All who truly belong to the church of the living God, will return to the same original doctrine and practice. They will put things into their rightful place and do it after the pattern showed in the Holy Scriptures. There will not be any private interpretations, but simply obedience to the Word. For those who believe, only what the Word says counts. Therefore, the true church does partake of the LORD’s Supper in remembrance of what happened on Calvary. There, the holy blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. There is not one place in the Holy Scriptures which states that anyone who participates in the LORD’s Supper thereby receives the forgiveness of sins. Wherever that is being taught, the salvation relies upon a religious function, rather than on personal faith in Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom of God takes its course even now. The gospel of Jesus Christ, the One who was crucified and rose again and is LORD over all, is being placed into the centre of the proclamation within the church of the living God. Also every ordinance given therein should be followed and observed in obedience. In this fashion, the church returns to the initial beginning in the grace of God. Our LORD is the First and the Last, truly, He is the same, yesterday, today, and for ever. Blessed are all who give Him and His Word the rightful place and acknowledge Him to be the LORD, doing whatever He commanded that we should do.

THE FOOT WASHING

After we dealt with the LORD's Supper, we briefly must touch on the subject of foot washing. Before reading the rest, pertaining to this ordinance in the New Testament, we must see how the priests were commissioned to do things in the Old Testament. Before entering into the Holy of Holies, there was a laver available for the purpose according to the divine order. It was placed between the altar upon which the sacrifice was placed and the tabernacle. We shall read Ex. 30:19, "... *For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat.*" They could not enter the tabernacle, nor come near the altar without first washing their hands and feet (v. 20). Really, while washing the feet, one washes ones hands automatically. In the New Testament the true believers are called a holy priesthood. We must come to God and approach Him in reverence and have to respect His Word in all things.

In Jn. 13:4-10, our LORD gave the following example, "*He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash them with the towel with which he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter; and Peter saith unto him, LORD, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered, and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, LORD, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not except to wash his feet ...*"

If we look upon this scripture just to be a recording of what took place, we don't even feel that God is speaking to us. At that time the LORD spoke to those who were present, and today He speaks by the same Word in the same way to those who come to appear in His presence. Now for a moment, we must consider what Peter actually went through. He asked, "*LORD, dost thou wash my feet?*" The LORD answered, "*What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*" Peter asserted his decision and thought to make it clear what he meant by saying, "*Thou shalt never wash my feet.*" He didn't want the LORD to humiliate Himself before him and do what the least of the servants was meant for, if somebody entered a house. But the LORD and Master gave His disciples a very practical teaching, "*Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant.*" The LORD of glory served in humility, complete by surrendering Himself to service. He put off His clothes and took the apron instead, bowed down and became as one of the least of the slaves in a household. This was an example for His disciples that everyone should esteem the other higher than himself. Here in this case, He showed in a practical lesson how it is done.

When the LORD said to Peter, *"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me"*, he was shocked and only could say with a deep desire the following words, *"LORD, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."* How can we understand that he would have no part with Him, if this ordinance and commandment would not be kept? Does anyone have a part with Christ, the LORD, because of foot washing? The point here is obedience to what the LORD said. This we owe unto Him and also to one another. Even if something He says does not seem to be important, if He says it and it's a request, or an ordinance, we must just do it in simple child-like faith without questioning Him why He requires it. We cannot ask, "Why must we do this?" If we don't obey what He said, we cut the connection to Him, because He gave the ordinance. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Of us it is required to do according to every Word and ordinance, and we must do it willingly and seriously to please Him.

In Jn. 13:12-17, we read the following text, *"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was seated again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and LORD; and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your LORD and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."*

The words of the Master are very clear. They cannot be misunderstood by someone who takes them, as they were spoken. HE said, *"If I, then, your LORD and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."* There is no need for anybody to explain or to give his private interpretation. When the LORD said that we should wash one another's feet, HE meant what He said, *"... ye also ought to wash one another's feet."* This has nothing to do with the oriental custom. HE was not speaking of something that was generally practised. HE knew about that, but very clearly HE stated, *"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."* That is a precise ordinance which cannot be questioned in any way. HE emphasised this commandment with the words, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."*

Every time the LORD said, "Verily, verily" we should take special heed and pay real attention what He said, because He was emphasising something of importance. Here in Jn. 13, He did it a number of times.

About the foot washing nothing much can be said. At the beginning of the New Testament church, it was understood and practised without it being mentioned too often. Paul once refers to the conditions the widows who

should be taken by the local church for support. And this was one condition laid down by him as found in 1 Tim. 5:10, “... *well reported of for good works, if she hath brought up children, if she hath lodged strangers, if she hath washed the saints’ feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work.*”

We showed according to the Bible that our LORD inaugurated the foot washing and gave the practical example Himself. Therefore, no one who is truly honest could discuss these things away. They must be done and obeyed. If somebody explains any scripture and guides the listeners into disobedience to a commandment He gave, what is motivating him? To every believer, the Word of God should be holy and we must be ready to obey and do the least commandment. In such a case, the word of the LORD applies, “*If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*” The blessing from beginning to end rests upon those who do the Word of God, and not on the listeners only who disobey. May the LORD make us such a people who follow in His ways and do as He commanded us, even in this case. Don’t ask why, don’t say it is foolish, and don’t believe that it is not necessary. The LORD said it, He commanded it, He practised it, and He said, “*I have given you an example, that ye should do to one another as I have done to you.*” That is THUS SAITH THE LORD in His Word. Amen.

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