

- f. It should be noted that God in His sovereignty may perform acts of divine healing at His good pleasure. However, He hardly needs the assistance of men performing through legitimate spiritual gifts as in the first century, or their present-day counterfeits.
- g. It speaks of the union of believers with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit at salvation. The analogy compares the physical body and its various organs and members with a mystical body of believers and its various spiritual gifts.
- h. Following the resurrection of the Church, the Body of Christ becomes the Bride of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12–14; Ephesians 2:18–22, 5:30; Revelation 19:7)

38. What is the divinely ordained system of authority in the local church, and what form of church government do you teach?

- a. The Supreme Authority over the local assembly of believers is Jesus Christ. His policies and guidelines for the function of the local church are found in His Word (1 Corinthians 2:16).
- b. Christ has delegated His authority to certain men with the spiritual appointment of pastor-teacher and has issued one each to the various congregations (Ephesians 4:11-13).
- c. The pastor-teacher is qualified for his position by possession of the spiritual gift plus the proper academic preparation. The Lord has ordained complete authority to the pastor-teacher over the congregation (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

Hebrews 13:7 Remember your leaders, who spoke God's message to you; reflect on the outcome of their lives and imitate their faith.

v.17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls and will give an account for their work. Let them do this with joy and not with complaints, for this would be no advantage for you. (NET)

- d. The pastor-teacher, therefore, answers only to the Lord and is promoted or demoted by Him (Proverbs 4:8-9).

- e. The position of pastor-teacher is not one of tyranny but one of leadership and exhortation, its authority being established through the teaching of Bible doctrine.
- f. The form of church government I would recommend would be representative. The congregation would appoint a pastor-teacher to provide them leadership in spiritual areas.
- g. The pastor-teacher would then appoint deacons to administer to the congregation in temporal areas. The deacons would administer and oversee the custodial, financial, and ministerial functions of the local church, but this body would simply conduct policy formulated by the pastor-teacher. Deacons may participate in the making of policy, but such policy must conform to doctrine and have the approval of the pastor-teacher.

39. What are the conditions of church membership and what part does church membership play in salvation?

- a. Church membership is an accessory for the organized church. If it is utilized, there should be some limitation places on it since applicants would participate in church government.
- b. It, therefore, should be established that those who seek membership be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and that they totally accept the authority of the pastor-teacher of that congregation. No good can be served by their membership if these two prerequisites are not met.
- c. Being a member of a church has absolutely nothing to do with one's salvation. Salvation is based solely on the individual's positive attitude toward Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. No other qualifications are called for in Scripture.
- d. Many churches have their membership rolls filled with names of unbelievers, names which will be blotted out of the Book of Life at the Great White Throne Judgment. (Matthew 18:20; Acts 16:30–31; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Revelation 3:5, 20:15)

40. What legitimate functions in the Body of Christ, if any, belong to denominations and Christian service organizations?

- a. Denominations seek to organize a large group of local churches under one doctrinal banner. The doctrinal statement of any given denomination is, at least in theory, intended to be the accepted theology of all its pastors and the belief of all its members.
- b. This doctrinal statement in effect becomes the sect's *sine qua non* and tends to siphon authority from the several local pastors and transfer it to the denominational hierarchy or diocese which supports it.
- c. The individual pastor must either conform or risk excommunication. If he conforms, he does so by stressing "milk" and ignoring "meat."
- d. As a result, point systems must be established in order to ward off congregational atrophy and attractive programs must be devised in order to lure in potential parishioners.
- e. So that some semblance of spiritual advance may be claimed although none exists, spiritual-gift functions peculiar to individual members of the Body are reassigned to the congregation at large.
- f. Thus, the entire local church becomes collectively involved in such things as mass evangelism, weekly visitation, or sacrificial giving; all at the expense of and in opposition to sound doctrinal teaching.
- g. Service organizations provide an excellent vehicle for the expression of two of the spiritual gifts which function within the Body of Christ.
- h. These two, evangelist and missionary, are the extant gifts which are designed to function outside the confines of the local church and its fellowship. Many present-day service organizations are doing excellent jobs in these areas.

