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The Constitution of the True Church of Christ

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The Constitution of the New Testament Church or Assemblies of God are those fundamental principles or organic laws which are inherent in the nature and formation of the Church of God which is the Body of Christ.

As the Church is not an organization which can be made by man, but an organism, comparable to the human body, its laws cannot be written out on paper as may be done with a human association. The body of Christ, like a human body, has laws which inhere and operate in the body.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS

All machinery derives motive power from some source. It may be the expansion force of steam or gas, the attraction of electricity, motion from the wind, or gravity from water.

Man has harnessed the mighty powers of nature. He has developed much skill in the exercise of his personal powers, such as oratory, magnetism, argument, emotion and many others of his innate powers. But this substitution of powers of man for the power of God constitutes a serious and hurtful intrusion. It is a wrong kind of power by which to conduct the Church of Christ which has been equipped to be operated by Divine dynamite. It cannot be operated by the power of nature, nor by that of man, nor by occult powers. It functions properly only when man submits to and co-operates with the power of God, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. (Ps. 87:7; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; I Cor. 4:20; II Cor. 10:4).

REVELATION

The first operation of the law of the Spirit of life is Revelation. Revelation is an uncovering which causes an opening of the things of the Kingdom of God by the inshining of the Light from Him who said, "I am the Light of the world."

Knowledge and experience of the things of God come not by observation, but by revelation. He, therefore, who would know God and the things of God, shall know them, not by mental apprehension but by that Divine light which is life.

It is a transforming power, changing nature and translating into the Kingdom of His dear Son. This transforming light of life reveals Christ as Son of God, Christ the Atonement, Christ the Coming One, Christ the Incoming One within to dwell, and Christ the Eternal One. Such revelation brings abundant eternal life which far exceeds the mental grasp of Divine things.

The true ecclesia, the mystery assembly of God, can only be known by revelation which is the Rock foundation upon which Christ builds.

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven" (Mt. 16:17, 18; Jno. 16:12-15; Rom. 16:25; Gal. 1:12-15; Eph. 3:3, 4; Heb. 6:1).

ECCLESIA IS BUILT BY DIVINE ACTIVITY

The true ecclesia is not constructed by activity of man, but by the working power of God. "He that built all things is God." Man cannot build an ecclesia of God, nor any part of it except by Divine appointment, and then only by becoming a co-worker with God. Divine power operates through man for the accomplishment, as with Paul: "According to the grace of God which

is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation." "We are laborers together with God."

Here are further clear strong statements as to the manner of the formation of God's assembly.

"I will build my Church." "It is the same God that worketh all in all." "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, etc. All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit." "In one Spirit have we all been baptized into one body." "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets." "And some evangelists, and some pastors; and some teachers" (Mt. 16:18; I Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:11).

THE ECCLESIA—WHAT IT IS AND HOW CONSTITUTED

The New Testament Assembly is a cluster of God's people, who "in one Spirit are all baptized into one body." "This body is the Body of Christ. They are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones" (Eph. 5:30).

The Church, "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Eph. 1:23; Col. 2:9). The Church contains the nature of Christ, manifested in various gifts and powers. Just as a man has abilities and powers of his nature, so the faculties, abilities, attributes and perfections of God have been brought forth in Jesus Christ, and those spiritual attributes are by the indwelling Holy Spirit divided to every one, severally as He will. So the Church should be glorious beyond words. "The glory that Thou gavest me, I have given them" (Jno. 17:22).

No single individual can contain all of Christ, who is the fulness of God; but the whole Church contains the fulness of Christ, who filleth all in all. She is the habitation of God. She is to be filled with all the fulness of God. She is the representation of Christ on earth. She should be royally clothed without stint. If she be but partially panoplied, poorly clad, then is Christ poorly and partially represented. Such facts should stir us to profoundest depths and most serious consideration. How is Christ being represented by our church and our lives? "What think ye of Christ" as we represent Him?

MODE OF OPERATION

Prophecy is the name of God's method or way of operating. Speaking as moved by the Spirit is a foundation principle, or how God operates in His ecclesia, so expressed and beautifully described in the Scriptures (Eph. 2:20).

Revelation, ordinances, works of grace, and ministries are all done in prophecy. Jesus was that Prophet. Apostles and New Testament builders were prophets. All her stones are prophetic. She is a great prophetic Church.

Discovery and practice of the principle that all preaching, testimony, prayer and exercise of the church should be done by the Spirit speaking through the various members would revolutionize meetings and churches. Its application to business and discipline would put human ruling spirits out of business and lift the Church into God.

GOVERNMENT

Then would it be seen that authority to govern and control the Church in all her activities were placed in her at the beginning by her Lord. But it was supernatural prophetic power and authority in the gifts of the Spirit, which might not be exercised by the will of man, but in the will of God. Therefore, the intrusion

of human power, authority, legislation and government has always been wrong and wrought havoc and ruin to a spiritual church. The ecclesia is theocratic in government. Jesus Christ is its Governor, acting by the Holy Spirit upon and through His ministers. "God hath set some in the church . . . governments." "When ye are gathered together and my Spirit, with the Lord Jesus Christ." "The government shall be upon His shoulder" (I Cor. 12:28; 5:4; Isa. 9:6).

