



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 21

The Believer's Body Life

Many Members - One Body

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Part IV

by - Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Text: I Corinthians 12:14-20

I. The IDENTIFICATION of a Body

Before moving on with this lesson, let us pause to ask ourselves, "Just what is a body?" Well, to help answer this question let's look at our own physical bodies. The "body" is the link between our spirit (and soul) and the outer world. In other words it is the link between the spiritual and the physical.

Now, that's just what the earthly life of Jesus Christ was all about. The Lord Jesus Christ took upon Him a physical body and had a *relationship* with the fallen descendants of Adam's race.

Today, we do not know Christ in this fashion:

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" (II Corinthians 5:16).

This does not mean that Christ does not have a *relationship* with mankind today. It is very important for each believer to understand that "the life of Christ" is not limited to that thirty-three year period occupied almost two

millenniums ago. Christ manifests Himself to the world TODAY through the church, which is HIS Body.

*"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that **the life** also of Jesus might be made **manifest in our body**. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the **life also of Jesus** might be made **manifest in our mortal flesh**"* (II Corinthians 4:10, 11).

Thus we, as members of the Body of Christ, are here on this earth as ambassadors "in Christ's stead" (II Corinthians 5:20).

II. The HEAD of the Body

Paul's teachings are very clear as to who has the preeminent place within the Body. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact it is *His Body!* He is the living Head and it is He who gives life to the members.

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things

(continued on page 195)

Dear Beloved in Christ:

This summer has been a very busy one! In addition to the Bible conferences and everything else that has been going on around here -- our family has been in the process of moving. And by the time you get this letter we should be settled in our latest temporary dwelling.

And just where are we? We have rented a place in Elam, VA. This is located about twenty minutes west of Farmville, VA. And since Elam has no Post Office of its own, our mailing address is Pamplin, VA. Our new home is large enough for our family, the library and bookstore, and of course -- hospitality. The house is an old restored colonial style home with 3000 square feet and it is situated on 208 acres.

We want to extend an invitation for each of you to make plans to come for a visit, once we get settled in. We look forward to having a better environment for hospitality! We will be out in Central Virginia "practicing up" for our planned "retreat center."

If you are writing to the Pilkington family be sure to use our new address:

Clyde & Cindy Pilkington
RR 1 Box 221
Pamplin VA 23958
1-804-574-2449

From Rt 460 you would turn south on Rt 657 at Elam. Immediately crossing over the railroad tracts make a right hand turn on to Rt 639. Go about a mile and you will see the "PILKINGTON" mailbox on the left.

We would like very much for each of you to come and stay with us. But be sure to let us know in advance of your coming -- because we will continue to be traveling from time to time and of course we will be coming back to the Hampton Roads area regularly. And even if we are home, we need to know that you are coming so we can "leave the gate open" for you.

Your servant,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
10/1994

Bible Student's Notebook

This biweekly publication (24 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of *rich* biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13)
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "Movement," "Organization," "Mission," or separate body of believers, but is sent forth to and for all "saints."

SUBSCRIPTION

U.S.: 6 months (12 issues) - \$24⁰⁰; 1 year (24 issues) - \$42⁰⁰;
2 years (48 issues) - \$72⁰⁰; 3 years (48 issues) - \$96⁰⁰;
Foreign: 1 year (24 issues) - \$60⁰⁰;

PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

The Bible Student's Notebook
www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

PO Box 265
Windber, PA 15963
Office: (800) 784-6010
bsn@studyshelf.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor
Andre Sneidar – Managing Editor
Visit our online bookstore at: www.StudyShelf.com

Copyright © 1989-2007 Pilkington & Sons

he might have the preeminence”
(Colossians 1:18)

The very first principle of the life of the Body of Christ is holding the Head in its proper relationship and function. The break-down of the Body of Christ begins with a failure to hold the Head in His preeminent place!

“And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Colossians 2:19).