41. What contributions, if any, are made by the National and World Councils of Churches?

- a. The aim of the National and World Councils of Churches is ecumenical unity.

- b. Since the amalgamation of the various branches of Christendom is the objective of the Councils, then it follows that a massive dilution of the Scriptures must be employed in order to achieve such a merger. No good can be served by any organization which is forced to alter Bible doctrine in order to justify its existence.
- c. The only contribution which these organizations could possibly make would be to fulfill the Scripture regarding ecclesiastical Babylon described in Revelation 30.
- d. Should the Rapture occur soon, these Councils would be perfect to play the part of the "Mother of Harlots" (Revelation 17:5). [See X. *The Doom of Babylon, 17–18* in *The Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, NASB), 1740–43.]

42. Of what importance is water baptism?

- a. Water baptism was a visual aid used during the transition period between the postponement of the Age of Israel and the beginning years of the Church Age, a time when it was necessary to use ritual in the teaching of certain areas of spiritual phenomena which involved mystery doctrine.
- b. The "new creation" of the believer through the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a new concept for first century believers.
- c. Believing Jews as well as Gentiles had to be taught the principle of being born again. Water baptism, utilizing immersion, was the visual aid used to teach this idea. (Acts 8:12–13, 10:48, 19:5).
- d. Being immersed under water identified the new believer with the spiritual death, physical death, and burial of Jesus Christ, or Retroactive Positional Truth.
- e. The new believer understood that his personal sins were forgiven at the Cross, but that Christ did not die for human good and evil. Identification with the passion of Christ signified the believer's separation from, rejection of, and divorce from the old sin nature as ruler of life.

- f. Emergence from the water typified identification with Jesus Christ in His resurrection, ascension and session and spoke of Current Positional Truth. Identification with the resurrected Christ symbolized the new believer's marriage to Christ as his New Husband, his new Ruler of life.
- g. Since the canon is now complete, visual-aid ritual is no longer necessary to teach the above concepts; therefore, the perpetuation of baptism is no longer necessary.
- h. Although its practice today is not evil, under the principle that ritual without reality is meaningless, new converts, as per their first century counterparts, should be totally cognizant of the doctrines the ordinance portrays.

43. Of what importance is the Eucharist or the Lord's Table?

- a. With regard to the Eucharist, Christ commanded in Luke 22:19, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (NASB).
- b. The Eucharist, then, is a periodic "Auld Lang Syne" for the believer, allowing a pause for reflection on the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. The ritual becomes a test requiring the believer to review the doctrine he has learned and to concentrate on the Source of that knowledge.
- d. During the believer's advance through the plan of God, he focuses on the fulfillment of the next hope and needs to revert occasionally to the point of entrance into that plan.
- e. The elements refocus attention to the moment of salvation and call to remembrance the person of Christ through the bread and the work of Christ through the cup.
- f. Christ's command regarding the Eucharist was for it to be performed habitually until His return.

g. With His return yet future, this ritual is still legitimately practiced in the local church. Its meaning is also obscured unless there is relevant Bible doctrine resident in the soul of the participant. (Matthew 26:26–28; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26, 28)

ESCHATOLOGY

44. What is the "great Tribulation" and where do you expect to be when it occurs?

- a. The "great Tribulation" is the last three and one-half years, or the final 1,260 days of the Age of Israel. It commences when the dictator of ***Senatus Populusque Romanus: The Senate and the People of Rome (SPQR)***, sets up a statue of himself in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.
- b. The Scripture calls this act the "abomination of desolation" in Matthew 24:15 and Daniel 9:27. This Satan-possessed dictator will begin an intense effort to eliminate the Jew from history. His scheme culminates in the Armageddon Campaign, which concludes the "great Tribulation" and the Age of Israel.
- c. I shall be in heaven in the presence of the Lord when this segment of history occurs, having been given a resurrection body at the rapture which terminates the Church Age. As a member of Christ's Royal Army, I shall return with Him at the Second Advent and observe the final moments of this period.
- d. Matthew 24:21-22; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 2 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7; Jude 14; Revelation 19:14

45. What is the Rapture of the Church and what is its purpose?

- a. The Rapture of the Church will mark the close of the present dispensation, the Church Age.