

THE BEAUTIFUL BRIDE OF CHRIST

In our age a lot has changed, but those of us who are older well remember the extreme joy a man experienced when as he stood at the front of a church somewhere, he saw the doors opened and his beautiful, chaste bride, dressed in pure white expressing her purity, appeared. I know that personally I have never seen such a beautiful sight as when I saw my bride coming down the isle.

Now if you will, think about what your feelings would be if as your beautiful, clean and spotless bride walked down the isle toward you, those sitting on the sides began to throw garbage, mud and other such things at her. As you stood there, you witnessed the spoiling of the beautiful, clean and chaste bride that you looked to be beside you shortly. Needless to say, I do not believe anyone reading this could truthfully say that it would not bother you at all.

The scriptures present Jesus Christ as being the bridegroom and the Lord's church as being His bride. Paul wrote, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

The church as built by Jesus Christ, having been sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water by the word was in every aspect perfect, clean, pure and chaste. However, it was not long before spots and blemishes were seen on her pure white garments. First, there were individuals from within that soiled her garments by failing to follow the commands of the Lord. An example is seen in the brother in Corinth who took his fathers wife (I Cor. 5). However it did not stop with the brethren who fell short, but she continued to become more and more soiled by those who would corrupt the very basics of the one true church, the departures that eventually became know as the Roman Catholic Church. When the reformation movement came along, the idea was to try to clean some of the spots and stains from the garments being worn by the completely corrupted bride. The end result of that movement was the establishment of more and more "soiled brides" rather than restoring the purity of the bride as she was when she first came through the door. Let us make sure we keep the bride pure by clothing her just as she was originally.

Robert

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION

There is a song we sometimes sing in our worship assemblies that begins with the words, "The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord...". This is of course, a simple statement of fact. For many, when the word "foundation" is used, we immediately think of the foundation upon which a house is built. An old saying is that no building is any stronger than its foundation. Jesus Christ is indeed the foundation upon which the church is built and He being the Son of God makes that foundation the strongest that could possibly be found.

Jesus once asked His disciples who they said that He was (Matt. 16:15). Peter's answer was, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Jesus then said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:17-18). The foundation upon which Jesus said that He would build His church was that statement of fact that Peter had just made, Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. This is the only foundation that could possibly be strong enough to sustain the weight of the Lord's church. Paul wrote, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11).

After stating that He would build His church, Jesus went on to say that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Many use this to say that nothing can destroy the Lord's church. However, Jesus is saying that nothing could keep Him from building His church. The gates of hell (death) would not stop Him from building His church. Even if the Pharisees were to arrest him and convince the Roman authority to crucify him on a cross (which is what happened), it would not keep Him from building His church. In fact, that was needed to make the foundation as strong as was needed.

The apostle John, at the end of his gospel account stated the reason for the record saying, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). All four gospel writers present the empty tomb; the fact that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Paul writes, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). Proof provided! The church is build on a strong foundation! **Robert**