the Christian, p.34).

Paul did not put the law which he described as holy, just, good and spiritual on a par with heathenism. The comparison he was making was solely concerned with how the Christian obtains justification before God. No law, not even the law of God, was any use as a substitute for the death of Christ. But it did have its function in explaining what sin was, and in showing the Christian how he should live after having his sins forgiven by Christ's sacrifice.

Chapter Four

THE INTERPRETATION OF COLOSSIANS

In the publication "The New Covenant and the Christian", various statements are made about Colossians chapter two. It is argued that the errors Paul was attempting to combat were caused by the work of Judaisers, hence the Colossians had ". . . many questions concerning the customs and holy days of Moses . . ."

Then a conclusion is drawn on page 14 that the "rudiments of the world" (Col.2:20) are the ordinances of the Old Covenant, and the "hand-writing of ordinances that was against us" refers to the Old Covenant. By extension, the writer claims, even the Ten Commandments are against us and "became a curse to man", and "the ordinances given to Moses were also against us in that there was no means of salvation in them no matter how hard one tried to keep them".

By the above definition, any law that does not offer salvation must be against mankind. BUT, WHAT LAW IS THERE THAT DOES OFFER SALVATION? Salvation is a free gift - not something earned by law-keeping. Further is it logical to expect a law to "offer" something?

Traffic laws hardly earn us salvation - but can they be regarded as against us? The ten commandments do not give salvation, granted, but do laws forbidding adultery, murder, stealing, etc., really work against us?

Unless one attempts to spiritualise away John's words, why does that apostle state that " . . . his commandments are not grievous". (I John 5:3). The Psalms of David - who was offered salvation - hardly give the impression that God's laws are against mankind (Psalm 119).

What was the error?

WHY IS IT THAT VIRTUALLY ALL SCHOLARLY WORKS ON THE SUBJECT MENTION THAT IT IS EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT TO SPECIFY

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SPECIFY THE NATURE OF THE ERROR? Peake's Commentary summarises succinctly: "About the precise nature of the error there has been much speculation" (Colossians and Philemon, p.990). The generally accepted source of error, and the nature of the error itself, is as follows:

The false teaching appears to have been dualistic (in the sense that it regarded matter as evil) and to have regarded Christ as only one among a whole hierarchy of angelic powers and not as supreme. Sin was interpreted as the entanglement of the spirit with matter. There was an elaborate mythology of the stages of ascent through which a redeemed soul might rise on its way to freedom; and speculation was rife about the angelic (or demonic) powers controlling the planets or the concentric zones of the universe, which had to be passed in the soul's ascent. These ideas are generally placed under the label GNOSTICISM. There is evidence that even in pre-Christian times this dualistic type of thought had already penetrated areas of Judaism.

COMMENTARIES GENERALLY FEEL THERE WAS AN AMALGAM OF JEWISH GNOSTIC AND CHRISTIAN IDEAS WHICH PAUL ATTACKED IN COLOSSIANS.

The author of the booklet under discussion needs to answer the following questions:

1. Why is it not admitted in his literature that Colossians is subject to much speculation? Why does he assume the whole matter is clear and watertight?

2. Why does he use an interpretation (i.e. Paul attacking the Old Covenant) which is never even considered in scholarly works?

3. Why does he take an instruction against judging (v.16) and turn it around to mean that they should not <u>do</u> the things for which they are being judged? After all, if we are attempting to please God by keeping his laws we are not really interested in

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in some man's judgment of our actions: God is our judge!

Conclusion

Because we lack details of the precise nature of the Colossian error, one should not base major doctrinal conclusions upon Paul's statements in this epistle.

Chapter Five

THE SABBATH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

". . . the New Testament makes it clear the sabbath has been annulled and abolished" (The Foundation Newsletter, Vol.2 no.6. June 1975, p.4.).

