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# A Study of the Extent of the Influence of Selected Jewish Institutions upon the Apostolic Church of the First Century

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A STUDY OF THE EXTENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF SELECTED  
JEWISH INSTITUTIONS UPON THE APOSTOLIC  
CHURCH OF THE FIRST CENTURY

by

Herbert F. Reinhardt

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## CHAPTER I

### THE INTRODUCTION

The Jew of every age has anxiously awaited the coming of his promised Messiah. The Jews just previous to the birth of Jesus Christ were no exception. Although they had a well-organized system of religion they still lacked one thing--their Messiah. He came and with Him came an immense change in the whole system of worship. Many of the previous institutions, ordinances, and rituals were omitted, others were changed and invested with new meaning, as Christ through the apostles set up the new Christian form of worship and organization. Certain of these institutions which became part of the early New Testament Church were selected as the object of this study.

#### A. Statement of the Problem

Certain New Testament institutions were chosen which have a counterpart or some relationship to other earlier Jewish institutions. The problem was to discover to what extent these earlier Jewish institutions have influenced both the formation and the meaning of the later Apostolic institutions.

#### B. The Importance of the Study

Philip Schaff said:

As the Christian Church rests historically on the Jewish Church, so Christian worship and the congregational organization rest on that of the synagogue and cannot be well understood without it.<sup>1</sup>

As the author has at various times studied the beliefs and institutions of the early New Testament Church the truth of the foregoing statement became increasingly apparent. There can be no proper understanding of the New Testament Church and its institutions without a parallel study of that which preceded it and out of which it grew. A study of the New Testament institutions without reference to the Old results in a fragmentary, consequently inaccurate, view.

Many books have been written on the institutions of the Old and New Testaments but to the knowledge of the author none have been written specifically to set forth the influence of the former institutions upon the formation of the latter. The study has value in many ways. It contributes to a proper understanding of the New Testament institutions. For the minister and the layman it provides a historical setting supplying reasons why the New Testament institutions were instituted and what function they were to perform. It has added greatly to the author's understanding of the institutions of the Old and New Testaments and he cherishes the hope that it will do the same for others.

### C. Purposes of the Study

The following objectives guided the study:

1. To discover if there was any vital connection between the institutions of the Old and New Testaments which are usually associated, and if so, how much.
2. To determine the influence of the Jewish institutions upon the New Testament institutions in the following areas: (a) How the earlier institutions influenced the choice of the later institutions, (b) To what extent the earlier institutions influenced the meaning of the later ones,

(c) How much resemblance there is in the forms between the old and the new, and (d) If there were any similarities in the personal qualifications necessary for the participating individuals.

3. To determine whether a study of the Jewish institutions is necessary in order to properly interpret and understand the New Testament institutions.

#### D. Limitation of the Study

This work was not designed to be a detailed, exhaustive study of the selected Old and New Testament institutions but rather a comparative study of both institutions particularly in the areas where the Jewish institutions have influenced the formation of the Christian institutions. Because of a limitation in time not every area has been exhaustively dealt with nor every possible explanation given; only the most commonly accepted opinions were given. Not all of the so-called institutions were investigated since that would be a task too large for the time available for the study. The study has been limited to the investigation of the Jewish Passover and the Lord's Supper, circumcision and Christian baptism, the Feast of Weeks and Pentecost, and the synagogue and the New Testament church.

There has also been somewhat of a limitation in the source-material since most of the works of the early scholars of the apostolic period were written in the German and those of the early Jewish period in Hebrew. Very few of these primary sources were available to the author.

#### E. Methods of Procedure.

The author gathered all the books available to him on the various

subjects and gleaned from them facts pertinent to the problem. The study was purely documentary, and material was collected from historians, writers of literature, theologians, Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. The author tried to confine himself to primary sources, but where these were lacking, he had to quote from other authors who had recourse to the primary sources. Only the materials which would contribute to this study were used; these were collected, compared, and the most commonly accepted view was quoted. Each chapter was divided into two parts: in the first part the study of the Jewish institution was given, and in the second part a parallel study of the New Testament institution was made. This parallel study facilitated observations of similarities and contrasts, making it relatively easy to determine the influence of the first upon the second.

#### F. Definition of Terms

By an institution is meant that which is ordained and set in operation to be perpetuated not only by the present people but by future generations. It is "that which has been established; or a corporate body or society for promoting a particular object."<sup>2</sup> The various chapters of this study were designed as units in themselves making it necessary to give particular definitions in their respective chapters.

#### G. Statement of Organization

Four main chapters were designed for this study. Two parts were included in each chapter, providing first a study of the Jewish institution, and in the second part a parallel study of the New Testament counterpart. In the first two chapters a study of the two sacraments of the New Testament Church and their counterparts in the Old Testament was given--

the Lord's Supper in relation to the Passover, and the rite of baptism with its relation to circumcision. The great event of Pentecost was next studied in its relation to the Feast of Weeks. Lastly, there was a study of the Jewish synagogue and its carry-over into the New Testament Church.

The facts and observations of the study were drawn together in the concluding chapter to show the extent of influence exerted on the New Testament Church by the previous Jewish institutions.

## CHAPTER II

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE JEWISH PASSOVER ON THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

#### A. Introduction

General Procedure. The purpose of this study was to discover the historical and Biblical background of the Jewish feast called the Passover and to determine its relationship to the New Testament institution of the Lord's Supper. An attempt was made to discover how much the earlier Jewish institution has influenced the formation of the later New Testament institution. A clear conception of this Jewish influence should be invaluable in the understanding of the meaning of the New Testament Lord's Supper.

In the beginning there has been a general description of the Jewish Passover and definitions of the Hebrew words used to describe the various parts of the festival.

Following this, there has been a thorough investigation of the origin of the Jewish Passover.

In section four the commemoration of the feast has been brought up to the date of New Testament times. An endeavor was made to obtain a clear understanding of how the Passover was kept prior to and during the time of Christ and also what significance it had for the Jews at that time.

With this understanding the author has in part five entered into the study of the Lord's Supper. There was a defining of terms and the establishing of the event as a counter-part of the Jewish festival.



An attempt was made to discover how much of the Jewish festival was performed by Jesus and His disciples and wherein their observance differed from the Jewish observance.

The later period of the apostles was investigated with reference to their views on the significance and observance of the Lord's Supper.

In conclusion the influence of the Jewish Passover was noted as it affected the formation of the New Testament Lord's Supper.

General Explanation and Definition of Terms. In order to fully comprehend the significance of the event called the Lord's Supper there must be a thorough understanding of its Jewish counter-part, the Passover festival. The Biblical account of this event is called the Passover, Pesach, or Paschal Supper. The Passover is the oldest of Jewish festivals and is first in the calendar of Jewish festivals. It is a Spring festival, beginning on the eve of the 14th day of Nisan, lasting for eight days, originally seven. There were two parts to the celebration, the Passover and the Passover Feast. The former was observed on the 14th of Abib or Nisan and the feast, lasting seven days, followed this event. It is co-incident with the Christian celebration of Good Friday and Easter.

Emil G. Hirsch wrote the following in the Jewish Encyclopedia:

Its Biblical basis is found in Exodus 12:1-50; 13:1-10; Leviticus 23:5-8; Numbers 9:1-14; 28:16-25; and Deuteronomy 16:1-8. The Hebrew word "Pesach" translated "Passover" means "to spare", "to pass by."<sup>3</sup>

It was so called because God passed over the dwellings of the Hebrews or wherever the blood of the Passover Lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts of the Hebrews.

The festival commemorates the deliverance of Israel's firstborn from the judgment wrought on those of the Egyptians (Ex. XII 12-13; comp. Ex. XIII 2, 12 et seq), and the wondrous liberation of the Hebrews from the Egyptian bondage (Ex. XII 14-17)."<sup>4</sup>

The Hebrew word "maggot" referred to in Exodus 12:17 means "the festival of unleavened bread coming from a root which means not 'fermented', 'unleavened'."5

The part of the ceremonies observed in the home was referred to as the "Sedar". Sedar means an order of service. The traditions and stories connected with the Passover are preserved in a book called the "Haggadah".

#### B. The Origin of the Passover

There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to the exact origin of this Jewish festival. Some authors attempt to connect the rite with the Spring festivities of the early Canaanites. Hayyim Schaus in his book The Jewish Festivals attempts such an explanation by saying:

The Pesach as a Spring festival is very old. Jews observed a Spring festival long before the deliverance from Egypt. The beginnings of Pesach carry us back to those pre-historic days when Jews were still tribes of shepherds wandering in the desert. Whenever they found pasturage for their herds, they pitched their tents and grazed their flocks. In the month when the kids and lambs were born, the month that ushered in Spring, they observed a festival at full moon (the fourteenth to the fifteenth day of the month). Every member of the family took part in the observance of this festival, which was featured by the sacrifice of a sheep or goat from the flock. The sacrifice occurred just before nightfall, after which the animal was roasted whole and all members of the family made a hasty meal in the middle of the night . . . One of the chief ceremonies attendant upon the festival was the daubing of the tent-posts with the blood of the slain animal. It was clear to

these primitive shepherds why certain ceremonies were commanded and other practices forbidden. They knew that observance was an antidote to plagues, misfortunes, and illness, and that it was an assurance of good luck and safety for the coming year. Similar beliefs, customs, and fetishes were prevalent amongst other peoples, too. . . . The Jewish peasants of Palestine, those who lived by tilling the soil, had another form of Spring festival, one related to the cutting of the grain which they called "The Festival of Matsos" (Unleavened Bread). Before the start of the barley harvest, the Jews would get rid of all the sour dough (fermented dough used instead of yeast to leaven bread) and the old bread they possessed; everything, in fact, connected with chomets, the leaven of the last year's crop. We cannot know for certain, by now, what was the origin of the removing of all sour dough and the eating of unleavened bread. It was probably regarded as a safeguard against an unproductive year. In later years the Jew created a new interpretation for this old custom, just as they evolved a new meaning for the Pesach eve ceremonies.<sup>6</sup>

Explanations such as these, however, are unfounded in facts.

The author of this study has searched the writings of authors that present this point of view and has discovered no primary source of real information upon which these assumptions are based. In this connection Nathan Isaacs in The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia states:

Many writers, however, eager to explain the entire festival as originally an agricultural feast (presumably a Canaanite one, though there is not a shred of evidence that the Canaanites had such a festival), have seized upon the ōmer, or sheaf offering, as the basis of the hagh (festival), and have attempted to explain the matsos as bread hastily baked in the busy harvest times, or as bread quickly baked from the freshly exempted first fruits. Wherein these theories are superior to the traditional explanation so consistently adhered to throughout the Pentateuch it is difficult to see.

The more prevalent view is the view that this festival has its

origin in the events of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt.

The Passover was the annual Hebrew festival on the 'evening of the 14th day of the month of' Abhibh or Nisan, as it was called in later times. It was followed by, and closely connected with, a 7 days' festival of maccoth, or unleavened bread, to which the name Passover was also applied by extension (Lev. 23:5). Both were distinctly connected with the Exodus, which, according to tradition, they commemorate: the Passover being in imitation of the last meal in Egypt, eaten in preparation for the journey, while Jehovah, passing over the houses of the Hebrews, was slaying the firstborn of Egypt (Ex. 12:12f; 13:1-17); the maccoth festival being in memory of the first days of the journey during which this bread of haste was eaten (Ex. 12:14-20). The ordinance of Pesach, the last meal in Egypt, included the following provisions: (1) The taking of the lamb, or kid without blemish, for each household on the 10th day of the month; (2) the killing of the lamb on the 14th at even; (3) the sprinkling of the blood on doorposts and lintels of the houses in which it was to be eaten; (4) the roasting of the lamb with fire, its head with its legs and inwards--the lamb was not to be eaten raw or sodden (bashal) with water; (5) the eating of unleavened bread with bitter herbs; (6) eating in haste with the loins girded, shoes on the feet, and staff in hand; (7) and remaining in the house until the morning; (8) the burning of all that remained; the Passover could be eaten only during the night (Ex. 12:1-23). This service was to be observed as an ordinance forever (Ex. 12:14,24) and the night was to be "a night of vigils" or at least, "to be much observed" of all the children of Israel throughout their generations (Ex. 12:42). . .

Unleavened bread was eaten with the Passover meal, just as with all sacrificial meals of later times. (Ex. 23:18; 34:25; Lev. 7:12), independently perhaps of the fact that the Passover came in such close proximity with the feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:8). Jewish tradition distinguishes, at any rate, between the first night and the rest of the festival in that the eating of maccoth is an obligation on the first night and optional during the rest of the week (Peschim 120a) although the eating of unleavened bread is commanded in general terms (Ex. 12:15; 13:6,7; 23:15; 34:18; Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:17).<sup>8</sup>

The Jews were to eat unleavened bread for a whole week the first and last days being special festive days in which they were to do no work.

The reason for eating unleavened bread is "that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life."<sup>9</sup>

The celebration of the Passover was thus started at the Exodus and continued throughout the later years of the history of Israel.

This is further brought out in the following statement from Nathan Isaacs:

In the very beginning of their national life in Palestine we find them celebrating the Passover under the leadership of Joshua in the plains of Jericho (Josh. 5:10). History records but few later celebrations in Palestine but there are enough intimations to indicate that it was frequently if not regularly observed. Thus Solomon offered sacrifices three times a year upon the altar which he had built to Jehovah, at the appointed seasons, including the feast of Unleavened Bread (1 Kings 9:25; 2 Chr. 8:13). The later prophets speak of appointed seasons for pilgrimages and sacrifices (Isa. 1:12-14) and occasionally refer to a Passover celebration (Isa. 30:29 bearing in mind that the Passover is the only night-feast of which we have any record). In Hezekiah's time the Passover had fallen into such a state of desuetude that neither the priests nor the people were prepared for the king's urgent appeal to observe it. . . . In the 18th year of King Josiah, however, there was celebrated the most memorable Passover, presumably in the matter of conformity to rule, since the days of the Judges (2 Kings 23:21; 2 Chr. 35:1). The continued observances of the feast to the days of the exile is attested by Ezekiel's interest in it (Ezk. 24:18). In post-exilic times it was probably observed more scrupulously than ever before (Ezr. 6:19).<sup>10</sup>

#### C. The Commemoration of it in New Testament Times

Just prior to and during the life of Christ the Passover lamb was slain in the courtyard of the Temple instead of in the individual homes. Thus it was necessary to make a special trip to Jerusalem if one wanted to take part in the Passover.

The evening before the Passover was especially set apart for the removal of all leaven from the homes and the temple (Exodus 12:16, 17).

The Jewish rabbi Emil G. Hirsch described the scene as follows:

As soon as night (on the 13th) had completely set in, the father of the household lighted a plain wax taper, took a spoon and a brush, or three or four entire feathers, and, after having deposited a piece of bread in some noticeable place, as on a window-sill, to mark the beginning of the search, made the complete round of the house and gathered up all the leavened bread that was in it. Coming to the window-sill where the piece of bread was deposited, he carefully put it into the spoon, leaving no crumbs on the sill, and pronounced this benediction: "Blessed be Thou. . . who hast commanded us to remove the leaven." Then he added an Aramaic formula: "All leaven which perchance remains in my domain and which has escaped my observation shall be destroyed and be like unto the dust of the earth." 11

During this previous day the lamb is purchased and the Jews arrange themselves into households so that there are at least ten and seldom more than twenty to each Paschal lamb. Hayyim Schaus gave the following description of the rites as performed in the temple:

The morning before, thousands of priests and Levites are gathered in the temple. There are twenty-four divisions of them of duty throughout the land, and, generally, there is only one division present in Jerusalem to take care of the Temple service. However, during the three great festivals, when there are so many people in town and so many animals to be sacrificed, all divisions come to Jerusalem. Around three o'clock thousands of Jews begin to make their way to the temple with a lamb on their shoulders to be among the first to offer their Pesach sacrifice.