Just what is the foundation of a proper relationship with the Head? Subjection! The Body derives its very life and authority from its Head. All true spiritual life and activity through the Body must issue forth from the Head, and each member of *His* Body must be in subjection to *Him*. When a part of the Body is disobedient and non-responsive to the authority of Christ in their life they become paralyzed. A paralyzed Body part is *not* responding to the Head. There is bondage and death in disobedience but there is freedom and life (animation) in subjection! (See I Timothy 5:6; Ephesians 5:14)

III. The MEMBERS of the Body

A. The SPECIALIZATION of each Member

There is an abundant variety of members within the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:14). All the members are not the same kind. We are all specialized Body parts (I Corinthians 12:19)!

(Example: Even among preachers the variety is abundant. A great definition of preaching is “Truth through personality!”)

The temporary, transitional gifts listed in this chapter serve to magnify the

distinctive nature of each member of the Body. They show us the pattern of God: variety (I Corinthians 12:4-11).

Look at us physically – how much we are alike, and yet how vastly different we are from each other. (Think of a beautiful tapestry! All those colors and shades complementing each other!)

Therefore, every member of Christ’s Body is *special!* Do not write off the significance of God’s grace toward you or the value of Christ’s life living through you! He is what makes you so valuable.

B. The LIMITATION of each member

Because there is an abundant variety within the Body, there is also a diverse limitation naturally found in each member (I Corinthians 12:15-16). Diversity and specialization mean limitation. There are no “all around” men, none who can “wear all the hats.” Just as different organs of the Body have their specialized functions, they are as surely disqualified for other forms of service. Specialization *is* limitation. Don’t become discouraged by your limitations! Don’t compare yourself with *others* (this is not wise – II Corinthians 10:12)! You are free to be who you are in Christ!

1. The EQUALIZATION of each Member

Paul is quick to point out that, unlike our physical bodies, the Body of Christ does not have unequal parts (I Corinthians 12:22-24).

Our physical bodies have many parts but their value is not equal. Although we would not like to lose any of our body parts, we would prefer losing some above others. In other words,

there is a different value for each part. For example, our feet are not as important as our heart or lungs.

Yet this is where the analogy of the Body of Christ and our human bodies breaks down and Paul wants to be sure that we do not become confused. In the Body of Christ God has “tempered” the Body together. He has produced true equality. No member of the Body is closer to Christ than another. No member of the Body is “more indispensable” than another. No member of the Body is more dear than another, none more valuable.

The word *tempered* means “to commingle, i.e., (fig.) to combine or assimilate (Strong’s #4786). The word has been translated as “mixed” in Hebrews 4:2.

2. The UNIFICATION of each Member

Although specialization is limitation, it is not intended to be *isolation* (*I Corinthians 12:20*). The pitfall of isolation begins by comparing ourselves with others. The issues here are those of superior/inferior *attitudes* (pride, or feelings of worthlessness and defeat). This is produced by OVER or UNDER estimating our place in the Body.

Before we can ever enjoy Body *life*, there must be a high level of Body *conscienceness*. We need to view ourselves not only as belonging to Christ, but to each other. We do *belong* to each other. We are “members one of another” (*Romans 12:5*). We, by “one Spirit”, have been placed into “one Body” (*I Corinthians 12:13*). This awareness can help deliver us from this world’s flourishing spirit of “individualism,” of “self” – that all important “I.” It is this

self-centered consciousness that lies at the root of isolationism.

3. The NECESSITATION of each member

“I have no need of thee” is not the intelligent voice of any member of the Body (*I Corinthians 12:21-24*).

1. EVERY member needs other members of the Body.
2. EVERY member has something to give other members of the Body.

We have an obligation to one another. The “less honorable” are only so by comparison (and remember that this comparison “is not wise”).

3. We should, therefore, cheerfully acknowledge “You are special and I need you!”

It is important that we recognize that the analogy given here for the Body is one of members and not cells. A member of a body is a far more important issue than that of a cell.

There is no place that the doctrine of the “ONE BODY” is put to the test quite like the local church; learning to function and operate, as who we are, with other believers – as they are. The local church is a place for the practical production and application of “Body Life” doctrines. This then prepares us for the enlargement of our “Body Life” circle outside of the local church setting.