Various invalid arguments are used to reach the erroneous conclusion quoted above. The main arguments can be summarised as follows:

1. If you say the sabbath helps to give you salvation you are really doing away with Christ, because Christ is the only requirement for salvation.

   Refuted by I Cor. 6:9-10 which shows there are many requirements for salvation, although justification can be obtained only through Christ's death.

2. Keeping the sabbath is a physical ritual, and the observance of physical rituals is unnecessary for salvation.

   Refuted by Christ's commands in Matt. 28:19-20 (the ritual of baptism) and in I Cor.11:24 (the ritual of bread and wine).

3. The sabbath is part of O.T. law, and since the Christian has changed his citizenship he is no longer obligated to follow O.T. law:

   Here a change of administration is incorrectly associated with a necessary change of law.

4. Absence of a specific command in the N.T. is proof for the abolition of the sabbath.

   This is an argument from silence, which proves nothing. The burden of proof is on the person who contends that the Sabbath is abolished.

5. Appeal is made to Gal.4:10 and Col.2:16 to show the Sabbath is done away.

   Gal.4:10 nowhere mentions the sabbath. Col.2:16 does not say whether

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whether or not a Christian should keep the sabbath but merely whether he should be judged concerning the sabbath. Both scriptures are subject to various interpretations because the background circumstances are unclear.

6. John 5:10-18 is used to show that Christ broke the Mosaic sabbath.

The phrase "Mosaic sabbath" is ambiguous since it is admitted that the "meaning of 'work' came to be somewhat moderated even under Mosaic legislation" (The Sabbath and the Christian, p.45). Christ in fact broke the Pharisaical sabbath and it is wrongly stated that the Pharisees were following Moses precisely, as proven by Mark 7:3-13. John 5:10 is not a reference to Jer.17:22, as the Jewish Soncino commentary makes clear, but it is a reference to the oral tradition as interpreted by the Pharisees.

7. Every "spiritual factor" of the sabbath - time to worship God; study his word; have fellowship etc. can be performed on every day of the week.

It does not follow that what you can do on the six days of the week you can do on the Sabbath, nor does it follow that you can make every day a sabbath by performing the "spiritual factors" mentioned.

8. Hebrews 4 proves that the sabbath is to be kept daily.

Hebrews 4 is referring to a future period of rest for the Christian. It is also an analogy and is not referring to whether the weekly sabbath should be kept or not.

Summary:

In the N.T., Christ is showing how the weekly sabbath created by God, for man, at creation wss to be kept, not whether it was to be kept. The claim that " . . . the New Testament makes it clear the sabbath has been annulled and abolished" has yet to be validated by any convincing evidence.

Chapter Six

THE TITHING QUESTION

The booklet entitled "The Tithing Question" makes two basic and serious errors on the Jewish teaching about tithing.

1. The doctrine of tithing came to an end among the Jews with the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.

   The Encyclopaedia Judaica, ad loc., states:- "after the destruction of the temple, tithing became a kind of substitute for the sanctity of the temple and religious sacrifices" - - the opposite of what the booklet claims.

2. Tithes were paid only on agricultural products.

   The Jewish sources (vid. Ma'aserot) reveal that the Pharisees determined all kinds of laws for the community (this fact is accepted on p.7 of the booklet), the Dispersion also being liable to tithe. Not only that, the Pharisees deemed that fish was tithable and that money was acceptable in the place of products. Tithing, therefore, was not given to remain unalterable throughout time; on the contrary, it was given to a living nation and was modified by the authority of those to whom this responsibility was given.

The booklet's claims for the New Testament are even more erroneous.

1. The outline uses the silence of the N.T. as proof against tithing.

   Since Christ and the apostles preach their doctrines from the O.T., never arbitrarily setting the O.T. at nought (e.g. circumcision, sacrifices, Messiahship, Kingdom of God, etc.) one should be able to explain, or explain away, tithing through the O.T. rather than simply by telling us that tithing is done away merely because it is not mentioned in the N.T. The burden of proof lies on those who claim it was done away,

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away, not on those who can find biblical commands to support their conclusions.