The ritual is repeated three times. When the court of the Temple is filled with the first comers, the gates are shut. The Levites blow the ceremonial blast on their trumpets and the sacrifice begins. The owner himself slays the animal. The priests stand in rows, bearing aloft gold and silver trays, each metal borne by a different row of priests. They perform their share of the ritual and the Levites stand on the platform and sing Hallel, Psalms of praise for holidays, to the

accompaniment of musical instruments. The elaborateness of the ritual and the singing and playing of the Levites add dignity and beauty to the scene, and the Jews gathered in the court are filled with devotion and piety. The first section files out of the court and the second section files in. The same ritual is performed again. It is repeated once more for the third and final section.<sup>12</sup>

The remaining part of the observances were celebrated in the home. In each home there gathered from ten to thirty persons. No alien could participate; circumcision was a prerequisite (Ex. 12:43-49). The outstanding ceremony in the home is the Sedar which is the name given to the order of service. The part of the service which was conducted in the homes was as follows:

In the homes people lounge on sofas placed around the room. The left hand rests on soft cushions, the right hand takes food and drink from small, individual tables set before each feaster. One sits at the head of the room and leads in the ceremonial observance. First a glass of wine mixed with water is taken. Then the right hand is washed and all partake of lettuce dipped in a tart liquid. Then the sacrificial animal is served and is eaten with matsch and bitter herbs, dipped in charoses, a mixture of ground nuts and fruits in wine. Then begins the second part of the ceremonial of the evening; sometimes called the Haggadah, the reciting of the story of the festival, and the discussion of the ceremonies that go with it. A second glass of diluted wine is drunk and the son of the household asks why this night is different from other nights. His father answers him with excerpts from the Bible telling about the deliverance from Egypt and then explains the meaning of the sacrificial lamb, the matsch, and the bitter herbs. All listen to him with great attention and devotion. And when he starts to sing Hallel, Psalms 63:68, 87 they all join in loudly. They conclude with the benediction for redemption and are filled with the hope of immediate deliverance from their enemies and the removal of the foreign governor and his foreign soldiers from the holy city.<sup>13</sup>

Altogether there are four cups of wine which every participant drinks during this service. These cups refer to the four expressions found in Exodus 6:6,7. of what Jehovah would do. An extra cup and place was prepared for Elijah, for it was generally expected that Messiah would come during Pesach, with Elijah as His herald. At a certain time in the ceremony the door was opened for Elijah, should he come. A benediction was then uttered, "Blessed is he who cometh" and also a prayer based on Psalm 79:6; 69:25; and Lamentations 3:66.

To the Jews the various parts of the Passover festival were very significant. The whole rite was an annual commemoration of the typical redemption of the Hebrew people (Ex. 12:25-27; 42).

It was also an annual ratification of the covenant between God and His people. As such it was itself a sacrifice both of expiation and thanksgiving; and summed up or represented all other covenant sacrifices.<sup>14</sup>

The bitter herbs signified the hardship of their bondage in Egypt. The unleavened bread and having the loins girded commemorated their sudden flight (Ex. 12:30,34; 39). The paschal lamb commemorated the saving of their firstborn and also some significant associations were made to the coming Messiah, who was again to liberate the people. The roasting of the lamb whole "has been thought to symbolize the unity of the family, the Passover being originally a pure domestic festival, a bond of union between the participants and Jahweh."<sup>15</sup>

The sacrificial element of the Passover was presented by Von Orelli as follows:

The Passover lamb was a sacrifice. . . Such expressions as, "it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover (Exod. 12:27)" an offering (Num. 9:7), etc., fully justify our classification. The idea of sacrifice is not brought out in the first cele-



bration in Egypt; for there was then no priesthood and no altar. At a later time, the blood was sprinkled, and probably the fatty pieces burned on the altar (Exod. 23:18, 34:25). It belonged to that class of offerings in which the meal was the principle part, and in which that was a representation of the communion between God and man. It was a home or family offering, where the members of the family were united, and confessed themselves to be the Lord's people. . . The blood had an expiatory efficacy, by keeping the divine wrath away from the home. The sacrificial nature of the occasion is shown by the regulations governing the selection of the lamb (or goat); and the injunction against breaking its bones points to its consecrated character.<sup>16</sup>

#### D. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is:

. . . the distinctive rite of Christian worship, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ upon the eve of His atoning death, being a religious partaking of bread and wine, which having been presented before God the Father in thankful memorial of Christ's inexhaustible sacrifice, have become (through the sacramental blessing) the communion of the body and blood of Christ (John 6:54; Acts 2:42; 20:7,11; Rom. 15:16; I Cor. 10:16; 11:23-26). The N. T. sources of our knowledge of the institution of the Eucharist are four-fold, a brief account thereof being found in each of the Synoptic Gospels and in St. Paul's First Ep. to the Corinthians (Mt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:14-20; I Cor. 11:23-26, 10:16, 17).<sup>17</sup>

The Lord's Supper has been so named because the Lord Himself instituted it and that the particular rite was in connection with a supper.

H. Orton Wiley made the following observations:

During the Apostolic age there were a number of terms used to express the meaning of the Lord's Supper, at least five of these words being found in the new testament. (1) It was called the Eucharist (εὐχαριστία), to give thanks, referring to Christ's taking the cup and giving

thanks. Sometimes also the eulogesis (from εὐλογέω, to praise, or bless), as in reference to Jesus' act in blessing the bread. The two words were also interchanged. Thus St. Paul speaks of "the cup of blessing". . . As such it is a solemn thanksgiving for the blessings of redemption.

(2) It was known also as the Communion. The

Acts of the Apostles joins together "the breaking of bread" and "the fellowship" (Acts 2:42).

(3) It was regarded as a memorial feast a commemoration of the death of Jesus. . . (I Cor. 11:26).

(4) It was looked upon as a sacrifice (θυσία).

As such, it not only commemorated the sacrifice of Christ, but was itself regarded as a sacrifice. . . The community meal was called a sacrifice, in that it was itself a thankoffering or a "sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15 cf Phil. 2:17; 4:18). (5) Finally it was called the presence or the mystery (μυστήριον).<sup>18</sup>

The problem that has now been considered is that of the relation between the Jewish Passover and the celebration as conducted by Jesus and His disciples.

The setting of the Supper in the Synoptic accounts implies that it was a Passover meal (see Mt. 26:17, Mk. 14:12, Lk. 22:7). According to that account, Christ sent the disciples to prepare the Passover on "the first day of unleavened bread," which Mk. and Lk. identify with the day on which the Passover lamb was killed. The Supper took place on the evening of the same day. Again, the words of Lk. 22:15 ("With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you"), in the setting in which they occur in the Lucan narrative imply that the meal was the Passover. Paschal references have been seen in St. Paul's account of the institution (I Cor. 11:32), e.g. the word "memorial" (cf Ex. 12:14); the "proclamation of the death, corresponding to the third cup of the Passover meal. . . Again, the reference to Christ's death and its sacrificial character undoubtedly arises more naturally out of Paschal associations than it would do if the meal were an ordinary one.<sup>19</sup>

Jesus and His twelve disciples formed the ideal group for the observing of the Passover feast, since there were to be at least ten

and seldom more than twenty. Jesus also would be the logical head of the group as the father would be in the Jewish home.

The Passover observance was not anything new to either Jesus or the disciples since all were Jews and had from childhood up been taught in the way of the Hebrews. The disciples had probably taken part in many of the Passover feasts throughout their lifetime and so it was natural for them when the time of the Passover was at hand to say to Jesus, "Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the Passover?" (Matt. 26:17). Alfred Edersheim, the noted authority on the history of the early church stated:

So far as appears, or we have reason to infer, this Passover was the only sacrifice ever offered by Jesus Himself. . . . If Christ was in Jerusalem at any Passover before His Public Ministry began, He would, of course, have been a guest at some table, not the Head of a Company. Hence, He would not have been the offerer of the Paschal Lamb. And of the three Passovers since His Public Ministry had begun, at the first His twelve Apostles had not been gathered (John 2:13), so that He could not have appeared as the Head of a Company; while at the second He was not in Jerusalem but in the utmost parts of Galilee, in the borderland of Tyre and Sidon, where, of course, no sacrifice could be bought (Matt. 15:21). Thus, the first, the last, the only sacrifice which Jesus offered was that in which symbolically, He offered Himself. And, in truth, as we think of it, we can understand not only why the Lord could not have offered any other sacrifice, but that it was most fitting that He should have offered this one Pascha, partaken of its commemorative Supper, and connected His own New Institution with that to which this Supper pointed.<sup>20</sup>

Peter and John were commissioned to go and make things ready for the Passover (Luke 22:7). They undoubtedly prepared just like the other Jews in Jerusalem. And thus it was that Jesus and the twelve disciples gathered for the Passover. We know that, as the Jewish

Law directed, they reclined on pillows around a low table, each resting on his left hand, so as to leave the right free. The following procedure of the actual observance is that given by Dr. Edersheim:

The Psachal Supper began as always, by the Head of the Company taking the first cup, and speaking over it "the thanksgiving". The form presently in use consists really of two benedictions--the first over the wine, the second for the return of this Feast day with all that it implies, and for being preserved once more to witness it. Turning to the Gospels, the words which follow the record of the benediction on the part of Christ (Lk. 22:17,18) seem to imply, that Jesus had, at any rate, so far made use of the ordinary thanksgiving as to speak both these benedictions. . . . He then passed the cup around to His disciples. . . . The next part of the ceremonial was for the Head of the Company to rise and "wash hands". It is this part of the ritual that St. John records the adaptation and transformation on the part of Christ. The washing of the disciples feet was evidently connected with the ritual of "handwashing."

Then follows the account of what happened "during Supper", the Supper itself being left undescribed. The explanation of the footwashing followed and then the food was brought to the low table. Then the Head of the Company would dip some of the bitter herbs into the salt water or vinegar, speak a blessing, and partake of them, then hand them to each in the company. Next he would break one of the unleavened cakes (according to the present ritual the middle of the three), of which half was put aside for after supper. This is called the Aphiqomon, or after-dish, and as we believe that "the bread" of the Holy Eucharist was the Aphiqomon, some particulars may here be of interest. The dish in which the broken cake lies is elevated, and these words are spoken: "This is the bread of misery which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt." "All that are hungry, come and eat; all that are needy, come, keep the Pascha."

The Supper itself begins by eating, first, a piece of the unleavened cake, then of the bitter herbs dipped in Charoseth, and lastly two small pieces of the unleavened cake, between which a piece of bitter radish has been placed. But we have direct testimony that, about the time of

Christ, "the sop" which was handed round consisted of these things wrapped together: flesh of the Paschal Lamb, a piece of unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. After being handed the sop Judas leaves.

We now approach the most solemn part of that night; The Institution of the Lord's Supper. . . If we now ask ourselves at what part of the Paschal Supper the New Institution was made, we cannot doubt that it was before the supper was completely ended (Mt. 26:26, Mk. 14:22). According to Jewish ritual, the third cup was filled at the close of the Supper. This was called by St. Paul (I Cor. 10:16) "the Cup of Blessing," partly, because a special "blessing" was pronounced over it.

If we are asked, what part of the Paschal service corresponds to the "Breaking of Bread," we answer, that this being really the last Pascha, and the cessation of it our Lord anticipated the later rite, introduced when, with the destruction of the Temple, the Paschal as all other sacrifices ceased. While the Paschal Lamb was still offered, it was the Law that, after partaking of its flesh, nothing else should be eaten. But since the Paschal Lamb had ceased, it is the custom after the meal to break and partake as Aphekomon, or after-dish, of that half of unleavened cake, which, as will be remembered had been broken and put aside at the beginning of the Supper. The Paschal Sacrifice having now really ceased, and consciously so to all the disciples of Christ. He anticipated this, and connected with the breaking of the Unleavened Cake at the close of the Meal the Institution of the breaking of Bread in the Holy Eucharist.<sup>21</sup>

After this the disciples and Jesus sang a Psalm (presumably the usual Hallel) and went to the mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26).

#### E. Comparisons Between the Passover and the Lord's Supper

A study of the two festivals has revealed the following deviations of the Lord's Supper from that of the Jewish Passover.

Judas the betrayer was the subject of much extra conversation not usually found in the Passover. This, however, did not affect the rite

directly. Instead of the handwashing ceremony, Jesus arose, girded himself with a towel, and thoroughly surprised the disciples by washing their feet. This deviation was apparently for the purpose of teaching the disciples a concrete lesson in humility and servitude (John 13:12-17), since they had previously argued as to who would have the first place. There was no extra place set at the table for the Messiah should He come; this suggested that at this last Passover Jesus took that place and thereby made open claim to His Messiahship before the disciples. As Jesus took the third cup He put an entirely new meaning into it by saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." With these words the old covenant was supplanted by the new covenant and the great sacrifice of Jesus' blood fulfilled the symbolical offering of the previous Paschal Lamb. According to the previous study another Paschal law was broken when Jesus passed around the Aphikomion or after-dish and the disciples partook of it. This is a significant change for by this act Jesus invalidated and disregarded the previous eating of the Paschal Lamb and connected the offering of His own body with the last thing to be eaten at the Passover meal.

Because of the definite relation between the Passover and the Lord's Supper, the meaning of the new Institution can be much more clearly discerned in the light of the old. Since the new rite has supplanted the old, the function of the new must in many ways be the same function as the old, only with a new emphasis, the object of devotion now being the Lamb of God instead of the Paschal Lamb. The earnest expectation is not now to be the first coming of the Messiah,

but His second coming.

Dr. Pope has adequately related the teachings of the two ceremonies by saying that:

(1) Now the ancient rite was an annual commemoration of the typical redemption of the Hebrew people; and the Lord's Supper is the solemn act of the Church's commemoration of the redeeming death of the Savior of the world. . . Hence the rite is the great expression of the Church's gratitude for the gift of Christ, and especially His atoning death. It is a feast of thanksgiving within the Christian assembly, and it is the feast of testimony before the world, "showing forth" His death. (2) The ancient Passover was also the annual ratification of the covenant between God and His people (Ex. 24:6-8). . . When our Lord substituted His Supper, He used language that included all and especially referred to the solemn covenant transaction in which Moses divided the blood of atonement into two parts: half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar, to denote the propitiation of God; with the remainder he sprinkled all the people, to signify to them the divine favor, and the book of the covenant also, to signify the ratification of the covenant of which the book was the record; "This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you." These words of Moses our Lord connects with the new Passover of His new covenant: "Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (3) But the ancient Passover was the rite that kept in annual remembrance the birth of the people as such and their community life in the bond of the covenant. . . The Supper is the sacrament of union with Jesus the true Vine; and of union with one another in Him. . . The real bond of union, however, is not the bread and wine; it is the common participation of life in Christ by the Spirit. But the sacramental eating and drinking together is the outward and visible sign of that union. The Supper therefore is the perfect badge of common discipleship; the mutual pledge of all the offices of brotherly love.<sup>22</sup>

From a study of the New Testament commemoration as instituted and performed by Jesus in comparison with the original feast of the Passover, some definite teachings are evident. These teachings have been well summed up by H. Orton Wiley as follows:

Apart from matters of doubtful interpretation, these passages plainly teach, First, that the Lord's Supper is a divine institution of perpetual obligation. Second that the material elements to be used in the celebration, are bread and wine. Third, that the important constituent parts of the Service are: (1) the consecration of the elements, (2) the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the wine, (3) the distribution and reception by the communicants of the bread and wine. Fourth, that the design of the ordinance is, (1) to commemorate the death of Christ, (2) to represent, to effect and to avow our participation in the body and blood of Christ, (3) to represent, effect and avow the union of believers with Christ and with each other, and (4) to signify and seal our acceptance of the new covenant as ratified by the blood of Christ. Fifth, conditions for profitable communion are: (1) knowledge to discern the Lord's body, (2) faith to feed upon Him, (3) love to Christ and to His people.<sup>23</sup>

#### F. Conclusions

In conclusion it can be said that the Passover has greatly influenced both the method and meaning of the Lord's Supper. It is doubtful if there would have been such a rite at all if there had been no previous celebration of the Passover, since the later rite was a re-emphasis of the old. The significance and meaning would certainly not have been so readily understood and comprehended by the disciples had it not been for the lingering memory of the significance of the Passover.