IV. BODY LIFE as seen in the “ONE ANOTHER” principle.

- A. BASIS – we are “members one of another” (*Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:25 [1-4, 16]*).

B. NEGATIVE ACTIONS PRODUCED BY THE FLESH (what we are NOT to be doing one to another):

1. Judging One Another (Romans 14:13).
2. Puffed Up (Prideful) One Against Another (I Corinthians 4:6).
3. Going To Law One with Another (I Corinthians 6:7).
4. Biting and Devouring One Another (Galatians 5:15).
5. Provoking (Irritating) One Another (Galatians 5:26).
6. Envyng (Jealous of) One Another (Galatians 5:26).
7. Lying One To Another (Colossians 3:9).
8. Preferring One Before Another (I Timothy 5:21).
9. Hating One Another (Titus 3:3).

C. POSITIVE ACTIONS PRODUCED BY THE SPIRIT (what we ARE to be doing one to another):

1. Kindly Affectionate One To Another (Romans 12:10).
2. Preferring One Another (Romans 12:10).
3. Same Mind One Toward Another (Romans 12:16; 15:5).
4. Love One Another (Romans 13:8; I Thessalonians 4:9).
5. Edify One Another (Romans 14:19; I Thessalonians 5:11).
6. Receive One Another (Romans 15:7).
7. Admonish (Gently Correct) One Another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16).
8. Salute (Greet – Enfold the arms) One Another (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 13:12; c.f. Acts 20:36-38).
9. Same Care (Impartial) One For Another (I Corinthians 12:25).

10. By Love Serve One Another (Galatians 5:13).
11. Forbear (Put Up With) One Another in Love (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13).
12. Be Kind To One Another (Ephesians 4:32).
13. Forgive One Another (Ephesians 4:32; Col. 3:13).
14. Submit One To Another (Ephesians 5:21).
15. Teaching One Another (Colossians 3:16; c.f. 2:9; Ephesians 4:16; 5:18-19).
16. Comfort One Another (I Thessalonians 4:18).

D. PAUL'S USAGE OF RELATED WORDS

1. Together:

- a. Positional Togetherness (Standing, Doctrine)
 - 1) Planted Together (Romans 6:5).
 - 2) Glorified Together (Romans 8:17).
 - 3) Joined Together (I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:16).
 - 4) Gathered Together (I Corinthians 5:4; II Thessalonians 2:1).
 - 5) Quickened Together (Ephesians 2:5; Col. 2:13).
 - 6) Raised Together (Ephesians 2:6).
 - 7) Built Together (Ephesians 2:22).
 - 8) Caught Up Together (I Thessalonians 4:17).
 - 9) Live Together (I Thessalonians 5:10).
- b. Practical Togetherness (State, Deportment).

- 1) Comforted Together (Romans 1:12; I Thessalonians 5:11).
- 2) Strive Together (Romans 15:30; Philippians 1:27).
- 3) Laborers Together (I Corinthians 3:9).
- 4) Gathered Together (I Corinthians 5:4; II Thessalonians 2:1).
- 5) Helping Together (II Corinthians 1:11).
- 6) Workers Together (II Corinthians 6:1).
- 7) Followers Together (Philippians 3:17).
- 8) Knit Together (Colossians 2: 2, 19).

2. Fellow:

- a. Fellow citizens (Ephesians 2:19).
- b. Fellow heirs (Ephesians 3:6).
- c. Fellow helpers (II Corinthians 8:23).
- d. Fellow laborers (I Thessalonians 3:2; Philippians 4:3; Philemon 1, 24).
- e. Fellow servants (Colossians 1:7; 4:7).
- f. Fellow soldiers (Philippians 2:25; Philemon 2).
- g. Fellow workers (Colossians 4:11).
- h. Fellowship (I Corinthians 1:9; II Corinthians 8:4; – this fellowship was a mystery – Ephesians 3:9; Philippians 1:5; 2:1; 3:10).

3. Same:

- a. Lord (Romans 10:12).
- b. Mind (Romans 12:16; I Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 4:2).
- c. Care (I Corinthians 12:25).
- d. Spirit (II Corinthians 4:13).
- e. Grace (II Corinthians 8:6).
- f. Body (Ephesians 3:6).
- g. Love (Philippians 2:2).