2. The booklet cites Paul's refusal to accept money from the Corinthians as proof against tithing.

Paul states in I Cor.9 that the reason for this decision was that he might not hinder the gospel. Tithing in such a situation would not promote but hinder the gospel due to the conditions in that area of the world at that time.

If the passage in Corintians is to be used as a proof against tithing it would also prove that we should not give offerings, because Paul did not accept their offerings either.

CONCLUSION

1). Although tithing is commanded in the O.T., it was given to a living church and was administered according to decrees made by those who had the authority to decide as to who should tithe and what was tithable.

2). Although tithing is nowhere discussed in the N.T., it is nowhere rejected, as for example physical circumcision was, nor is there anything said against it.

3). Acts 21:20 shows that three decades after Christ's resurrection Christians at Jerusalem kept the laws zealously (unless the author wants us to conclude that all the laws were kept except tithing).

4). 2 Tim.3:16 says that all scripture is profitable for doctrine. Since no N.T. books had yet been canonised, the only scriptural books were those of the O.T.

5). Acts 28:17 - Paul states categorically: "I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers".

6). Tithing was practised by Jews after the destruction of the temple. The booklet fails to deal with any of these points.

Chapter Seven

WHAT IS THE CORRECT FORM OF CHURCH ORGANISATION?

The booklet, "Church Government and Church Organisation", is an attempt to show the form of government for the Church to-day. The author claims church government should be based on New Testament example. In order to arrive at the "correct" form he has chosen to show the "incorrect" form. In other words, by attempting to destroy an existing organisational system he purports to show what is right.

His conclusion is that the correct form of church government and church organisation is no form at all! This booklet is essentially a tirade against all "hierarchical, aristocratic" forms of government.

The author uses four analogies to represent church government in the NT: (a) the body (I Cor.12), (b) "priesthood of believers" (1 Pet.2:5), (c) the temple of God (Eph.2:21), (d) the family.

Two points need to be immediately noted. Firstly, analogy proves nothing. It is a technique to illustrate a point, not to prove it. Secondly, all the analogies referred to above represent relationships among Christians, and between Christians and God. To draw more than this from these examples renders the argument nonsensical. We are asked, "Can we imagine one temple of God rivalling another temple of God for psot position and power?" By the same token can we imagine one temple of God teaching another temple of God? Can we imagine one temple of God marrying another temple of God? Ridiculous. The analogy was used by Paul to illustrate a profound truth: that God dwells within us as he dwelt in the temple.

The analogy of the family suffers from the same weaknesses. Of course we should love each other as a family, but does this mean the parents have no authority over the children? Does love necessitate the absence of government or authority? Nonsense. Incidentally, the author says, "having this kind of love . . . there will be minimal government /

government needed". Agreed. But "minimal government" IS government.

Leaving the analogies, let us look at some Greek usage taken from the booklet.

1. It is claimed that "the word 'ekklesia' is embedded within the concepts of co-operation between free people to govern themselves." This statement is devoid of meaning. The word "ekklesia" denotes any kind of assembly, for any purpose, at any time, and can be used for the Roman Senate - a highly organised efficient hierarchy - and can also apply to a mob! It does not have the "opposite sense to pyramidical government"!

2. A translation of Matt.16:19 is used in this case the author's own! " . . . whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth must be what is already bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth must be what is already loosed in heaven". (Notice his "King James" English). It is claimed that this is what "Christ really said and it is plainly stated in the Greek". This is patently and flatly untrue. Why is no evidence given to support this "new" translation? Scholarship is evidently lacking in his handling of so complex a language as Greek. The words "must be what is already" do not appear in the Greek nor are they implied. As for "shall be bound" it is in the future perfect tense in Greek and is therefore correctly translated in the Authorised Version and other authoritative translations.