With the understanding of the Passover and the study made of the Lord's Supper the following interpretations can be derived. As none that were uncircumcised were allowed to partake of this feast so should none that have not entered into a saving covenant relationship be allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper. Even as the Jews made the Passover a time of thankful recalling of the deliverance out of Egypt so ought the Lord's Supper be made a time of thankful reminiscence of the time when we were delivered from sin and bondage. When the Jews kept this feast there was a longing and an expectancy in their hearts for the coming of the Messiah. In our hearts there ought to be the longing and expectancy of our Lord when we shall eat and drink together with Him in the new kingdom. To the Jews the Passover was a ratification of their covenant relationship. As Christians it ought to be a time of the renewing, of the allegiance to Jesus Christ, a time of re-affirmation of the faith in Him and a renewal of the pledge and purpose to be true and faithful until "the kingdom of God shall come" (Lk. 22:17).

## CHAPTER III

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION UPON CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

#### A. Introduction

General Procedure. The purpose of this chapter has been to discover the origin and Biblical significance of the Jewish rite of circumcision, to investigate its significance in relation to the covenant made with Abraham, and to discover how much of the previous rite has been carried over and incorporated into the meaning of Christian baptism.

First the rite of circumcision has been investigated, its origin and Hebrew significance explained, with a view to discovering the part it occupied in securing to the person the blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant. The normal life of a Hebrew child has been studied, including the various rites through which he passed in order to discover the spiritual efficacy of the rite of circumcision.

Secondly the rite of water baptism has been discussed with the intent of discovering its origin in the Old Testament and its peculiar meaning in the case of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. The relationship of the New Testament believer to the covenant has been discussed in order to discover the initiatory similarities of Christian baptism in the light of circumcision. Circumcision and baptism have been compared and the seemingly obvious influences of the first upon the latter have been suggested.

General Explanation and Definition of Terms. The rite of circumcision figured prominently in the life of every Hebrew, from the time

of Abraham even to this day. In Biblical Hebrew the word circumcision means "the cutting away of the foreskin".<sup>24</sup> Circumcision is a religious rite performed on all male children of the Jews on the eighth day after birth; also on their slaves, whether born in the house or not. It was enjoined upon Abraham and his descendants as a "token of the covenant" concluded with him by God for all generations, the penalty of non-observance being excision from the people (Gen. 17:10-14; 21:4; Lev. 2:3). Aliens had to undergo circumcision before they could be allowed to partake of the covenant-feast of Passover (Ex. 12:48), or marry into a Jewish family (Gen. 34:14-16). It was "a reproach" for the Israelite to be uncircumcised. Hence the name "uncircumcised" became an opprobrious term, denoting the Philistines and other non-Israelites (I Sam. 14:6; 31:4).

Since circumcision was the initiatory rite through which one became heir to the privileges and obligations of the Abrahamic covenant it became a vital question in the new dispensation or after the death of Christ. The disciples commissioned by Christ and empowered with the Holy Spirit began to preach to the Gentiles. The question consequently arose as to whether these new converts were under obligation to be circumcised before they could enter into the fellowship of the believers and enjoy the privileges of salvation. A dispute arose climaxing in the "Jerusalem Conference" (Acts 15). The apostles and elders under the guidance of the Holy Spirit reached the decision that circumcision was no longer obligatory.

Another rite was commanded by Christ (Matt. 28:19) and practised by the disciples (Acts 2:38) called Christian baptism. This new rite

was not unfamiliar to the people since the Jews had many forms of ceremonial "washings" and "baptisms". This rite, however, was distinct from the other baptism both in its form and meaning. From the beginning of the New Testament Church Christian baptism has been regarded as the initiatory rite by which members are admitted into the visible Church of Christ.<sup>25</sup> This fact together with Paul's statement in Colossians 2:11-12, relating the two rites, makes it evident that this Christian baptism in the new covenant is the counter-part of circumcision in the old covenant. The term "baptism" first emerges in the New Testament in relation to the baptism of John. This rite had only a temporary meaning and was replaced by the baptism of the apostles which was different in form and meaning. It has been the author's task to discover what effect circumcision had in determining this later apostolic baptism.

## B. Circumcision

The Origin of Circumcision. Circumcision was known not to be an exclusively Jewish rite.

Diodorus (according to an observation in Biblioth 3:32) found it even among the Troglytes, and in recent times it has been found in the South Sea Islands and among heathen negroes. It may be taken as certain that it was a custom of immemorial antiquity among some nations of Western Asia and Africa, but not, as far as appears, among Japhetic tribes.<sup>26</sup>

We see then that the rite was in existence before it was introduced to the race of Abraham. This, however, does not justify the inference that the significance of circumcision in the Old Testament must be explained from heathenism. The historical origin and the religious import of circumcision must be carefully distinguished.

The first mention of this rite is in relation to Abraham, the father of the Jewish Covenant people. God called Abraham to become the head of a special chosen people who were to be the instruments through which God could bless the nations of the earth. The transaction which took place between God and Abraham was as follows:

And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. . . and my covenant shall be an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.<sup>27</sup>

If any stranger or Gentile wanted to enter the fellowship of the covenant people God instituted thus:

And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one born in the land.<sup>28</sup>

Any who were not born to a family in the covenant but desired to become members of the covenant were classified as proselytes. The rite consisted of the removal of a part of the foreskin of the male organ and could be performed by any Israelite, but usually it was performed by the father of the child. In special cases women might perform it (Exod. 4:25). The instrument used in earlier times was a sharp stone or a knife of flint (Exod. 4:25, Josh. 5:2,3). The operation was a

painful one, at least to grown persons (Josh 5:8), and required about three days for the inflammation to subside. It was usual to connect the naming of the child with circumcision (Gen. 21:3,4; Luke 1:59; 2:21), a practise which probably had respect to the fact that it was in connection with the institution of the rite that God gave to the ancestor of the race his name of Abraham (Gen. 17:5).

A religious consecration for girls is neither prescribed at the institution of circumcision, nor at a later date. This agrees with the dependent position of woman, who has a part in national and covenant life only as a partner of man--as a wife and mother.<sup>29</sup>

The Commemoration of Circumcision. M<sup>l</sup>Clintock and Strong in their very thorough work presented the following excellent account of the commemoration of circumcision:

In compliance with God's command, Abraham, though then ninety-nine years of age, was himself circumcised and all of his household, including Ishmael. On the birth of his son Isaac, the rite was attended to with regard to him (Gen. 21:4); and it continued to be observed by his posterity, and distinctively to characterize them from the people amidst whom they dwelt (Gen. 34:14,15).<sup>30</sup>

The usage thus introduced by Abraham was formally enacted as a legal institute by Moses (Lev. 12:3; comp. John 7:23). Slaves, whether home-born or purchased, were circumcised (Gen. 17:12, 13), and foreigners must have their males circumcised before they could be allowed to partake of the Passover (Exod. 12:48), or become Jewish citizens (Judg. 14:10). . . . It was appointed to be observed in relation to all who became proselytes from heathenism to Judaism (comp. Judith 14:10) . . . . The penalty of death for a neglect of this ordinance appears in the case of Moses to have actually been demanded of the father, when the Lord "sought to kill him" because his son was uncircumcised (Exod. 4:24-26). During the passage through the wilderness the practice fell into disuse, so that of those who entered Canaan none had been circumcised. As this was fatal to their title under the

covenant to take possession of the land, Joshua, in obedience to God's command, caused all the males to be circumcised (Josh. 5:2-9). The most satisfactory explanation of this neglect appears to be, that the nation, while bearing the punishment of disobedience in its forty years' wandering, was regarded as under a temporary rejection by God, and was therefore prohibited from using the sign of the covenant. This agrees with the mention of their disobedience and its punishment, which immediately follows in the passage in Joshua (verse 6), and the words (verse 9), "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." The "reproach of Egypt" was the threatened taunt of their former masters that God had brought them into the wilderness to slay them (Exod. 32:12, Num. 14:13-16; Deut. 9:28), which, so long as they remained uncircumcised and wandered in the desert for their sin, was in danger of falling upon them. From this time forward it became the pride of the nation to observe this ordinance; on all those people who did not observe it they looked down with contempt, not to say abhorrence (Judg. 14:3; 15:18; I Sam. 14:6; 17:26; 2 Sam. 1:20; Isa. 52:1; Ezek. 31:18; Eph. 2:11, etc.); and so much did it become a rite distinctive of them, that their oppressors sought to prevent their observing it--an attempt to which they refused to submit, though threatened with the last penalties in case of disobedience (1 Macc. 1:48, 50, 60-62). The introduction of Christianity was the signal for the abolition of this rite in the Church of God; as the old covenant had waxed feeble and was passing away, that which was the token of it also ceased to be binding; the rule was proclaimed that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15; Col. 3:11), though among the Jewish Christians were still found many who clung tenaciously to their ancient distinctive rite, and would have imposed it even on the Gentile converts to Christianity (Acts 15:1; Gal. 6:12, etc.).<sup>31</sup>

There are a number of references to circumcision in the New Testament. The following reference from M'Clintock and Strong refers to the circumcision of Christ.

Our Lord himself was circumcised (Luke 2:21) because it became Him who was the seed of Abraham according to the flesh to fulfill all righteous-

ness, and because he was "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promise made unto the fathers (Rom. 15:8)."<sup>32</sup>

John the Baptist was also circumcised the eighth day and was destined to become the one who prepares the way for the new covenant (Luke 1:59). Paul the Apostle, speaking of himself, mentions that he was circumcised the eighth day (Phil. 3:5). Paul caused Timothy to be circumcised to avoid offence to the Jews, his mother being a Jewess. There were undoubtedly others who were circumcised before the decision was made that circumcision was no more obligatory. The views taken by the early Christians concerning circumcision was brought out in the following excerpt:

The attitude which Christianity, at its introduction, assumed towards circumcision was one of absolute hostility, so far as the necessity of the rite to salvation, or its possession of any religious or moral worth were concerned (Acts 15; Gal. 5:2). But while the apostles resolutely forbade its imposition by authority on the Gentiles, they made no objection to its practice, as a mere matter of feeling or expediency. Paul, who would by no means consent to the demand for Titus, who was a Greek, to be circumcised (Gal. 2:3-5), on another occasion had Timothy circumcised to conciliate the Jews, and that he might preach to them with more effect as being one of themselves (Acts 16:3). The Abyssinian Christians still practice circumcision as a national custom (see Gibbon, Decline and Fall, N. Y. edition, iv, 565). In accordance with the spirit of Christianity, those who ascribed efficacy to the mere outward rite are spoken of in the N. T. almost with contempt as "the concision" or "amputation" (τὴν ἀκροτομήν); while the claim to be the true circumcision is vindicated for Christians themselves (Phil. 3:2, 3). An ethical idea is attached to circumcision in the O. T., where uncircumcised lips (Exod. 6:12, 30), or ears (Jer. 6:10), or hearts (Lev. 26:41) are spoken of, i.e. either stammering or dull, closed as it were with a foreskin, or rather rebellious and unholy (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 4:4), because circumcision was the symbol of purity (see



Isa. 52:1). Thus the fruit of a tree is called uncircumcised, or in other words, unclean (Lev. 19:23). In the N. T. the ethical and spiritual idea of purity and holiness is fully developed (Col. 2:11,13; Rom. 2:28,29).<sup>33</sup>

The Significance of Circumcision. Gustav Oehler, a competent student of the Old Testament, gave the following significance to circumcision:

When first appointed by God, circumcision was expressly set forth as a token of the covenant which God had made with Abraham; and the Apostle tells us that Abraham received "the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of that faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised" (Rom. 4:11); so that to Abraham it was not only a sign or token of God's covenant, but also an ob-signation or certificate that he was in a state of acceptance before he was circumcised. As a Mosaic institution, it was also the sign of the covenant which God made with Israel, which is hence called the "covenant of circumcision" (Acts 7:8). In consequence of this, it became the medium of access to the privileges of the covenant, and entailed on all who received it an obligation to fulfill the duties which the covenant imposed (Rom. 2:25; 3:1; Gal. 5:3). In a word, it was the token which assured to Abraham and his descendants the promise of the Messiah (Gen. 17). It was thus made a necessary condition of Jewish nationality. Circumcision served also to separate the people of the Jews from the rest of the nation, as a people set apart to God. These were its uses. As respects its meaning, that was symbolical, and the things which it symbolized were two: 1. Consecration to God; and 2. Mental and spiritual purification (Exod. 6:12; Lev. 19:25; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Isa. 52:1; Jer. 4:4; 6:10; Rom. 2:25-29; Col. 2:11, etc.).<sup>34</sup>

The Old Testament nowhere gives expression to the idea, which many entertain, that the propitiation of God's justice is a distinct element in the rite, expressed by the shedding of the blood. This thought is not contained in Genesis 7:14, where the cutting off of the uncircumcised is simply the punishment of disobedience . . . It does not operate as an individual means of

grace. Circumcision is no vehicle of sanctifying forces, as it makes no demand in reference to the internal state of the recipient; of whom no more is presupposed than that he is by birth of Israelitish descent, or if a born heathen, has been externally incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel. The rite effects admission to the fellowship of the covenant people as an opus operatum, securing to the individual as a member of the nation his share in the promises and saving benefits granted to the nation as a whole. On the other hand, circumcision certainly makes ethical demands on him who has received it. It binds him to obedience to God, whose covenant sign he bears in his body and to a blameless walk before Him (Gen. 17:1).<sup>35</sup>

It was in this regard that the apostle Paul spoke of another circumcision, the circumcision of the heart. This was an inward consecration and purification, an operation on the heart which makes it possible to live up to the demands of the Law (Rom. 2:29). Paul, an educated and informed Jew, brought out the true significance of the Jewish circumcision by making its efficacy contingent upon keeping the Law (Rom. 2:25). In other words Paul states that the efficacy of circumcision is not unconditional but contingent upon the recipient's personal choice and decision, to accept the obligations and privileges signified by his circumcision. If in the New Testament baptism replaces circumcision, it seems to the author that the apostle adequately refutes the position that either of these outward rites are adequate for salvation. Paul's explanation is also substantiated by Jewish custom. The Jewish child was circumcised at eight days. Two other legal ordinances still remained to be observed. "The firstborn son of every household was, according to the Law, 'redeemed' of the priest at the price of five shekels of the Sanctuary. The earliest period of presentation was thirty-one days after birth."<sup>36</sup>

Luke writes concerning Jesus' redemption in Luke 2:27. This second ordinance was the personal appearance in the temple.

In strict law, personal observance of the ordinances and hence attendance on the feasts at Jerusalem, devolved on a youth only when he was of age, that is, at thirteen years. Then he became what was called "a son of the commandments" or "of the Torah". But, as a matter of fact, the legal age was in this respect anticipated by two years, or at least by one. It was in accordance with this custom that... after Jesus had passed his twelfth year, His parents took Him . . . to Jerusalem.<sup>37</sup>

In the years previous the Jewish child was diligently taught the ways of the Jewish religion, the inauguration and meaning of the covenant, and the significance and obligations of his circumcision. The lad now by his own choice and decision took upon himself the responsibility of the obligations which his circumcision signified.

Concerning this experience in the life of Jesus Edersheim writes:

So far as we can judge, it was then and there that, for the first time, He felt the strong and irresistible impulse--that Divine necessity of His Being--to be "about His Father's business." We all, when first awakening to spiritual consciousness--or, perhaps when for the first time taking part in the feast of the Lord's house--may, and learning from His example, should, make this the hour of decision, in which heart and life shall be wholly consecrated to the "business" of our Father. It was the first manifestation of His passive and active obedience to the will of God.<sup>38</sup>

The author here suggests the similarity to the New Testament baptism of infants and the necessity for a personal decision after the child has become "of age".<sup>39</sup>

### C. Baptism

Various Old Testament Ceremonies. Baptism, one of the sacraments

of the Christian Church, is a rite of purification or initiation, in which water is used. The rite of baptism first appeared in the New Testament with reference to the rite of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:13). The acceptance of the rite on the part of the people and the scribes and pharisees without remonstrance or confusion presupposes a previous acquaintance with symbolical rites in which water was used. Some of the uses of water by the Jews:

Purifications by washing were very common among the Jews. In the language of the prophets, cleansing with water is used as an emblem of the purification of the heart, which in the Messianic age is to glorify the soul in her innermost recesses, and to embrace the whole of the theocratic nation (Ezek. 36:25 sq.; Zech. 13:1). Of the antiquity of lustrations by water among the Jews there is no question, but it is still a disputed point whether baptism was practised, as an initatory rite, in connection with circumcision, before the coming of Christ. This Jewish rite was probably originally only a purifying ceremony; and it was raised to the character of an initiating and indispensable, co-ordinate with that of sacrifice and circumcision, only after the destruction of the Temple, when sacrifices had ceased, and the circumcision of proselytes had, by reason of public edicts, become more and more impracticable.<sup>40</sup>

There were many ceremonial washings in the religious life of the Jews. Water was sprinkled on the priests to cleanse them when they were consecrated to the priesthood (Num. 8:5-7). Gentile converts to Judaism underwent a ceremonial washing along with circumcision. The Jewish religious leaders baptized utensils, and articles of furniture. Lepers were ceremonially cleansed by application of water and blood (Lev. 14:7). These, however, are non-ritual ceremonies or lustrations.