4. One:

a. The Seven-fold Unity of the Spirit

- 1) Body (Ephesians 4:4; [new man 2:15] 2:16; Romans 12:4; I Corinthians 10:17; 12:13; Colossians. 3:5).
- 2) Spirit (Ephesians 4:4; 2:18; Philippians 1:27).
- 3) Hope (Ephesians 4:4).
- 4) Lord (Ephesians 4:5; I Corinthians 8:6).
- 5) Faith (Ephesians 4:5).
- 6) Baptism (Ephesians 4:5).
- 7) God (Ephesians 4:6; I Corinthians 8:6).

b. Other Unities

- 1) Mind (Romans 15:6; II Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 1:27; 2:2).
- 2) Mouth (Romans 15:6).
- 3) Accord (Philippians 2:2).
- 4) Mediator (I Timothy 2:5).

V. SELECTIVE READING

(The use of the following materials should not be viewed as an endorsement of the authors or their writings.)

“The church has no business trying to provide a setting for anonymity! That is, a place for people to hide, remain private, live to themselves. The church’s function is to be an environment in which every believer is provided the opportunity, the encouragement, and the freedom to be, in his own peculiar way, a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ ...

“The church needs to [provide] the kind of atmosphere that moves people outside of themselves and into the kinds of close relationships in which spiritual ministry is the

normal exchange between people. The church is to [provide] an environment in which it is possible to know each other well enough to be serving each other's real needs. The church is to be a setting for the exchange of burdens and helps as well as ideas ...

"Somewhere in church life there must be opened up wide places where there can be mutual ministry (interaction) among the members of the Body. It is as indispensable to the health and growth of the church as preaching and teaching, prayer and worship, or evangelism ...

"When the light of this first began to dawn on us, we immediately were confronted with the need to rethink everything ... It became painfully apparent that there was no place in our church life for interaction, nowhere for the development of the kinds of relationships where mutual ministry could take place ... Restructuring was necessary.

"The accepted life styles of materialistic secular society opposed the kind of daily mutual ministry toward which we must be moving. Suburban America is a society of fences and private tract homes into which each family retreats, locks the door, pulls the drapes, and sits down to watch television for the next forty years, hoping no one interrupts ... The society into which we are called is described in Romans 12 as a community of people who are ... 'One another ...' 'One another ...' 'One another ...' 'One another ...'

"Too long the church has just gone along with the world's way of not relating to one another. The church has decided not to disturb the status quo for fear of offending people who want to keep their privacy and loneliness. But we have been called to reject that life style ... A family of new people who really care for each other!" – Robert C. Girard, *Brethren, Hang Together*.

++ + + +

"Although an abundance of research exists that men need both to give and receive physical affection, rarely does a man express his feelings physically. We do not touch. Touching of any kind implies sex to most men. If they are not engaged in contact on the football field or engrossed in sexual intercourse, American men will not touch other humans, especially men. We are afraid. We have been conditioned to believe that expressing emotions is wrong ... Even within church we see people sitting together - alone. We smile, we may even say hello, but we don't know one another.

"Our behavior at church is similar to being on an elevator. We don't stand too close to anyone else; we don't talk; we look straight ahead; and we can hardly wait for the door to open so we can run out. Being 'at church' can be like one more meeting in the usual Monday through Friday experience. But it should be different ... Don't blame others if things are not like you wish. As the Bell telephone ad used to say, 'Reach out and touch someone.'" – David Smith, *Men Without Friends* (p. 138-139).

++ + + +

"The New Testament lays heavy emphasis upon the need for Christians to know each other, closely and intimately enough to be able to bear one another's burdens, confess faults one to another, rebuke, exhort, and admonish one another, minister to one another with the word and through song and prayer ...

"Where, in the usual, traditional, church structure of meetings is this kind of interchange possible? What provision is made by church leaders to encourage it and guide its expression through scriptural teaching and wise admonitions?" – Ray Stedman, *Body Life* (p. 113-114).