3. In Acts 15:22 the word "edoke" (sic) is used to show the Church "VOTED" to send Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. The word "edoxe" means "seemed good to" and has nothing to do with voting. Apparently the author misunderstands the English word "Vote"! "Vote" doesn't mean "agree" - it means to "express choice", "decision by a majority" (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary).

Here are some questions which the author needs to answer:

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answer:

1. What does the word "governments" mean in I Cor.12:28? Surely not a person who oversees picnics and ball-games, as suggested on p.11.

2. Why are Heb.13:7,17, not quoted in their entirety? They are certainly most relevant and fundamental. Could it be because they exhort the Christian to "OBEY" and "submit yourselves"? The Greek amply bears out the AV.

3. If Jesus condemned the "pyramidical" form of government in Matt.20:25-27 wouldn't he be condemning Moses? There is no doubt that Jethro's in Exodus 18 suggestion was, at least stylistically, "pyramidical". There is no hint of godly condemnation of this.

4. What did Peter mean when he instructed the elders in "taking the oversight thereof" (I Pet. 5:2)?

5. If Paul didn't exercise authority, by what right did he instruct Titus to ordain elders in every city (Titus 1:5)? As Titus ordained elders would they not in turn be subject to him as he was to Paul?

6. Why DID Paul go to Jerusalem? (Acts 15). Why was it necessary? Could he not have just ignored any opposition? Couldn't he have continued to do "the Work" without referring to the apostles there?

7. Why didn't Paul and Barnabas object when the Jerusalem Church sent out letters instructing the Gentile churches? Wasn't that Paul's responsibility, if we follow the author's reasoning?

8. If the Churches in Paul's area were independent, why did he write them corrective letters, assuming the supervision of their activities? If they were autonomous, why did they submit?

In conclusion, when one does not have to face problems relating

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relating to a church and a worldwide ministry, it is easy to pontificate about the "best" form of government. Even the business world has long since discovered that a most effective and equitable form of government is from the top down, with input and suggestions from all levels. Adding God's Spirit to this structure makes it even more effective and fair, and represents more closely the organisation of the New Testament Church than does the "anarchy" proposed by this booklet.

Chapter Eight

WERE DOCTRINAL DISPUTES AIRED BEFORE THE ENTIRE CHURCH?

Does Acts 15 show that decisions in the early church were made by the whole membership, laymen included, and not exclusively by the ministry.

Acts 15:2 shows that Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to discuss with the apostles and elders whether circumcision was essential to salvation. On arrival in Jerusalem, "they were received by the church, and of the apostles and elders". Here undoubtedly others apart from the ministry were present, and verse 5 makes it clear that certain Christian Pharisees were involved. These insisted that circumcision was essential before the Gentiles could attain salvation.

When we come to Acts 15:6, however, a meeting of only the ministry is strongly implied, "And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter". Galatians 2, considered to be a parallel account of this same Jerusalem conference, adds even more specific details. Paul says: "And I went up by revelation (to Jerusalem), and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation (specifically James, Peter and John), lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain" (Galatians 2:2).

The whole purpose of the conference at Jerusalem was to maintain the unity of the Church. Paul was anxious that the Gentiles should not be required to be circumcised, but equally well he wanted the agreement of the Jerusalem apostles so that Jewish Christians everywhere could be reassured that his gospel was not contrary to the truth. This he achieved.

The apostles and elders, with the full support of the whole Church, then sent out a letter which confirmed the decision that had been arrived at (Acts 15: 22-23). It was the leadership of the Church who decided to /

to send the letter.

Some have assumed on the basis of Acts 15:12 that the whole Church made the decision. The commentaries make no claim to the proposition that the "multitude" means the whole church. Most translations render verse 12 as "the whole assembly" or "the whole company". In other words, all those gathered there in conference.

In conclusion, Acts 15 cannot legitimately be used to prove that the New Testament Church operated under a system of democracy. The clear implication is that the prime authority and responsibility lay with the apostles and elders, i.e. the ministry.