In the New Testament the word "baptism" is used in many different ways in describing both physical and spiritual events. The author has

confined himself only to that initiatory rite of Christian baptism which is the counterpart of circumcision.

The Baptism of John. John's Baptism is interesting in that it was different in purpose than the Old Testament rites and yet distinct from the rite instituted by Christ. The nation of Israel had become very corrupt and was in no condition to receive its Messiah.

John's baptism was not merely a rite by which proselytes were brought into the Jewish religion but was "unto repentance as a preparation for Christ and the New Covenant."<sup>41</sup>

John urged Jews and Gentiles alike to repent and to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus Himself embodied the New Covenant (Isa. 49:8) and John preached "the kingdom of God is at hand (Matt. 3:2)."

It was the principle object of John the Baptist to combat the prevailing opinion that the performance of external ceremonies was sufficient to secure participation in the Kingdom of God and his promises; he required repentance, therefore, as a preparation for the approaching kingdom of the Messiah. . . John's baptism had not the character of an immediate, but merely of a preparatory consecration for the glorified theocracy (John 1:31). The apostles, therefore, found it necessary to rebaptize the disciples of John, who had still adhered to the notions of their master on that head (Acts 19).<sup>42</sup>

John lived and died in the old dispensation before Jesus instituted the new rite.

The Baptism of Jesus. John's baptism of Jesus has been variously interpreted. Two main views have been presented as to why Jesus was baptized of John. The first view was advocated by the early Methodist writers such as J. M. Boland, W. A. Swift, and T. L. Hulse. The position is also advocated by present day writers such as John R. Church, Z. T. Johnson, and others. John baptized Jesus to consecrate Him a

priest. The requirements of the Old Testament Law were: (1) the priest must be thirty years old before he could enter upon the functions of his office (Num. 4:47). (2) The priest must be inducted into his office by the well-known rite of ceremonial purification (Num. 8:6,7). (3) He must be consecrated by a priest. (4) He was to be anointed with oil. (5) He was to do no official work before his consecration to office.

"Christ came 'not to destroy the law but to fulfill it', and for this reason He answered John, 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness'--all the law."<sup>43</sup> Christ fulfilled the law in His circumcision, redemption, and personal dedication at twelve years of age. Why should He not fulfill this part also? All of the previous Old Testament requirements were fulfilled by Jesus. As evidence to this view T. L. Hulse referred to Mark 11:27-30.

When He cleansed the temple by driving out the money changers he was exercising the authority of a priest. The indignant Jews came to Him asking: "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" In reply Jesus calmly cited them to John's baptism.<sup>44</sup>

Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit and then entered into His official task. It would seem to the author that the evidence presented in this position carries considerable weight.

The second view states that in His baptism Jesus identified Himself with humanity and humanity's sin. Being then identified with sin He became the propitiation for sin and hence bore the load of humanity's sin to Calvary's Cross, there providing the remedy for it.

Both of these views could be true, each expressing a different aspect of the baptism of Jesus. One thing, however, was quite evident

from this study and that was that the purpose of Jesus' baptism was quite different from that of the ordinary people who came to John to be baptized. For this cause Jesus cannot be made our example for baptism. Jesus replaced John's baptism with that of His own (Matt. 28:19).

The Baptism of the Apostles. Benjamin Field gave the following excellent definition of Christian baptism:

" . . . the initiatory rite into the New Testament Church, and is a sign and seal of that spiritual covenant to which aforetime circumcision had stood thus related. As a sign it represents the poured out and cleansing influences of the Holy Ghost, which constitute the great promise of the Christian dispensation. And as a seal, it is on God's part a visible assurance of His faithfulness to His covenant stipulations; and on our part a pledge by which we make ourselves parties to the covenant, promising to fulfill its conditions, and claiming our right of inheritance in its truth, mercies, and hopes.<sup>45</sup>

Webster defines baptism as "the application of water to a person, as a sacrament or religious ceremony, by which he is initiated into the visible Church of Christ."<sup>46</sup> It is to be administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19).

The mode of Christian baptism is not within the scope of the author's present study. It will be sufficient to state that no definite mode is prescribed and hence the mode must be determined from the Old Testament usage and from the practise of the early church.

The proper subjects eligible for baptism are determined by who was eligible to enter into the covenant relationship given to Abraham.

In order to take a comprehensive view of the New Testament's view of its relationship to the Old Testament dispensation, it is necessary

to realize that fundamental to the whole question is the covenant-concept. The frequent use of the terms "testament" and "covenant" in both Testaments indicates this very clearly. In fact the word "testament", so often employed by the translators, particularly in the New Testament, should frequently be interpreted "covenant." The covenant is primarily one between God and man, the latter being represented from all eternity by the Son, acting for all those who would believe on His name. The statement of Christ Himself in John xvii concerning those whom God had given Him, points to this covenant relationship, and it is specifically linked up with the Old Testament Church in Hebrews ii.9-17. In Hebrews xiii. 20 there is also a reference to Christ making His people perfect "through the blood of the eternal covenant". Thus it would seem to be indicated that the New Testament holds to the existence of an eternal covenant of grace between God the Father and God the Son, the latter standing in the place of sinful men. This, to begin with, would place the whole matter above and beyond the question of the old or new dispensations. The covenant of salvation is from all eternity.<sup>47</sup>

Whoever is included in the covenant is a proper subject of Christian baptism. The covenant with Abraham was not just a political and national covenant but a covenant of grace, a spiritual covenant. (1) It promised many spiritual blessings to him and his seed, a promise that has ever been acknowledged by God's people as the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. This can be seen in Jer. 31:33, 32:38-40; Ezek. 34:23,25,30,31; Heb. 8:10; and 2 Cor. 6:16-18. (2) Abraham was to be the father of many nations. This refers as much to his spiritual seed as to his natural descendants (Rom. 4:16-18). (3) The promise of Canaan included the higher promise of the eternal inheritance (Heb. 11:9-10,13). (4) The covenant was to be an everlasting covenant (Gen. 17:7). In the light of these texts it is evident that the covenant made with Abraham was the Gospel covenant. It is expressly called "the Gospel" in Galatians 3:8.



At the same time it is necessary to keep in mind that throughout the Old Testament the promises are not merely made to adults but also to children. Circumcision was given to Abraham as a sign and seal of his receiving the promise of God's covenant, but it was administered to his children and his servants also because they were to be included in the covenant relationship (Gen. xvii. 10-17). Paul in Romans iv. 9-12 refers to this promise to back up his argument of justification by faith, but he never makes any demand that children should now be excluded. Nor is there anywhere in the New Testament any attempt to exclude children from the covenant relationship. Instead they are to be regarded as "holy", which would seem to mean that they are within the covenant circle (I Cor. vii. 14). Moreover, since Paul equates New Testament baptism with Old Testament circumcision (Col. ii. 11,12), it would seem that in both Old Testament and New Testament the children of believers are to be regarded as within the Covenant, and to receive its sign. When they come to the age of responsibility, they are then to assume its obligations by public profession of faith.<sup>48</sup>

The Old Testament covenant included all circumcised Jews and proselytes and their children.

None of the promises were changed or abrogated when the "New Covenant" was introduced. It would have been a breach of the original promise given to Abraham to have done so. So it was that Peter in his first sermon introducing the gospel age states: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."<sup>49</sup> Richard Watson in his Theological Institutes presented the following excellent discussion on the meaning of baptism to the adult and infant.

Baptism introduces the adult believer into the covenant of grace and the church of Christ, and is the seal, the pledge to him on the part of God of the fulfilment of all its provisions in time and in eternity, while on his part he takes upon himself the obligations of steadfast

faith and obedience. To the infant child it is a visible reception into the same covenant and church--a pledge of acceptance through Christ--the bestowment of a title to all the grace of the covenant as circumstances may require, and as the mind of the child may be capable, or made capable of receiving it, and as it may be sought in future life by prayer, when the period of reason and moral choice arrive. It conveys also, the present "blessing" of Christ, of which we are assured by his taking children in his arms and blessing them. To these advantages must be added the respect which God bears to the believing act of the parents, and to their solemn prayers on the occasion. . . as well as in that solemn engagement of the parents which the rite necessarily implies to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.<sup>50</sup>

Baptism, as was circumcision, is of perpetual obligation. Christ by His disciples baptized many that were brought to profess faith in Him as the Messiah. Christ commanded the rite after His resurrection (Matt. 28:19). The apostles practiced the rite (Acts 2:28) and administered it to all the Gentile converts as well as to the Jewish converts (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 10:47).

Circumcision in Relation to Christian Baptism. M'Clintock and Strong brought out the similarity between the two rites.

Circumcision and baptism correspond in meaning. The Zion of the Old is the Zion of the Newly-arranged Church, the new has only been purged, its arena enlarged, and the machinery of the garnering process changed from a specific to a general object, from the national to the cosmical. The pious patriarch was a Christian in everything but name and extent of privilege. The longitude of the atonement is for all time, and the existence of the blessed; its latitude and breadth of the race. The change of the symbolic seal adapts it to a wider sphere, yet it is only in a visible form, not in the substance; it becomes a new and more eligible likeness of the same things.<sup>51</sup>

In Colossians 2:10,12 the apostle Paul expressly calls baptism "the circumcision of Christ" and in Galations 3:27,29 the relation

between the two rites is clearly set forth.

#### D. Conclusions

The influence of the rite of circumcision upon the rite of Christian baptism seems quite extensive and evident. From the previous study it would seem that circumcision has influenced baptism in at least the following ways: (1) The existence of an initiatory rite into the Old Covenant presupposed a rite of similar function in the New Covenant. (2) As circumcision was obligatory, so baptism is of perpetual obligation in the New Covenant. (3) The early Christian leaders associated baptism with the previous rite of circumcision in order to clarify its meaning and significance (Col. 2:11-12). (4) It helped to form the conception of baptism, being the initiatory rite in the new dispensation. (5) The previous rite defined who could become members of the covenant. (6) Since circumcision was a token or sign of the covenant, baptism became the token of the new covenant. (7) Circumcision, being only an outward rite, was not a means of propitiation of God's judgment. Likewise baptism was not looked upon as a regenerating agent. The means of propitiation in both Old and New Testaments has been justification by faith. (8) As the circumcised child when he was twelve years old had to decide personally to become what the rite symbolized, so must the child that has been initiated into the visible Church of Christ by baptism make a personal acceptance of Christ when he becomes of age in order to enter into the invisible church.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE FEAST OF WEEKS UPON THE NEW TESTAMENT PENTECOST

#### A. Introduction

General Procedure. An attempt has been made in this chapter to discover the origin and Biblical significance of the Jewish Feast of Weeks with an attempt to discover the historical and symbolical relationship of this festival to the New Testament festival of Pentecost.

First the Jewish Feast of Weeks has been investigated noting its origin, time of celebration, and the nature of the feast as a whole. A study of ritual and sacrifices has been made to discover the significance of the feast in the Jewish calendar and a study of the burnt, sin, and peace-offerings.

Secondly there has been a study of the New Testament Pentecost with an intent to discover its historical relationship to the Feast of Weeks. The historic event has been investigated and discussed with reference to the work of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost and His special ministry following Pentecost, noting the inaugural signs and evident results of the outpouring of the Spirit. To discover the significance of the event a study has been made of the signs of the wind, fire, and tongues, endeavoring to discover their typical significance and evident purpose in connection with this great event.

In conclusion the two events have been compared pointing out the similarities and obvious influences of the first upon the second.

General Explanation and Definition of Terms. The Feast of Weeks owes its name to the fact that it was to be celebrated seven weeks after the Passover. It was the second of the three great annual festivals at which all able bodied males were required to appear before the Lord in the national sanctuary in Jerusalem, the other two being the feast of the Passover and the feast of Tabernacles. This feast was appointed to be held at the distance of seven weeks complete--a week of weeks--from the second day of the Passover, when the first ripe barley sheaf was presented, therefore, on the fiftieth day after the former. From the Greek word for fifty, "Pentecoste", the feast in the New Testament and in later times generally, came to be designated Pentecost.

There are, however, other names applied to it in the Pentateuch. In Exodus 23:15, it is called "the Feast of Harvest", because it was kept at the close of the whole harvest, wheat as well as barley,--the intervening weeks between it and the Passover, forming the season of harvest. And in the same passage, as again in Numbers 28:26, it is also called "the feast of the firstfruits", because it was the occasion on which the Israelites were to present to God the first-fruits of their crop, as now actually realized and laid up for use. In other Jewish writings it is called "the feast of fifty days" and "the festival of conclusion" of the Passover.<sup>52</sup>

In the New Testament it was during this great feast day, the day of Pentecost when the multitudes of Jews were assembled in Jerusalem that a significant thing happened which gave the feast a new meaning. What was symbolized in typology in the previous ritual reached its

ultimate fulfillment in the coming of the Holy Spirit at that day mentioned in Acts the second chapter.

Richard S. Taylor related Pentecost with the other Christian special days in the following manner:

There are four great days in the Christian system. There is Christmas, on which we commemorate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is Black Friday, on which we remember His crucifixion. There is Easter Morn, on which we think of the resurrection. Then there is Pentecost, on which we remember the descent of the Holy Spirit in the upper room. . . . The day of Pentecost is the climactic day of the four. This is true because the first three days were given in order that this might be.<sup>53</sup>

Thus it was that while the multitudes of Jews were going through the symbolic forms the one hundred and twenty followers of the risen Christ actually experienced in their hearts and lives that which had been foreshadowed in the previous feast and personally promised by the Lord.

#### B. The Feast of Weeks

The Time of its Celebration. The three festivals, the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles were held in the months of April, June, and October respectively, or according to the Jewish sacred calendar on the 16th of Nisan, the 6th of Sivan and the 15th of Tishri. J. L. Magnus gave the following account of the Biblical commands concerning the Feast of Weeks:

In Palestine the grain harvest lasted seven weeks and was the season of gladness (Jer. 5:24; Deut. 16:9; Isa. 9:2). It began with the harvesting of the barley. . . . during the Passover and ended with the harvesting of wheat at Pentecost,

the wheat being the last cereal to ripen. Pentecost was thus the concluding festival of the grain harvest, just as the eighth day of Tabernacles was the concluding festival of the fruit harvest. . . According to Ex. 34:18-26, the Feast of Weeks is the second of the three festivals to be celebrated. . . by all males at the sanctuary. They are to bring to the sanctuary "the first-fruits of wheat harvest," "the first-fruits of thy labours which thou hast sown in the field." These are not offerings definitely prescribed for the community; "but with a tribute of the free-will offering of thine hand. . . shalt thou (the individual) rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou and thy son and thy daughter, . . . the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow (Deut. 16:9-12)."<sup>54</sup>

The Origin of the Feast of Weeks. As far as this author could discover, the origin of the Feast of Weeks was solely in the Mosaic Law. It was a festival commanded by Jehovah of perpetual obligation to the Jews (Lev. 23:21). The festival and its ritual were minutely described in this Law. The most important scriptures relating to it are Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:15-23; Numbers 28:26-31; Deuteronomy 16:9-12. Henry E. Dosker has correlated the scriptures into the following description:

The general character of the festival was that of a harvest-home celebration. The day was observed as a Sabbath day, all labor was suspended, and the people appeared before Jehovah to express their gratitude (Lev. 23:21; Nu. 28:26). The central feature of the day was the presentation of two loaves of unleavened, salted bread unto the Lord (Lev. 23:17-20; Ex. 34:22; Nu. 28:26; Dt. 16:10). . . Lev. 23:18 describes the additional sacrifices required on this occasion. It was a festival of good cheer, a day of joy. . . The O. T. does not give it the historical significance which later Jewish writers have ascribed to it. The Israelites were admonished to remember their bondage on that day and to reconsecrate themselves to the Lord (Deut. 16:12), but it

does not yet commemorate the giving of the Law at Sinai or the birth of the national existence, in the O. T. conception (Ex. 19). Philo, Josephus, and the earlier Jewish writers are all ignorant of this new meaning which was given to the day in later Jewish history. It originated with the great Jewish rabbi Maimonides and has been copied by Christian writers.<sup>55</sup>

Various authors such as Fairbairn and Richard S. Taylor contend that Pentecost is not only an agricultural feast but also a commemoration of the giving of the Law because the typology is so fitting although both assent that there are no scriptural grounds for doing so.