God never delegated to any man or set of men the right and authority to legislate and rule over His people. All such proceedings are superfluous, meddlesome and hurtful. They indicate man thinks he knows better than God how to conduct His work. Consider these reproofs: "They that think good to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and their great ones exercise authority upon them." "But so shall it not be among you" (Mk. 10:42). "Jehovah will come as mighty one and His arm will rule for Him" (Isa. 9:12).

ITS LAWS

Laws of the ecclesia of God are not written on stone or with ink. They are written upon the heart by the Spirit of God. Some of the principal ones are Law of Spirit of Life, Heavenly life in the Spirit, seated with Christ, perfect law of liberty, royal law of the cross, self-denial, law of grace, law of love, law of faith. It is only under the operation of these unwritten laws that a true assembly of God comes forth.

"Let us walk in the Spirit." "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah: my spirit that is upon thee and my words which I have put in Thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and forever." "That ye love one another as I have loved you" (Gal. 5:16, 18, 25; Isa. 59:21; Jno. 13:34).

ITS FELLOWSHIPS

There are several ways of forming fellowships by man. Some are based upon certain agreements, as in oaths and benevolences of secret orders. Most denominations base their fellowships upon certain tenets which consist in methods of administering ordinances, forms of church government and a variety of interpretations of so-called fundamental doctrines. These agreements can only bring into a fellowship of assent and acceptance of one another on the basis of mental understanding.

Fellowship in the ecclesia of God is deeper than mental assent and man made agreements. Doctrinal agreements may be accepted substitutes among men, but will not bring into that true heavenly fellowship of Christ in the Spirit which is a heart touch, a heart fellowship which can only exist by the inflow and impartation of divine life, through the working of the Holy Spirit. Once having known experimentally the things of the mystery spiritual Church, though doubted and controverted by others, knowledge of them is so deep and lasting that it can never fade from memory.

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing." "They were all of one accord." "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." "Trumpeters and singers were as of one to make one sound" (Mt. 18:19; Acts 5:12; 4:24, 32).

The Greek word for "agree" in Mt. 18:19 is the word from which symphony is derived. Where the notes of a chord are tuned to a certain pitch, the result is harmony. Where a number of musical instruments are all in accord with a certain pitch, there is symphony.

Symphony is a constitutional principal of Christ's Church.

This spiritual symphony or oneness is wrought by the Holy Spirit. Like the aeolian harp, it may not be played by human fingers—only the wind can bring forth its music. Divine wind or breath of the Spirit is required to operate God's assembly.

This state of oneness into which the early Church was brought is the proper condition of the Church and will prevail wherever God has his way.

TEACHINGS AND PRACTICES

People often say they stand on the Bible, the Word of God. The Bible was written by men in the power of the Spirit to the end that men might be brought into a life in the power of the Holy Spirit. Doctrines or practices are acceptable to God only when brought forth and held in the power of the Spirit. They must bring not only illumination to the mind, but life and power to those who hear.

Such an ecclesia is thus described: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

To sum up all, such a Church is actuated and moved by the life energy of Holy Spirit, lighted by revelation, built by Divine activity, Christ her only door. The Body of Christ—she operates by spiritual gifts, governed and directed by God: her laws are spiritual and divine, her fellowships a symphony of the Holy Spirit, her practice in the power of God. She is tuned into fellowship, divine, by the Heavenly Musician: her doctrines, exercises, and practices are the sweet music of heaven.

The Man-Child

Ellen French

Commencement Address, Class of 1933. Abridged.

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

"And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven: and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

"And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up to God, and to his throne" (Rev. 12:1-5).

The woman in symbolic Scripture always represents a church. This one, clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet, is the called-out church, baptized in the Holy Ghost, endued with power from on high, and with the glory of the Lord upon her and the gifts of the Spirit in evidence. She is a separated Church. The moon under her feet is interpreted to mean that the old ecclesiastical order, having declined in power, is shining with a borrowed light only.

The man-child is caught up to the throne as soon as it is born and is presented without spot to God. It is composed of a company of individuals in whose lives Christ has been revealed in His resurrection life and power and who have been transformed through His grace and made ready for translation. This first company of Overcomers will be a First Fruits company, having reached a full degree of maturity first, and will be in a state of intimate union and fellowship with their

Heavenly Father over sin, sinners.

The man-child is to maturity priest to God, the first ripe tied with a sheaf chosen out and to the reaping sheaf is a blessing the first fruit sheaf the gift company with men.

There is and the man-child Church and born, he was the woman for her. Gentians put the of Judaism through persecution was called going out. Translation through Spirit, but men.

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God had a nation. In this people He gave them after them. It is the same then another selected out.

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Overcomers throne. All in pain. So the price will be amongst.

To belong that all that and spirit n

Some of cate very c "How long daughter, for earth, a word of the man-child 8), "Before pain came, heard such the earth be

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