**PAUL, APOLLOS OR CHRIST?**

**By A.N.Dugger**

“For while one saith I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal…I have planted and Apollos watered, but God gives the increase,” (1 Cor. 3:4-6).

We find from the above that the Church of God in the year of 59 A.D. was divided and many were following the ways of the flesh, which Paul called carnality, instead of being led of the Spirit in love for one another. He rebuked them for following after men, and for magnifying their differences, which he speaks of as contentions in 1 Cor.1:11-13.

It is very much the same way today; while some say, “I am of this group,” and another, “I am of that group,” and “I am of some other group,” it is very common also today to hear people call congregations by the names of those who are leaders of different groups, just as it was in Paul’s day. If Paul were here now, he would call them carnal, just as he did then, but still he would esteem all of the groups “The Church of God,” just as he did then, When people qualify according to Rev.12:17 and 14:12, and emphasize the “Testimonies of Jesus,” as well as the Commandments of God, they are of the “Family of God.”

By strictly following the Testimony (The New Testament), they are known by the family name by which the one family in both heaven and earth are known (Ephesians 3:14, 15; Rev.14:1). The unity of this body, as well as the name of the family, was the great burden of the prayer of our Saviour as He approached Calvary (John 17). Here He prays that the family, the household of faith, will hold to the name of the Father of the family, and that they will be ‘one’. He repeats both of these conditions a number of times in the prayer. Shall we not, dear reader, do our best that this prayer shall be answered? It is the enemy of souls that does not want it so. Those who truly love the Master will cooperate to bring unity to pass.

The Bridegroom Coming For The Bride.  
During the long period after the church fled to the wilderness (Rev.12:6, 14), they were separated in many different localities, with thousands of miles between and no means of communication. Different leaders, led of the Holy Spirit, fed them and nourished them. Yet these leaders, besides holding to the “Commandments of God and the Testimony of the Saviour,” held to different views on minor points. Still, they constituted the Church of God in the wilderness, just as the Scriptures tell us. There is an abundance of history relative to these leaders, and the belief of these scattered persecuted people, who emphasized the power of God through His Holy Spirit. On many minor points they held to different views. This, however, did not cause them to manifest anything but love, because they believed they were one, and the people of God.

The Bridegroom is coming, His bride is making herself ready, “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:7, 8).

We are told in these scriptures, “Let us be glad and give honor to Him (the Bridegroom), for the marriage of the Lamb Jesus (Hebrew Yeshua) has come and His wife has made herself ready.” So, dear brothers and sisters, let us rejoice together, and best of all give honor to Him. Let us endeavor to see that His prayer is answered and let us, “be one as He and the Father are one.” (John 17:12, 21, 22, 26). Instead of lifting up barriers and walls of partition, let us speak good of one another and fellowship together, without a motive of stealing sheep or transferring them from one pasture to another. Let us have liberty to teach the truth in love, seasoned with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

With the Holy Spirit, strife and division will not arise. But without the presence of the Holy Spirit to soften our speech, and tune it with kindness, it is best to remain in our own camp to avoid strife and contention, while we pray for one another.

Half Were Wise And half Were Foolish.

There were five wise and five foolish virgin; and remember, they were virgin. They all had the original maiden name for the church. The Father said of her, “I am jealous over you with a Godly jealousy, for I have espoused you unto one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor.11:2).

They were virgin, all having the name divinely given for the Bride of the Saviour, which name has been retained down through her wilderness experience. Now in her broken fragments she still holds to the name, but half are shut out (Matt.25:12). The wise paid special interest in possessing an abundance of oil in their vessels. Oil represents the Holy Spirit, which gives people the light of the Word, with boldness, power and wisdom to give it to others.

The Saviour said, “Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled,” (Matt.5:6). The trouble is that many of the virgin class are hungering and thirsting after money, after worldly possessions, after the very best and the most up-to-date (worldly standards) of everything, void of a holy purpose in possession for the Glory of God in sending out the light. Such are of the foolish virgin class. The wise are those, “hungering and Thirsting,” craving and desiring righteousness above everything else, seeking for the Power of the Spirit and the joy of service, in this approaching midnight hour. We have the precious promise that the Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him, than the earthly father is wiling to give bread to his hungry children (Luke 11:11-13). Therefore, those who do not possess an abundance of this free gift, this divine power, are of the foolish class, who spent their time and thoughts coveting the mighty dollar to give them that deceptive joy possession so prevalent today.

There are many, however, of the wise virgins, filled and led by the Holy Spirit, who are successful in business; led of the Lord and blessed, so that they may in this way be a blessing to the workers out in the fields of labor, preaching the gospel of salvation. In this way they are nobly serving the Master to the very capacity to which the Father had called them, and many stars will be in their crowns on redemption morning.

The possessors of oil in their lamps, with an extra supply in their vessels to bring them safely through the darkness and deception of the midnight hour, are, through the Spirit, also possessors of that, ‘Love one for the other,” by which the disciples are known (John 13:35). This Bride of the Lamb, who enters into the marriage with Him will be possessors of that love, and the Saviour will be the one whom they will follow. They will be His disciples; and not the disciples of Paul, Apollos and Cephas, or any particular man, or of any of those groups of men, who exclude all of the others and separate themselves.

The true Church of God included all of these several groups and many more as well as hundred of people in different groups who are known by the Father above and whom He will call out in due time. The Bride is making herself ready. The wise virgins are trimming their lamps and filling their vessels with oil. They are hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and are being clothed with those spotless linen garments of white. They await with joy the good news of His coming, and will be represented at the place where He comes, which is Jerusalem (Zech.14:4). Their eyes will be upon their Saviour and Him only. They will be His disciples- which is what His followers are called over one hundred times in the New Testament- and not the disciples of any man or group of men.

The true “Church of God,” “The Remnant,” the “Bride Class,” includes all these several groups, just as it did in the wilderness. And now, in this preparation time, the wise virgins from among all of them are trimming their lamps. They are hungering and thirsting for righteousness above everything else in this world, and, with love one for the other, they seek for a refilling of the Spirit; to be clothed with the beautiful garments of white. They will not have a worldly spot upon them. That virgin class will be represented at Jerusalem. It is here where He is to descend from heaven with all the Holy Angels to be King of Kings (Rev.11:15).

The Mount Zion Reporter Nov/Dec 1995.