The Nature of the Feast. In Leviticus 23:21 it is stated that this day was to be a holy convocation and no servile work was to be done on that day. M'Clintock and Strong described the manner of preparation in the temple.

The pilgrims went up to Jerusalem the day previous to the commencement of the festival, when they prepared everything necessary for its solemn observance, and the approach of the holy trumpets. The altar of the burnt-sacrifice was cleansed in the first night-watch of the preparation-day, and the gates of the Temple, as well as those of the inner court, were opened immediately after midnight for the convenience of the priests, who resided in the city, and for the people, who filled the court before the cock crew, to have their burnt-sacrifices and thanksgiving offerings duly examined by the priests. When the time of sacrifice arrives, the daily morning sacrifice was first offered.<sup>56</sup>

According to Numbers 28:3-8 this was the daily burnt offering or continual burnt offering, that was offered every day of the year. One lamb was offered in the morning and one in the evening. Together with the lamb was offered a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil and a drink offering--one-fourth of an hin of strong wine, to be poured unto the Lord.



After the regular sacrifices the special festive sacrifices were offered. According to Numbers 28:26-30 this ceremony consisted of burnt offerings of two young bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year with their meat offering of flour mingled with oil. Besides this there was a sin offering of one kid of the goats for atonement.

The distinguishing feature of the festival was the special offering of Pentecost. The Levites and the people then chanted the Great Hallel which is Psalms 113-118 after which the congregation solemnly and heartily thanked God for the successful harvest. The priest then offered the special offering which consisted of two loaves of salted leavened bread, baked out of the very finest of wheat from the new crop with the accompanying sacrifices prescribed in Leviticus 23:16-21. The grain was to come from the habitations of the Israelites, and not from that prepared for the sanctuary or from its treasury. This was ground into flour and baked into two loaves twenty-one inches long, twelve inches wide and about five inches deep. With the two loaves were to be offered as a burnt-offering seven lambs of the first year and without blemish, one young bullock, and two rams with their meat offering and their drink offering. These were to be burned by fire. A young goat was then offered as a sin offering. The peace offering or thanksgiving offering consisted of two lambs of the first year and the two loaves. These were waved before the Lord by the priests. The two lambs were brought into the Temple and waved together by the priest while yet alive, as it is written, "And he shall wave them . . . a wave offering" (Lev. 23:20). The lambs were slain and flayed

and the priest took the breast and shoulder of each one and laid them down by the side of the two loaves, put both his hands under them and waved them all together as if they were one, towards the east side--the place of all wave-offering--doing it forwards and backwards, up and down. Upon this he burned the fat of the two lambs, and the remainder of the flesh was eaten by the priests. As to the two loaves, the high-priest took one of them, and the second was divided among all the officiating priests, and both of them were eaten up within the same day and half the following night, just as the flesh of the most holy things.<sup>57</sup> No one in all the land was to partake of the new harvest until those two loaves had been offered to the Lord.

Besides the two loaves with their accompanying sacrifices, and the special festival sacrifices which were offered for the whole nation, each individual who came to the sanctuary was expected to bring a free-will offering according to his circumstances (Deut. 16:10-12). According to the admonition "honour the Lord with thy substance and with the first-fruits of thine increase" the individuals gave their gifts to Jehovah. The day was characterized by joy and cheerfulness and part of the first-fruits were given to the priests and Levites, and the rest was used to form the cheerful and hospitable meal of the family, to which the Levite, the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger were invited.

### C. The Significance of the Feast of Weeks

In Connection with Harvest. Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks was primarily an agricultural feast occasioned by the command to present

unto the Lord the first-fruits of the harvest, making it a combination thanksgiving harvest festival. There is considerable significance to the sequence of the sacrifices offered on this day so the author has chosen to study each offering in its proper order. The first two groups of sacrifices, the daily sacrifice and the special festive sacrifice, have been omitted in this present investigation since they are common to all the special days and hence do not contribute to the special meaning of the feast of Pentecost.

The Sacrifices. The first of the rites distinctive to Pentecost was the burnt offering. There were five stages in the process: (1) The presentation of the victim; (2) The laying on of the hand; (3) The killing of the victim; (4) The sprinkling of blood; and (5) The sacrificial burning. The offerer himself had to bring the animal to the door of the Tabernacle in order to show that he was willing to surrender a valuable thing. The offerer felt that God already dwelt in the midst of the people, but he could enter into the enjoyment of God's presence only by offering a sacrifice. The offering had to be a "male without blemish"<sup>58</sup> because bodily defect symbolized moral flaw. In the second act the offerer laid his hand on the head of the victim by which he became identified with the offering. This identification permitted the animal to become a substitute for the offerer. Then the animal was killed, although innocent; hence the animal's life was taken as a substitute. The animal died, though the offerer deserved to die. The priest then applied the blood to the altar only, conveying the idea that the blood which was the life of the sacrifice, covered the sins of the offerer so that the sins were powerless to keep back the love of

God or to bring the wrath of God.<sup>59</sup> The sacrificial burning signified the transformation of the sinful nature of the offerer into something more ethereal and kindred with the heaven to which it rose. Some authors say the burnt-offering typified the perfect consecration and self-surrender of Christ unto God. This self-surrender was made in behalf of the offerer or those who identified themselves with the perfect sacrifice. Through this identification, the offerer was permitted to enter into God's presence through the substitute.

The second distinctive rite was the sin offering. In many respects the ritual of the sin-offering was the same as the burnt-offering. The particular which was not mentioned in the other offering was that he confessed his sin in connection with the laying on of his hand.<sup>60</sup> The sin hence was transferred to the animal and the priest killed it and applied the blood in atonement before God. The distinctive peculiarity in the ritual of the sin-offering was the action with the blood. It was sprinkled upon the horns of the altar. When man exercised faith in God, objectified by this offering, God took away the sin and removed the guilt. Nothing is more clearly stated in scripture than that Christ is the true Sin-offering.<sup>61</sup> The sacrifice of Christ and the shedding of His blood made full provision for all sin. Not only was the blood of Jesus adequate to cleanse from actual sins, but it was adequate to cleanse from the defilement of original sin.<sup>62</sup>

The third distinctive rite of Pentecost was the peace offering.

The general name for this species of offering is shelamim and comes from the root which signifies to make up, to supply what is wanting or deficient, to pay or recompense; and hence it very naturally came to express a state in which all misunderstandings or disturbances having been

removed, there was room for friendship, harmony and peace, prosperity. . . The peace-offerings appear under three divisions--the sacrifice of thanksgiving or praise, of a vow, and of free will.<sup>63</sup>

Both the first and the last were performed on Pentecost. The thank or praise offering was the expression of the worshipper's feelings or adoring gratitude on account of having received some spontaneous tokens of the Lord's goodness.<sup>64</sup> In this event it was in regard to the harvest. The offerer cooperated with the priest in the peace-offering since it was a wave offering. The meaning of the wave offering was given by M'Clintock and Strong.

In conjecturing the meaning of this rite, regard must be had, in the first instance, to the kind of sacrifice to which it belonged. It was the accompaniment of peace-offerings. These not only, like other sacrifices, acknowledged God's greatness and his right over the creature, but they witnessed to a ratified covenant, an established communion between God and man. . . The rabbins explain the heaving of the shoulder as an acknowledgment that God has his throne in the heaven, the waving of the breast that he is present in every quarter of the earth.<sup>65</sup>

D. Eletscher quoting W. P. Paterson suggests an explanation also of the wave and heave offerings. He said that the ceremony of wave-offering consisted in moving the portion backwards and forwards in the line of the altar. The swinging in a forward direction was an action declaring that it properly belonged to God; while the movement back again denoted that God returned the gift and assigned it as His own present to the priest. The heave offering is interpreted similarly only the offering is presented by being lifted upward.<sup>66</sup>

The free-will offering, also a part of the peace-offering, consisted of the individual bringing his particular gift of firstfruits and

presenting them to God. Fairbairn said concerning this offering:

And the free-will offering which was presented without any constraint of necessity, and either without respect to any special acts of mercy experienced, or with a view to the obtaining of such, occupied a still lower ground, as the worshipper here took the initiative, and appeared in the attitude of one seeking after God.<sup>67</sup>

When those parts were thus presented and set apart to the priesthood, the Lord's familiars, the rest of the flesh, it was implied, was given to the offerer to be partaken of by himself and those he might call to share and rejoice with him . . . This participation by the offerer and his friends, this family feast upon the sacrifice, may be regarded as the most distinctive characteristic of the peace-offering. It denoted that the offerer was admitted to a state of near fellowship and enjoyment with God, shared part and part with himself and his priests, had a standing in his house, and a seat at his table. It was, therefore, the symbol of established friendship with God and near communion with Him in the blessings of his kingdom; and was associated in the minds of the worshippers with feelings of peculiar joy and gladness—but these always of a sacred character.<sup>68</sup>

No unclean person was allowed to partake in the peace-offering. The peace offering foreshadowed the joy of the Christian, being free from all disharmony and disunity, in close communion and fellowship with Christ who is the true Peace-Offering.<sup>69</sup> In Deuteronomy 16:12 it is stated that during this festival of weeks the people were to be reminded of their bondage in Egypt, and were especially admonished to keep the divine law.

The Giving of the Law. It is generally agreed that the Law was given on the date of the feast of Pentecost and hence it can be readily seen why the later Jews combined the commemoration of Sinai with the

Pentecost festivities. The three days before Pentecost were set aside for separation and sanctification because the Lord commanded Moses that the people should sanctify themselves three days prior to the giving of the law (Exod. 19:12,14,23). The two events were related and compared in the following quotation:

It is not surprising that, without any direct authority in the O. T., the coincidence of the day on which the law appears to have been given to Moses, should have strongly impressed the minds of Christians in the early ages of the church. The divine Providence had ordained that the Holy Spirit should come down in a special manner, to give spiritual life and unity to the Church, on that very same day in the year on which the law had been bestowed on the Children of Israel which gave them national life and unity.<sup>70</sup>

#### D. The New Testament Pentecost

##### General Explanation and Definition of Terms.     The New Testament

Pentecost was a festival commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, which occurred on the day of Pentecost.<sup>71</sup> The name "Pentecost" therefore was derived from the fact that it was coincident with the Jewish feast of Pentecost. The chief significance of Pentecost was brought out by H. E. Dosker as follows:

The almost universal opinion among theologians and exegetes is this: that Pentecost marks the founding of the Christian church as an institution. This day is said to mark the dividing line between the ministry of the Lord and the ministry of the Spirit.<sup>72</sup>

The difference between the Old Testament Pentecost and the New Testament Pentecost can be derived from their setting in history. The former related to the sacrificial system and the latter emphasized a unique part of the new dispensation of Jesus Christ. They coincide in

the time of their observance and their symbolism, the former being a shadow and type of the latter event. As the Old Testament Pentecost was related to the Passover so was the New Testament Pentecost related to the death of Christ, the true Passover Lamb. Christ's personal ministry lasted for three years culminating in His death, then there was an interval of fifty days before the ministry of the Holy Spirit was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost. The event has been referred to as the "birthday of the church" and the "advent of the Holy Spirit." The habit of dressing in white and of seeking baptism on Pentecost gave it the name "Whitsunday", by which it is popularly known all over the world.<sup>73</sup>

In the early Christian Church the entire period between Easter or the resurrection of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit was called Pentecost. It was commemorated in the manner described below.

The feast was observed as the festival of the Holy Spirit at a very early date, allusion being made to it by Tertullian, as shown above, and by Origen. All public games were interdicted. . . during the Pentecostal as during the Paschal solemnity. During these weeks the Acts of the Apostles were read, as being the most suitable for the period. . . Fasting was intermitted and the prayers of the church were offered, not in a kneeling position, but erect as symbolizing the jubilant attitude of the Church during her Lord's passage from the grave to the glory.<sup>74</sup>

The Time of the Event. According to the Chronology of Samuel J. Andrews and others the death of Christ occurred at three o'clock in the afternoon of April 7. April 8 was the day of the Passover and hence the reason for the Jews requesting the removal of the bodies from the crosses (John 19:31,32) so that the Passover day would not



be defiled. Jesus was buried in the evening of April 7th and remained in the grave that day, the day of the Passover, and rose in the morning of the third day, the day after the Passover. Acts 1:3 states that Jesus was seen of His disciples for forty days, then He ascended into Heaven (Luke 24:51). Various authors including William Hendriksen<sup>75</sup> and G. F. Maclear<sup>76</sup> have stated that ten days elapsed between the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Thus the total time from the resurrection to Pentecost is fifty days.

This corresponds to the chronology of the Old Testament feasts, for the Passover lamb was slain on the 14th of Nisan, and it was eaten on the day of the Passover, the 15th of Nisan. The day following the Passover was the day of the waving of the barley sheaf (Lev. 23:11). This day corresponds with the day of the resurrection. Leviticus 23:16 states that from the day of the waving of the sheaf it would be fifty days till Pentecost or the waving of the two loaves. The two loaves were waved on the morrow after the Sabbath (Lev. 23:16) and so the ancient church has very correctly placed the first Christian Pentecost on the Sunday.<sup>77</sup> Thus it can be seen that the dates of the Old Testament Pentecost and the New Testament Pentecost coincide.

The Work of the Spirit Before Pentecost. Very little has ever been written on this subject. To the knowledge of the author Daniel Steele is the only man who has written extensively on this topic. The material presented in this section are the views of Daniel Steele. The influence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was a strong outward influence, but not a conscious indwelling in the individual.

The gifts of the Spirit before Pentecost were largely external rather than internal, rather gifts than grace; such as skill to Bezaleel, pre-

science to the prophets, strength to Samson, valor and administrative ability to the Judges and the kingly instinct to Saul.<sup>78</sup>

Daniel Steele's study concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament concludes that: (1) Conviction for sin does not seem to have been so pungent. (2) The Old Testament conversion was a moral change wrought by the will of the penitent, influenced by the Spirit of God, rather than a new creation or a new birth. (3) There was no assurance of acceptance with God certified to the penitent soul, no witness of the Spirit. (4) Old Testament piety was characterized by bondage, the New by freedom. (5) It naturally follows that there was no permanent state of reconciliation, because there was no permanent atonement. (6) There was no conscious constant indwelling of the Spirit.<sup>79</sup>

Philip Schaff presented the following Biblical study.

In the Old Testament he seems to have been active from the moment of creation, when the "Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2), and God said that his "Spirit should not always strive with men" (Gen. 6:3). He is said to have fallen upon God's agents (1 Sam. 10:10). He was the author of the light which the Old Testament prophets had of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11), and of their inspiration (2 Pet. 1:20). In many of the cases in the Old Testament, it is doubtful whether a distinct person is meant by the designation "Spirit" or merely the power of God. But in the New Testament the uncertainty vanishes; and not only is his distinct personality made permanent, but a definite work assigned to him. He had a part in the life of Christ, was active in his generation (Luke 1:35), descended upon him at the baptism (Matt. 3:16), and led him into the desert of temptation (Matt. 4:1).<sup>80</sup>

The Advent of the Holy Spirit. The prophet Joel in the Old Dispensation clearly foretold the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit when he said, "And it shall come to pass after-ward, that I will pour

out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."<sup>81</sup> This was substantiated by Peter as he preached on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16). Philip Schaff said concerning the Holy Spirit that:

In his last discourses our Lord referred repeatedly to him (the Holy Spirit), and made the promise that he should come upon the disciples (John 16:7,13; Acts 1:8 etc.). In these passages the Holy Spirit is declared to be the representative of Christ after his removal from the earth, and the dispenser of the benefits of Christ's life to the souls of believers. He was the "other Comforter" (Paraclete), who should take the place of Christ in leading the disciples into the way of all truth (John 14:16,15:26, 16:13). He is the permanent companion and guide of the Church, in contrast to the earthly Christ, who dwelt only temporarily on the earth (John 14:16). The Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9), because he holds the relation of a dispenser to the benefits of Christ's salvation. The Spirit, therefore, has a relation to Christ similar to that which the Son has to the Father.<sup>82</sup>

Christ fully prepared his disciples for the coming of the Spirit by thorough instruction and by the command to tarry in Jerusalem until they had received Him (Luke 24:29). As a consequence the disciples obediently gathered expectantly in an upper room and continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. There were a hundred and twenty disciples both of men and women (Acts 1:14,15). Luke's narrative (Acts 2) relates that when the day of Pentecost had come the effusion of the Spirit was inaugurated in accord with God's method of introducing the changes in his method of administration. Such signs were in evidence at the giving of the Law in manifestations of fire and earthquake. At the death of Jesus there was darkness and earthquakes. When the special ministry of the Holy Spirit was introduced there were signs

like fire and wind. These dispensations do not represent a change in God's attitude concerning man but a change in the method through which He deals with them. A. W. Meyer gave the following exegesis of the events in the second chapter of Acts.

Acts 2:2 describes what preceded the effusion of the Spirit as an audible. . . sound occurring unexpectedly from heaven as of a violent wind borne along. . . and it filled the house where they were sitting. . . After the audible . . . immediately follows the visible. . . There appeared to them, i.e. there were seen by them, tongues becoming distributed, fire-like, i.e. tongues which appeared like little flames of fire. . . After this external phenomenon, there now ensued the internal filling of all who were assembled.<sup>83</sup>

This last part was the real inward miracle, the main fact, the central idea of the Pentecostal narrative.<sup>84</sup> The persons possessed by the Spirit began to speak in languages which were foreign to the nationality instead of their mother-tongue, namely, in the languages of other nations, the knowledge and use of which were previously wanting to them, and were only now communicated in and with the Holy Spirit.<sup>85</sup>

The communication of the Holy Spirit was not confined to the twelve. It extended to the brethren of the Lord, the mother of Jesus, the pious women who had attended his ministry, and the whole brotherhood of a hundred and twenty souls.<sup>86</sup>

The early apostles and Christians were full of faith and the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8; 6:5), and in the power of this endowment spake in council-halls, wrote epistles, and suffered violent deaths, in hope and amidst rejoicing. There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate that this manifestation of power was to be confined to the apostolic times, although it is not unreasonable to suppose that the methods of His manifestation may be different in kind at different epochs.

## E. The Significance of the New Testament Pentecost

In Relation to the Old Testament. Philip Schaff attributes the following significance to Pentecost:

The Pentecost in the year of the Resurrection was the last Jewish (i.e. typical) and the first Christian Pentecost. It became the spiritual harvest feast of redemption from sin, and the birthday of the visible kingdom of Christ on earth. . . . On this day the Holy Spirit, who had hitherto wrought only sporadically and transiently, took up his permanent abode in mankind as the Spirit of truth and holiness, with the fulness of saving grace, to apply that grace henceforth to believers, and to reveal and glorify Christ in their hearts, as Christ had revealed and glorified the Father. . . . Pentecost was the first act of the mediatorial reign of the exalted Redeemer in heaven, and the beginning of an unbroken series of manifestations in fulfillment of his promise to be with his people "always, even unto the end of the world." For his ascension was only a withdrawal of his visible local presence and the beginnings of his spiritual omnipresence in the church.<sup>87</sup>

The universal opinion among theologians and exegetes is this: that Pentecost marks the founding of the Christian church as an institution.

The Inaugural Signs. Primarily there are three inaugural signs, and the first a supernatural sound resembling that of a rushing mighty wind came down from heaven and filled the whole house in which they were assembled. Jesus pointed out that wind was a type of the Holy Spirit.<sup>88</sup> This was further brought out by R. S. Taylor.

The wind is a type of the Holy Spirit inasmuch as the Holy Spirit, like the wind, comes only where there is a readiness to receive Him. After all, wind is simply the movement of air into an atmospheric vacuum. . . . That is the reason there must be a self-emptying.<sup>89</sup>

The second inaugural sign was the tongues of fire. Richard S. Taylor states that the fundamental thought back of this symbol is the purifying and energizing power of the Holy Spirit in the human heart. Their hearts were set ablaze, ignited, by the flame of holy love and zeal.<sup>90</sup>

Of these two signs Philip Schaff says: "But these audible and visible signs were appropriate symbols of the purifying, enlightening, and quickening power of the Divine Spirit."<sup>91</sup>

The third supernatural sign was that of the gift of foreign languages. God the Holy Spirit supernaturally empowered the one hundred and twenty to preach the gospel in the language of their auditors, thus facilitating the rapid spread of the glad tidings to all the nationalities assembled at Jerusalem. It was a remarkable means of arresting their attention and smiting their conscience. Here was the gushing forth of the fervency and the power that the wind and fire symbolized.<sup>92</sup> R. S. Taylor said:

Now then you might ask, "Why, then, were all these collateral signs given?" We can't be sure of a full answer. We can say they furnished corroborative evidence in those early days and they furnished symbolism to help us understand the mysterious workings of the Holy Spirit. What then was the real thing that Pentecost did? Pentecost purified their hearts, loosened their tongues, and blended their spirits.<sup>93</sup>

It is interesting to note that the women were sitting with the men, not in a separate court as in the temple, nor divided by a partition as in the synagogue but were in the same room as equal sharers in the spiritual blessings. This was a manifestation of the universal priesthood and brotherhood of believers in Christ, in whom all are

one, whether Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female (Gal. 3:28).<sup>94</sup>

The Work of the Holy Spirit. The special work of the Holy Spirit was inaugurated ten days after the Lord's ascension, on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were endued with power. The work of the Holy Spirit subsequent to Pentecost was presented from a scriptural point of view by Philip Schaff.

Since that time he has been active in the church, the source of all spiritual enlightenment, and without whose agency man neither knows Christ as his Savior, nor can call him Lord (I Cor. 12:3). He is the originator of convictions of sin that is of the sinfulness of refusing to believe in Christ (John 16:9) and the author of regeneration (John 3:5). He promotes the sanctification of the soul (I Cor. 6:11), and imparts to the Church his special gifts (I Cor. 12:4). The agency of the Spirit is, however, not completed with this activity, but extends to assuring the believer of his union with Christ, and participation in the promises of eternal life (Rom. 8:16). All spiritual blessings, righteousness, peace, and joy, come to the believer by reason of his reception of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17; Eph. 2:8). For this reason the unbeliever is warned against rejecting the knowledge and convictions of the Spirit, which is called "grieving" (Eph. 4:30), "quenching" (I Thess. 5:19), and "doing despite unto" the Spirit (Heb. 10:29). All kinds and degrees of sins may be forgiven, except the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31,32). This sin is absolutely unpardonable, because it is the final rejection of him without whom a saving knowledge of Christ and regeneration are impossible.<sup>95</sup>

The Holy Spirit enters into the interior personality of the believer, and dwells within him, putting the law of God, the law of love, into his innermost heart. The Easter miracle and the Pentecostal miracle are continued and verified by the daily moral miracles of regeneration and sanctification throughout Christendom.

## F. Comparisons

In comparing the Feast of Weeks with Pentecost considerable similarity was noted both in the events themselves and in their symbolism. Among the similarities were the following: (1) The time when the events were celebrated coincided exactly, thus making a fundamental connection between the two events. The time element gives further proof of the accepted conception that the New Testament event was the fulfillment of the Old Testament event. (2) They are not only connected historically but internally, Pentecost being early regarded as a festival of thanksgiving for the first-fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:23).<sup>96</sup> As the first event was celebrated with reference to the first-fruits of the harvest so the three thousand were the first-fruits of the harvest of souls. (3) The first required a free-will offering of one's goods and the second a free-will offering of oneself. (4) As the first was a time of consecration of the harvest so the second was a consecration of oneself. (5) Both were seasons of great rejoicing (Acts 3:46). (6) In order to partake of the special offering of Pentecost the individual had to be ceremonially clean; in order to partake of the blessing of the Holy Spirit the individual must be regenerated. (7) In the wave-offering the individual gave to God and God in return gave the offering back to be partaken of by the individual. At Pentecost the disciples offered themselves and God gave them individually to partake of His Spirit. (8) If there is a relation between the giving of the Law and the commemoration of the Old Testament Pentecost then even as the Holy Spirit gave spiritual life and unity to the Church so the Sinai experience gave the children of Israel national life and unity. In this relation Jerome stated:



There is Sinai, here Sion; there the trembling mountain, here the trembling house; there the flaming mountain, here the flaming tongues; there the noisy thunderings, here the sounds of many tongues; there the clangor of the ramshorn, here the notes of the gospel-trumpet.<sup>97</sup>

### G. Conclusions

The influence of the Feast of Weeks on the New Testament Pentecost can be summed up as follows: Since the whole time between the Passover and Pentecost was a consecrated season climaxing with the feast of Pentecost it certainly contributed to the spiritual preparation of the disciples preparing them for the climactic experience in the upper room. The disciples had knowledge of the requirements of the previous rite, the necessity of being clean, the free-will offering, the consecration, the return of the gift, the expectation of joy, and this knowledge no doubt contributed to their understanding and interpretation of the new event. Today the knowledge of the symbolism and sacrifices of the Passover and the Feast of Weeks gives much enlightenment on the death of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. The influence of the Old Testament Pentecost was mainly preparatory, that of preparing for the greater event by supplying types and shadows of that which was to come. The time of the outpouring of the Spirit could not be determined without a knowledge of the previous rite, for Luke states that the Spirit was poured out when the day of Pentecost was fully come.

## CHAPTER V

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE SYNAGOGUE ON THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF THE FIRST CENTURY

#### A. Introduction

General Procedure. During and after the Jewish captivity in Babylon there arose a system of worship among the Jews which greatly affected and prepared the way for the New Testament system of worship. The Jewish system called the Synagogue and the New Testament system called the Apostolic Church has been the object of study in this chapter.

The synagogue service has been investigated as to its origin and later development, noting especially the buildings in which they worshipped, the various other functions which the synagogue served, the official organization and finally a detailed study of the worship service. An attempt was made to note the departures upon the concept of God.

Similarly a parallel study has been made of the early Apostolic Church, noting its origin, development, various functions, organization, and worship service. The concluding section was a comparison of these two systems of worship noting especially the elements of the Jewish synagogue that were adopted literally by the apostles when the organization of the New Testament church became apparent. Other concepts were noted that affected directly or indirectly various phases of the Apostolic Church and its methods of preparation.

General Explanation and Definition of Terms. The institution of the synagogue was a child of circumstance and arose to fulfill a definite

need in the religious life of the Jewish people. Upon the desolation of Judea, the burning of Jerusalem and the temple by the Chaldeans, the Jews were carried into captivity. Alienated from their country and among strangers the Jews felt keenly their lack of the temple or a place of worship. The Jews, jealous of their nationality and distinctive characteristics went about to discover a means whereby they could teach the Law of Jehovah to their people and off-spring. Meeting places were established which served the purpose of keeping the worship of Jehovah alive among the people and of teaching their children.

The word synagogue is of Greek origin, and literally means a gathering together. Like the word church the term was used to designate both an edifice and the people accustomed to meet in it.<sup>98</sup>

The English word synagogue occurs only once in the O. T. (Ps. 74:8). The marg. of R. V. has "places of assembly" instead of synagogues . . . It is not, therefore, certain that there is any reference to a synagogue, in the later sense of the word, in the Old Testament. In the 1st century they were found wherever Jews dwelt. Even small communities of Jews in the lesser cities outside of Palestine had their synagogues . . .<sup>99</sup> In large cities synagogues were often numerous.

The synagogue played a large part in preparing the thinking and worship of the Jews for the coming of Christianity. The necessity of a central location for worship and for sacrifices was changed to that of simple worship without sacrifices in diversified convenient locations. These synagogues located all over the known world, wherever Jews had gone, were used as preaching places by the early apostles. How much the synagogue influenced the organization, worship, and administration of the early church is the problem of this chapter.

## B. The Origin and Development of the Synagogue

### The Origin of the Synagogue. Edersheim stated:

That synagogues originated during, or in consequence of, the Babylonish captivity, is admitted by all. The Old Testament contains no allusion to their existence, and the Rabbinic attempts to trace them even to Patriarchal times deserve, of course, no serious consideration.<sup>100</sup>

There is in Psalm 74:8 a reference to synagogues and has been used to try to establish its history early in the Old Testament. Nearly all authors state this reference is not to synagogues in the ordinary sense of that term. The rise of it, on the other hand, may be readily discovered in the history of the exiles before spoken of, especially in the book of the law (Neh. 8:8). During the captivity the Jews were deprived of the Temple services, and some kind of religious meetings would become an absolute necessity, if the people were not to lapse into practical heathenism.

The synagogue was primarily a place of instruction, in order to keep fresh among all classes of people, a knowledge of God's will as contained in the Old Testament. It was especially adapted to the Jews of the dispersion and found a speedy welcome among them.

The Development of the Synagogue. It can be readily understood that the first gatherings of Jews took place either in a private dwelling or in the open air. Here the Jews gathered to encourage and instruct themselves out of their beloved law. Since it was primarily a place of instruction the time and place of the gathering became regular and included only simple brief forms of worship. Since they were separated from the temple and unable to offer sacrifices a distinctive,

more concise and much simpler form of service was adopted.

In it were included instruction, prayer, worship, and singing. Where there was no synagogue the citizens had the right to demand that one be built and to compel one another to do this. Ten men were sufficient to constitute a religious assembly. Where there was no synagogue building the people gathered in the open air, usually near a river or sea shore on account of the ceremonial washings. One of these places is mentioned in the New Testament where Paul entered into the city of Philippi and went to the river-bank where there was a place of prayer (Acts 16:12-13). Edersheim described the development of the synagogue service as follows:

It was but natural that prayers, and, lastly addresses, should in course of time be added. Thus the regular Synagogue services would gradually arise; first on Sabbath and on feast--or fast--days, then on ordinary days . . . The services on Mondays and Thursdays were special, these being the ordinary market-days, when the country-people came into the towns . . . This gave them opportunities for worship. 101

The institution of the synagogue spread rapidly among the Jews, making up for the lack of the temple. So fully did the synagogue engrain itself into the race that after the people returned from captivity and the temple was rebuilt it continued to spread even more rapidly than before. After the last destruction of the temple in 70 A. D. and the general dispersion of the Jews, the Synagogue, to the Jew, became a bond of union throughout the world. Wherever the Jews went synagogues appeared. In Jerusalem and in other large cities, there were not only several synagogues, but also arranged according to nationalities, and even crafts.

At first the people stood or sat on the ground but later seating accommodations were added. Other articles of symbolical significance borrowed from the temple and tabernacle were added besides those which arose from the very nature of the institution. The uses of the synagogue multiplied from mere instruction to an elementary school and center of judicial administration.

### C. The Building

The Site. There is a difference of opinion among authors as to the site selected upon which to build the synagogue. Philip Schaff and others state that the building was erected on the most elevated spot of the neighborhood, and no house was allowed to overtop it. In the absence of a commanding site, a tall pole from the roof rendered it conspicuous. The reason for this was the prophetic saying that the Lord's house should "be established on the top of the mountains" (Isa. 2:2). Edersheim, however, states that there is no evidence that in Palestine synagogues were always required to be built on the highest elevation in a town, for recent excavations prove this rule false. There are records that synagogues in Babylonia were outside of the city, possibly beside a river. The reason for this seemed to be that the worshippers would be out of the noise and wickedness of the city in an atmosphere more conducive to worship.

The Structure. The building was commonly erected at the expense of the district but whether by a church-rate levied for the purpose, or by free gifts is uncertain. The building was a rectangular structure almost always lying north and south, so the entrance was at the south.

There were usually three doors in front--one principle entrance and two smaller side doors. It was built of native rock with much ornamentation on the lintels of the doors. The arrangement and plan of the structure combined elements of the tabernacle and the temple. There were rows of pillars supporting the roof and the row of pillars near the back of the building supported a gallery where the women sat.<sup>102</sup> Edersheim further described it.

The floors were of slabs of white limestone; the walls were solid (from 2 even to 3 feet in thickness), and well built of stones, rough in the exterior, but plastered in the interior. The Synagogue was furnished with sufficient windows to admit light. The roof was flat, the columns being sometimes connected by blocks of stone, on which massive rafters rest.<sup>103</sup>

The Internal Arrangement. There is an obvious analogy to the Tabernacle in the interior arrangement of the synagogue as revealed by John Kitto.

At the wall opposite the entrance, or at the Jerusalem end, stood a wooden chest or ark containing the scrolls of the law. It stood on a raised base with several steps leading up to it.<sup>104</sup>

A veil hung before the ark and above it was suspended a lighted lamp, which was never allowed to go out. A candlestick with eight branches stood at one side, that was lighted only at the feast of dedication. Right before the ark, and facing the people, were the seats of honour for the rulers of the synagogue and the honourable (Matt. 23: 6). Also in front of the ark was the desk of the leader of the divine worship, either elevated or to mark humility, lowered. In the middle of the synagogue was the Bima, or elevation capable of containing several persons, and in the middle of this a pulpit, on which the holy

books were laid and where the reader stood. Teaching was done in a sitting position (Luke 4:20; Matt. 5:1). The male congregation sat on the lower level, and the women in low side-galleries covered by screens of lattice-work. Almsboxes were placed near the door, after the pattern of the temple. There were notice-boards on which were written names of offenders who had been put out of the synagogue. There was a separate chest for trumpets and other musical instruments. 105

The Use of the Synagogue. The functions of the synagogue were several. It was a little sanctuary where the people gathered for worship and instruction. The congregation assembled every Sabbath for worship (Acts 15:21) and on the second and fifth days of the week to hear a portion of the law read. Philip Schaff gave the following description of the worship of the synagogue.

The worship was simple, but rather long, and embraced three elements--devotional, didactic, and ritualistic. It included prayer, song, reading, and exposition of the scripture, the rite of circumcision, and ceremonial washings . . . The prayers and songs were chiefly taken from the Psalter, which may be called the first liturgy and hymn-book. 106

The synagogue was not only the place of public worship; it also served as a school in which the first instruction in the Holy Scriptures as the principle or the sole subject of education was given. The earliest religious training of the Jewish child was received in the home. The education of the Jewish child was described by Edersheim.

Directly the child learned to speak, his religious instruction was to begin--no doubt, with such verses of Holy Scripture as composed that part of the Jewish liturgy which answers to our Creed. Then would follow other passages from the Bible, short prayers, and select sayings of the sages. Special attention was given



to the memory. The earliest hymns taught would be the Psalms for the days of the week, or festive Psalms . . . The regular instruction commenced with the fifth or sixth year, when every child was sent to school . . . where at first they either stood, teacher and pupils alike, or else sat on the ground in a semicircle facing the teacher . . . Thus encircled by his pupils . . . the teacher--generally the Chazan, or officer of the Synagogue (unpaid)--would impart to them the precious knowledge of the Law, with constant adaptation to their capacity, with unwearied patience, intense earnestness, strictness tempered by kindness, but above all, with the highest object of their training ever in view. To keep the children from all contact with vice; . . . to show sin in its repulsiveness, rather than to terrify by its consequences; to teach truthfulness, gentleness with a judicious increase of study and work, with careful attention to thoroughness in acquiring knowledge . . . made the teacher's office of high esteem in Israel . . . The study of the Bible commenced with that of the book of Leviticus. Hence it passed to other parts of the Pentateuch; then to the Prophets; and, finally, to the Hagiographa.<sup>107</sup>

From the ages of ten to fifteen the Mishnah or traditional law was taught, after that age other theological discussions were taught.

The officers of the synagogue were also the administrators of justice extending to both civil and religious questions. Tribunals were held and punishment of "stripes" were meted out to offenders. These religious communities maintained an existence separate from the state and managed their own religious and civil affairs, subordinate, of course, to the law of the land.<sup>108</sup>

#### D. The Officials

The special officers who directed the worship, maintained order, and looked after the temporalities were:

The Elders. These officials (Lk. 7:3) formed the local tribunal, and in purely Jewish localities acted as a Committee of Management of the affairs of the synagogue. To them belonged the power to excommunicate (Lk. 6:22; Jn. 9:22).

The Ruler of the Synagogue. This man was chosen from among the elders and was in charge of the worship services. He selected the men who in turn led prayers, read from the Torah, and preached (Luke 4:16; Matt. 4:23; Acts 13:15). He saw to it that nothing improper took place in the synagogue, and that the prayers were properly conducted and the building properly taken care of.

The Three Almoners. The duties of these three men consisted of collecting and distributing the alms. They were required to be men of honesty, wisdom, and justice, for they had to exercise great discretion from whom to demand alms and to whom to give them. There were first alms of the dish, consisting of articles of food which had to be collected by the officials daily, and distributed every evening. Secondly, there were the alms of the box consisting of money collected every Friday and distributed weekly. All three almoners had to be present at the distribution of the alms.

The Chazzan or the Attendant. He was the lowest servant corresponding to the sexton today. His work was to take care of the furniture, to open doors, light lamps, summon the people to worship, call out the names of those selected to read from the Law, to hand the Law to the reader, and take it back after the reading (Luke 4:17-20). His duty also consisted of meting out prescribed punishment (Matt. 10:17) and of being the teacher of the Synagogue School.

The Ten Men of Leisure. At least ten men were needed to constitute a religious assembly so ten men were chosen from the group who were of sufficient means so that they could entirely devote themselves to the synagogue. These men were permanently on duty every service making up a congregation so there might be no delay in beginning the service at the proper hours, and that no single worshipper might go away disappointed.

The Leader of Worship. This was not a permanent position but was alternately conferred upon any lay member who possessed the qualifications for offering prayer. The person who read in the synagogue the portion from the Prophets was also expected to conduct the devotions and speak.

The Interpreter. After the Babylonian captivity, when the Hebrew language was rapidly disappearing from among the common people, it became the custom to have an interpreter alternately interpret the passages of scripture into Aramaic as the reader read the Hebrew. Any competent person from the congregation was chosen to do this.

#### E. The Service

The Leader of Worship chosen would ascend to the Bima and standing at the lectern, begin the public service by two prayers which were recited by all. After the prayers came the creed which Edersheim described as:

After this followed what may be designated as the Jewish Creed, called the Shema, from the word "shema", or "hear", with which it begins. It consisted of three passages from the Pentateuch (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Numb. 15:37-41).<sup>109</sup>

Then came another benediction if it were a morning service, two of them if it were an evening service, the last being a form of evening prayer. This prayer finished, he who officiated left the reading desk and took his place before the Ark, and there repeated the more formal prayer consisting of eighteen (now nineteen) so-called "eulogies" still extant in the Talmud. All stood during this prayer, and the congregation responded with an "amen" at the close of the several prayers.<sup>110</sup> The liturgical part being thus completed the chazzan approached the Ark, and brought out a roll of the Law and gave it to the leader of worship. Others to the number of at least seven assisted him in the reading, each reading successively three verses. The whole of the Pentateuch was so divided that the whole of it could be read through in three or three and one-half years.

The reading of a section from the Law was followed by that of one from the prophets. As the reading was in Hebrew, which had already become a dead language two centuries before Christ, an interpreter stood by to interpret the readings verse by verse. The reading of the section from the prophets was in olden times immediately followed by an address, discourse, or sermon, that is, where a Rabbi capable of giving such instruction, or a distinguished stranger, was present (Acts 13:15). The reading was done standing, the address was made in a sitting posture (Luke 4:20). Any private member of a synagogue could speak, the qualifications being that he was mentally and morally competent. At the close of the sermon opportunity was given for discussion when the speaker would answer questions and meet objections (Luke 4:22-28; Acts 9:21; 13:45). The order of service just given was for the Sabbath; a simpler form was used

for weekdays.

Very little information was found concerning the use of music and singing in the synagogue. Philip Schaff<sup>111</sup> and Edwin Bissel<sup>112</sup> merely mention the fact that singing was part of the service of the synagogue.

#### F. The Significance and Contribution of the Synagogue

E. P. Barrows ascribed the following significance to the synagogue:

The influence of the Jewish synagogue on the religious character and history of the Jews was immense. To the systematic instruction in Moses and the prophets which it provided for the masses of the people must be ascribed, under God, their steadfast adherence to the Mosaic institutions amidst all the seductive influences on the one hand, and bloody persecutions on the other, to which they were exposed . . . Under the training of the Mosaic economy, so powerfully supplemented by the synagogue services, a whole nation was at length purged from every vestige of idolatry, so far as its outward form is concerned.<sup>113</sup>

The Babylonian exile greatly influenced the Jewish conception of God. Previously they conceived of Him as a national God residing in Jerusalem whose favour was to be gained by definite modes of sacrifices. The exile forced the Jews to adopt a worship which was independent of the Temple. In the synagogue the sacerdotal element was excluded and replaced by an individual participation and appropriation of the divine word. This brought a corresponding advance in the conception of God as pure spirit. The pious man looked to the synagogal worship, where the visible machinery was of the slightest, for his edification, and was brought face to face with God.<sup>114</sup>

This change from external to internal religion advanced the concept of personal moral and ethical righteousness required by God.<sup>115</sup>

Being separate from the sacrificial system they elected their own leaders and alternately conducted their own services. Thus the synagogue prepared the basis for the New Testament conception of the priesthood of every believer.

The synagogue contributed much to the educational life of the Jews both young and old, it being the principle institution for their education. The synagogue was the social center of the Jews and became the center of Jewish life and activity. To the Jew the synagogue was the bond of union throughout the world, for wherever he went he always found a hospitable welcome and warm fellowship in the synagogue.

#### G. The Origin and Development of the Early Church

The Origin. The Greek word  $\epsilon\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\alpha$  in the New Testament (Matt. 16:18; 17:17; 1 Cor. 10:32; Eph. 1:22) is rendered "church" in our language.

The meaning of the word would thus seem to be, in the New Testament, the whole company of God's elect, those whom he has called to be his people, under the new dispensation, as he did the Israelites under the old . . . Instead of  $\epsilon\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\alpha$ , Christ generally used the terms "kingdom of God", "kingdom of heaven", or simply kingdom, or the Son of Man's kingdom (John 3:3; Matt. 6:32) . . . The word "church" is first applied by St. Luke to the company of original disciples at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47), and is afterwards applied in the Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse.<sup>116</sup>

The day of Pentecost was the birthday of the church. On this day the disciples were empowered and sent forth to proclaim the message of the risen Christ. The purpose of Christianity was the redemption of mankind and the Church was the divinely constituted means by which this redemption was to be brought to all people. Hence it is the kingdom

and royal dwelling-place of Christ upon the earth.

The Development. The book of the Acts describes the growth and influence of the early church from the first day of amazing increase to the expansion of it to the far corners of the known world. The increasing strength could be measured by numerical estimates, so long as numbers could be reckoned. In Acts 1:15 there were one hundred and twenty, in Acts 2:41 there were three thousand, in Acts 4:4 there were five thousand, thereafter the complexity of the Church, and its extension over many synagogues and groups prevented numerical calculation. William M. Ramsay stated:

In the following stages the steps by which the Church was spread over the world are stated geographically. Samaria was included, then the maritime plain, and Galilee, Damascus, Phoenecia, Antioch, and on to the West.<sup>117</sup>

The persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem caused them to be scattered in every direction. Wherever they went they broadcasted the seed of the Church. In every city they found themselves at home among their own people and in their own synagogues; and they were still generally of the earliest Jewish Christian type.

Antioch of Syria was the first Gentile Church, and exercised, as such, a distinct influence at the time. There was unity and harmony between the two centers of Antioch and Jerusalem after the first council settled the question of Gentile rights (Acts 15). A step in consolidating the now widely scattered churches consisted of the organization of a church fund for the relief of distress. The Apostle Paul carried the gospel into Europe and with the help of other apostles the message of salvation was carried to almost every known country at that time.

In the first account we find the Church composed of the apostles and other disciples, and then of the apostles and "the multitude of them that believed". Hence it appears that the Church was at first composed entirely of members standing on an equality with one another, and that the apostles alone held a higher rank, and exercised a directing influence over the whole . . . The apostles as necessity required, created other offices, the first of which we have mention is that of deacon (Acts 6:1), followed soon after by that of elder (Acts 11:30) . . . The apostles, deacons, and elders, with the whole body of believers in every place, constituted the membership and government of the Church.<sup>118</sup>

#### H. The Organization and Administration of the Early Church

The Various Phases of the Early Church. Augustus Neander stated concerning the early church that:

The essence of the Christian Community rested on this: that no one individual should be chosen, preeminent organ of the Holy Spirit for the guidance of the whole; but all were to co-operate,--each at his particular position, and with the gifts bestowed on him, one supplying what might be wanted by another,--for the advancement of the Christian life and of the common end.<sup>119</sup>

There were different gifts, grounded in the diversity of peculiar natures, which, quickened by the Spirit contributed to the various phases of the work of the Church.

In the phase of church government Christianity freely appropriated to its own use such already existing forms as were adapted to its spirit and essential character. In the Jewish synagogue, there existed a form of government which was not monarchical but aristocratic; consisting of a council of elders, who had the guidance of all affairs belonging to the common interest. To this form Christianity would most natur-



ally attach itself.<sup>120</sup> The guidance of the communities was accordingly everywhere entrusted to a counsel of elders. It was not necessary that these should be the oldest in years but it was a designation of worth. Other names were given to these men denoting their office such as shepherds, and overseers. These men were to be men of wisdom and honor (I Cor. 6:5) to whom were entrusted both secular and spiritual affairs (I Cor. 6:1-9).

There were few explicit details given in the New Testament as to what regular provisions were made for the teaching of the children and adults. There were enough references, however, to the office of teacher and to instances of teaching to give the impression that the educational phase of the early church was of prime importance. Teaching was the main method of proclaiming the gospel and was used intensively by Jesus (Matt. 5; Mark 4:1) and by the apostles (Acts 5:42; I Cor. 4:17). The Jewish synagogue afforded an excellent opportunity for apostles to teach the gospel and they made full use of the opportunity with great success (Acts 13:14; 14:1). The office of teaching was not committed exclusively to the apostles, for all Christians had the right of pouring out their hearts for the edification of all in the public assemblies. It occurred naturally that individuals qualified for teaching by previous cultivation of mind, were by virtue of this qualification commonly ordained and set apart for teachers of the church.<sup>121</sup> Clarence H. Benson mentioned the following:

We read that every day in the temple and in the homes they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ. Bible schools were organized everywhere as the very basis of the Christian Church, grouping pupils in classes under skilled teachers for the study of the Word of God.<sup>122</sup>

There were two methods of teaching used. The interlocutory method required as a prerequisite for admittance to the congregation in which there was a free-for-all discussion, through instruction in the home and in the school.<sup>123</sup> H. C. Trumbull lecturing on the Sunday School mentioned the following:

It would be strange if the Christian Church, while retaining the other features of the synagogue, had ignored its very chiefest feature, the Bible-school service; especially as the Great Commission laid pre-eminent emphasis on the work therein included.<sup>124</sup>

The same author continued by saying:

Hence there is sound reasoning for supposing that the best lessons of the Jewish Church, and the specific injunctions of the divine Founder of the Christian Church, concerning the church care of children, and the systematic study of the Scriptures through the process of interlocutory instruction, were borne in mind, and put into practise by the leaders of the Apostolic Church.<sup>125</sup>

The other method, the catechetical method, was for those who had no earlier Christian education. These, even if adults, had to pass through a period of instruction before they were admitted to the assembly. This was taught by means of skillful and appropriate questions which stimulated mental self-activity, the course sometimes continuing for two to three years.

The worship phase of the early church contained few if any new elements that had not been previously practised by the Jews particularly in the synagogue. There was one element, however, which was quite characteristic of the early worship services. This was the spontaneity and informality of the services. Neander said:

All the members of a community might, at particular seasons, feel the impulse to address the assembled brethren, or to break forth before them in acts of invocation or praise to their God.<sup>126</sup>

Instead of some particular person calling out those who were to participate in the service as in the synagogue, the Holy Spirit seemed to be the one who chose and inspired those who were to contribute to the service.

The Officials. The necessity for organization was brought out by Augustus Neander.

As the inner fellowship of divine life introduced by Christianity strove . . . to exhibit itself in an outward fellowship, it must necessarily appropriate to itself some determinate form, because without such form no association, for whatever purpose, can have actual being and subsistence. To this end, a certain organization was necessary; a certain relative superordination and subordination of the different members according to the particular position and task in reference to the whole.<sup>127</sup>

The Holy Spirit was the Guiding Spirit and each member was to cooperate, in his appropriate place, for the common end.

The apostles were so called because they had personally seen the Lord (Luke 12; Matt. 10:2; I Cor. 9:1) and were appointed by Him to continue His work. This group included the original eleven, plus Matthias, Paul, James, and probably Barnabas.<sup>128</sup> To these chosen witnesses was given the task to bear the message and spirit of Christ to the end of the world. Since they were historically the intermediate links between the Church and Christ this office was not transferable. Upon them fell the responsibility of guiding the new church, which they did with humility and love with no intent of overlordship of the church.

The first step in the widening of the organization was the appointing of the seven deacons (Acts 6:1-4). The church had increased so rapidly it was no longer possible for the apostles to take care of all the duties so the seven deacons were elected to be the collectors and distributors of the charitable funds. They also ministered at the table in the daily love-feasts and attended to the wants of the poor and sick. Deaconesses, or female helpers, had a similar charge of the poor and sick in the female portion of the church.<sup>129</sup>

The office of deacon was followed soon after by that of elder (Acts 11:30). The office of elder, presbyter, and bishop are generally conceded to be identical.<sup>130</sup> The root word "presbyteros" which is translated in I Timothy 4:14 as presbytery and in Acts 14:23 as elders means an older man or a worthy man and names the officer in reference to his personal character. The word "episkopos", translated "bishop" in I Timothy 3:1 means a superintendent or overseer and names him with reference to his functions. "Poimeen", "pastor", follows the analogy of the second; it means "Shepherd of a flock".<sup>131</sup> The elders were appointed not only to teach and administer the sacraments, but also to govern the church in the absence of the apostles (Acts 20:28).

To them belonged the direction of public worship, the administration of discipline, the care of souls, and the management of Church property.<sup>132</sup>

There are lists of various other functions of the church given in I Cor. 12:4-12 and Eph. 4:11-12. Of these passages M'Clintock and Strong said:

These passages establish nothing respecting the ministerial offices of the apostolic age; what they do teach us is that the spiritual en-

downments necessary for the office of an apostle, a pastor, a teacher, or a governor of the church, whether these functions were united in the same person or not, flow directly from Christ, and are part of the standing spiritual constitution of the Church.<sup>133</sup>

## I. The Worship of the Early Church

The Place of Worship. The early Church met daily in the temple and the synagogues as well as in homes (Acts 6:42). Later in recognition of Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week, that day became the principle occasion of public worship (I Cor. 16:2). That this early period was a time of transition was brought out by Philip Schaff.

The Jewish Christians, at least in Palestine, conformed as closely as possible to the venerable forms of the cultus of their fathers . . . As far as we know they scrupulously observed the Sabbath, the annual Jewish feasts, the hours of daily prayer . . . This gradually changed . . . and was at last entirely broken by the destruction of the temple . . . In the Gentile-Christian congregations founded by Paul, the worship took from the beginning a more independent form . . . So early as the close of the apostolic period this more free and spiritual cultus of Christianity had no doubt become well nigh universal.<sup>134</sup>

The Worship Service. John D. Davis made the following scriptural study:

The public worship of the church was engrafted upon the synagogue service. It consisted of preaching (Matt. 28:20; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 14:19), reading of scripture (James 1:22; Col. 4:16), prayer (I Cor. 14:14-16), singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and the hymns (Eph. 5:14, I Tim. 3:16), administration of the sacraments . . . (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:21, I Cor. 11:18-34), and almsgiving (I Cor. 16:1-2). When the spiritual gift was present, there were also prophesyings and tongues.<sup>135</sup>

The preaching was at first a form of missionary address to the unconverted; that is, a simple, living presentation of the main facts of the life of Christ, with practical exhortation to repentance and conversion. The main topics were the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Epistles also may be regarded in a wider sense as sermons, addressed, however, to believers, and designed to nourish the Christian life already planted. Concerning the increasing use of the New Testament writings Philip Schaff said:

The reading of portions of the Old Testament, with practical exposition and application; transferred from the Jewish synagogue into the Christian church. To these were added in due time lessons from the New Testament; that is, from the canonical Gospels and the apostolic Epistles, most of which were addressed to whole congregations and originally intended for public use (I Thess. 5:27). After the death of the apostles their writings became doubly important to the church, as a substitute for their oral instruction and exhortation, and were much more used in worship than the Old Testament.<sup>136</sup>

Prayers were offered in various forms of petition, intercession, and oral thanksgiving. The practise of prayer descended likewise from Judaism but now it began to be offered in childlike confidence to a reconciled Father in the name of Jesus. The first Christians accompanied every important act of their public and private life with this holy rite. On solemn occasions they joined fasting with prayer, as a help to devotion. They prayed freely from the heart, as they were moved by the Spirit, according to special needs and circumstances. There was no trace of a uniform and exclusive liturgy; it would have been inconsistent with the vitality and liberty of the apostolic churches.

The Lord Himself inaugurated psalmody into the new covenant at the institution of the holy Supper (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26), and Paul expressly enjoined the singing of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), as a means of social edification. Besides the precious inheritance from the past, the church, in the enthusiasm of her first love, added original, specifically Christian psalms, hymns, doxologies, and benedictions. There are three types of songs mentioned by Paul. The Old Testament psalms were set to music and were used in the temple and synagogue and were carried over into the Christian worship. The hymns were early Christian compositions based on some great truth of doctrine. The spiritual songs were compositions of lyric poetry.

The sacraments, both the Lord's Supper and Christian baptism were practised. In the apostolic period the eucharist was celebrated daily in connection with a simple meal of brotherly love (agape), in which the Christians, in communion with their common Redeemer, forgot all distinctions of rank, wealth, and culture, and felt themselves to be members of one family of God.<sup>137</sup> This meal led to abuses in Corinth and Paul rebuked them (I Cor. 11:29-34). The meal was gradually separated from the eucharist and in the second and third centuries gradually disappeared altogether.

#### J. The Influence of the Synagogue on the Apostolic Church

Since the majority of the early Christians were Jews, especially the leaders, it would seem very likely that they would adopt the methods of worship and government to which they were accustomed. Bishop Whately says:

It seems highly probable, I might say morally certain, that the synagogue was brought--the whole or chief part of it--to embrace the Gospel. The Apostles did not, then, so much form a Christian Church as to make an existing congregation Christian by introducing the Christian sacraments and worship, and establishing whatever regulations were necessary for the newly adopted faith, leaving the machinery of government unchanged; the rulers of synagogues, elders, and other officers, whether spiritual or ecclesiastical, or both, being already provided in the existing institutions.<sup>138</sup>

Thus it seems that the synagogues were the pattern which the apostles proposed to themselves, though it is by no means certain that they adopted any model. The greatest influence of the synagogue was in its preparatory function. The synagogues everywhere prepared the way for the new order.

The Organization. It will be seen at once how closely the organization of the synagogue was reproduced in that of the Ecclesia. The apostolic church, after the fashion of the synagogue, was ruled by a council of elders, who had the guidance of all affairs. The office of almoners probably suggested that of the deacons. The office of bishop or overseer probably found its counterpart in the ruler of the synagogue. There were other similarities in the minor officers of both organizations.

The Magisterial Functions. The early church was organized to take care of the disputes of its members as is brought out by the following quotation:

The church, either by itself or by appointed delegates, was to act as a court of arbitration in all disputes among its members. The elders of the church were not, however, to descend to the trivial disputes of daily life. For these any men of common-sense and fairness, however destitute of official honor and position,



would be enough (I Cor. 6:1-8). For the elders, as for those of the synagogue, were reserved the graver offences against religion and morals. In such cases they had the power to excommunicate.<sup>139</sup>

The Worship Service. Jesus both worshipped and taught in His local synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16, 21). His first followers continued to worship in the Jerusalem Temple for a time (Acts 3:1), but they used the synagogues as teaching places and centers for gathering new recruits. It was to be expected that the two worship services would have much in common. B. A. Hinsdale wrote the following concerning the worship of the early church.

While much less elaborate, ceremonial, and ritualistic than the synagogue service, the Church service nevertheless has many points in common with it. The scripture readings, the prayers, the sermon, the exhortation, the hymn, and the benediction of the nineteenth century all go back to the synagogue.<sup>140</sup>

The Influence on Education. In the following quotation H. C. Trumbull refers to the teaching phase of the church adopted from the synagogue.

It would seem strange, passing strange, if the Christian Church, while retaining the other main features of the synagogue, had ignored its very chiefest feature, the Bible-school service; especially as the Great Commission laid pre-eminent emphasis on the work therein included. There are many indications in the Book of Acts and in the Epistles that "teaching", after the pattern of the synagogue Bible-schools, was a recognized agency for the extension of the Christian Church, and for the upbuilding in the new faith of those who were won to Christ from the Jewish fold or from the Gentile world.<sup>141</sup>

The Church as a Whole. Schaff summed up the whole case as this point when he said concisely:

As the Christian Church rests historically on the Jewish Church, so Christian worship and

the congregational organization rest on that of the synagogue and cannot be well understood without it.<sup>142</sup>

Edersheim stated:

The Synagogue became the cradle of the Church. Without it, as indeed without Israel's dispersion, the Church Universal would, humanly speaking, have been impossible, and the conversion of the Gentiles have required a succession of millennial miracles.<sup>143</sup>

#### K. Conclusions

It has been discovered that the Christian sanctuary, with its congregation of believers, is the heir to both the ancient tabernacle and the Jewish synagogue; having the whole worship of God, and in it all that is needful for the believer's edification here, and his preparation for glory, honor, and immortality hereafter.

The synagogue prepared the way for the early church by its teaching of the concept of God and its democratic form of worship. The very fact that there was a synagogue in nearly every city of considerable size ministering to both the Jews and the Gentiles prepared the way by giving the apostles the unique opportunity of preaching to previously prepared audiences. The early church used the synagogue as a pattern in establishing its organization, in which the officers and their functions were strikingly similar; its worship service, in which there were evident similarities, and in its program of education.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

#### A. Specific Conclusions

The following are the specific conclusions that were arrived at in each chapter. In chapter II, the study of the Jewish Passover and the Lord's Supper, it was noted that: (1) Jesus shortened the form of the Passover meal and invested the ritual with new meaning. (2) The existence of the Jewish feast probably occasioned the formation of the later institution. (3) The Passover greatly contributed to the understanding of the Lord's Supper. (4) As none that were uncircumcised were allowed to partake of the Jewish feast, so unbelievers were not allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. (5) The Passover feast was to commemorate the Passover Lamb and the deliverance from Egypt, and the Lord's Supper was to commemorate the Lamb of God and one's deliverance from sin and bondage. (6) The Jews longed for the first coming of the Messiah; the Christians longed for His second coming. (7) To the Jews the Passover was a ratification of their covenant relationship; to the Christians it was a time of renewing allegiance and re-affirming their faith in Jesus Christ.

In chapter III, the study of circumcision and baptism, the following things were noted: (1) The early Christian leaders associated baptism with the previous rite of circumcision. (2) The rite of circumcision helped to form the conception of baptism, being the initiatory rite in the new dispensation. (3) The rite of circumcision defined who could become members of the covenant. (4) Just as circumcision was a token or sign of the old covenant, baptism became the token of the new covenant. (5) Circumcision, being only an outward rite, was not a

means of propitiation of God's judgment. Likewise baptism also was not looked upon as a regenerating agent. The means of propitiation in both the old and new testaments was justification by faith. (6) As the circumcised child when he was twelve years old had to personally decide to become a son of the Law, whose privileges were symbolized by circumcision, so did the Apostolic Christians expect their children to make a personal acceptance of Christ when they became of age.

The study of the Feast of Weeks and the New Testament Pentecost in chapter IV disclosed the following: (1) The time when the events were celebrated coincided exactly, thus making a fundamental connection between the two events. The time element gives further proof of the accepted conception that the New Testament event was the fulfilment of the Old Testament event. (2) They are not only connected historically but vitally, Pentecost being early regarded as a festival of thanksgiving for the first-fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:23). As the first event was celebrated with reference to the first-fruits of the harvest so the three thousand were the first-fruits of the harvest of souls. (3) The Feast of Weeks required a free-will offering of one's goods and Pentecost a free-will offering of oneself. (4) As the first was a time of consecration of the harvest, so the second was a consecration of oneself. (5) Both were seasons of great rejoicing (Acts 2:46). (6) In order to partake of the special offering of the Feast of Weeks the individual had to be ceremonially clean; in order to partake of the blessing of the Holy Spirit the individual must be regenerated. (7) In the wave-offering the individual gave to God and God in return gave the offering back to be partaken of by the individual. At Pentecost the disciples offered themselves to God and God gave unto each of them in

return His Holy Spirit. (8) If there is a vital relation between the giving of the Law and the commemoration of the New Testament Pentecost, then, even as the Sinai experience gave the children of Israel national life and unity, so the Holy Spirit gave spiritual life and unity to the Church.

The study of the synagogue and the apostolic church in chapter V revealed the following: (1) The synagogue formed the pattern for the institution of the early church. (2) In the area of organization both institutions were ruled by a council of elders. The office of almoners probably suggested that of the deacons, and the office of bishop or overseer was probably the counter-part of the ruler of the synagogue. Other similarities in the minor offices were noted. (3) Both organizations had similar provisions for arbitrating disputes, and offences among their members. (4) The elements of the worship service such as the scripture readings, the prayers, the sermon, the exhortation, the hymn and the benediction were common to both institutions. (5) The educational methods of the synagogue were perpetuated in the Apostolic era. (6) The synagogue became the cradle of the New Testament church.

#### B. General Conclusions

Besides the more specific and detailed conclusions which were reached, there were some over-all conclusions that have come out of this study in regard to the relationship and influence of Old Testament institutions on the New Testament institutions. These conclusions have been organized in various areas of influence.

The first area where the influence of the Jewish institutions can be clearly seen upon the Apostolic Church is in the choice of institutions.

such as baptism replacing circumcision and the Lord's Supper replacing the Passover. Man's relationship with God was usually expressed in some outward form of rite. Since the New Testament is only a more perfect expression (Matt. 5:17) of the Old Testament relationship with God, it was noted that in the choice of forms and methods of expression recourse was taken to the older forms. These were wholly or in part adopted and if need be, changed to fit the new economy, invested with new meaning and vitality, and perpetuated in the New Testament. Since the predominant emphasis of the New Testament was inward and not outward (Rom. 4:17) it was noted that fewer outward institutions were required.

Secondly, from the few institutions studied, it was apparent that the meanings that were attached to the new institutions were partly determined by the previous Old Testament institutions. Those who established and perpetuated the New Testament institutions were Jews and from this study it seemed that they interpreted the new institutions in the light of their previous acquaintance with the Old Testament institutions and in the light of the new distinctive significance attached to them in the new economy.

Thirdly, there was some influence in the matter of forms adopted. Whether the New Testament rite was in connection with a distinctive act, in connection with eating or in the use of a form of organization, the forms seemed to have been suggested by the Old Testament institution. The influence on the form adopted was especially apparent in the Lord's Supper and in the organization of the New Testament Church. In these two instances there was almost a complete adoption of the forms of the previous institution.

Fourthly, the requirements for participation in the New Testament

institutions manifested the influence of the requirements of the earlier Old Testament institutions. In order to be eligible to take part in the different institutions certain qualifications were necessary, these depending on the particular rite or office, which either qualified or disqualified the individual for the institution.

Lastly, it has become the conviction of the author that the New Testament institutions cannot be properly interpreted nor understood without a corresponding study of their Old Testament counter-parts.

### C. Suggestions for Further Study and Investigation

(1) A similar study could be conducted with other of the Old and New Testament institutions.

(2) A study of the covenant would be valuable, presenting the relationship and meaning between the old covenant and the new covenant.

(3) A detailed study of the educational program and methods of the synagogue would be invaluable.





# FOOTNOTES

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