++ + + +

“The Body of Christ is not provided for us as some kind of club, for temporary enjoyment and inspiration. The mutual influence of each upon others, the participation of each member, is described by as being specifically for the building up of one another and of the Body. This ‘building up’ is not some ethereal influence. It is real and visible. The members know it; each one changes, develops, matures. The world can see it.

“Now such close personal interaction is difficult to put into practice solely in weekly gatherings of large numbers ...

“Many have tended to equate ‘going to church’ with attending what is little more than a preaching center. They meet once or twice a week to have some small part in a structured service and hear a preacher. Others go weekly to services where the preaching isn’t the main thing, but where they take part together in a time-honored ritual of singing, responding, reading or reciting, kneeling and standing. The question is, is there real community among them, a real practical belonging to one another in the Holy Spirit? There may be, of course. But the fact remains that the restoration of anything like real ‘koinonia’ [fellowship] ... is virtually unknown to millions of ‘church’ adherents today.” – Ron Trudinger *Cells for Life* (p. 14, 43).

+++++

“It is most significant that whenever spiritual awakenings have occurred throughout the Christian centuries they have always been accompanied by a restoration of koinonia [fellowship] ...” – Ray Stedman, *Body Life* (p. 118).

+++++

“Each member has his distinct usefulness. A member of a physical body is different from a body cell. Lacking a cell does not matter much, but the lack of a member in a body is unthinkable. Of course, a cell has its use, but please note that

the Bible in its use of the analogy of the human body says that we are *members* of the body of Christ, not cells.” – Watchman Nee, *The Body of Christ: A Reality* (p. 18).

+++++

“Some people come to a church meeting as if they were tourists or spectators. Coming in such a manner will doubtless bring death to the meeting. Many times death is felt in church meetings, a death which has been brought in by such visitors as these. Let this not be so. Let there be a mutual supplying of one another in all the meetings ...

“Like the physical body, all the members parts of the spiritual Body of Christ are incessantly communicating with each other ... If any part should cease communicating, it stops the flow of the life of God and brings in death to the Body. No member can stop communicating or fellowshiping without doing damage to the church, neither can any member be useful without the need of the supply of the church. Some believers, upon being provoked, tend to retreat to a place all by themselves. They assume that as long as they seek to be spiritual, everything will be all right. Well, you just try and grow spiritually by this method and see what will happen. It will not bear positive fruit, for life must constantly flow. Never imagine that we can be spiritual by setting ourselves aside in isolation. And keep well in mind that the vessel which God ultimately seeks after is the Body, not the individual.” – Watchman Nee, *The Body of Christ: A Reality* (p. 81).

+++++

“We must rid our minds of the popular idea of ‘fellowship’ as merely a cheerful, back-slapping, social contact. True biblical fellowship is something very personal, even intimate: a full, open, warm sharing of one’s life and spirit with others ... biblical ‘koinonia’ [fellowship] lies at the

very core of the real nature of the church.” – Ron Trudinger, *Cells for Life* (p. 10).

+ + + +

“To describe a grace-filled church ... is to realize how far short of that ideal most of our churches fall ... What does it take to build grace into a church? How can a given church be changed from a mere preaching post, or a sort of Christian club, into a genuine fellowship of grace? I shall simply mention a few requirements for such change ...

“[1] One requirement for building a genuine fellowship of grace is the COMMITTED LEADERSHIP and example of a few people in the fellowship who have been truly touched by God’s grace ... No group can become grace-filled believers without such a nucleus of Christians at its core.

“[2] Another requirement is A VISION, shared by the leadership of the church and by many of its members, as to what a grace-filled fellowship can be.

“[3] Before a church can have that shared vision or be hungry enough to work toward it, PEOPLE MUST BE TAUGHT – months and months of solid teaching on the nature of grace [and] the nature of the church ...

“[4] But teaching is not enough. They must see A DEMONSTRATION of how it all works and be exposed to the kind of acceptance and self-giving love that will make them want more of it. This kind of thing is not learned from preaching. It is caught by infection.

“[5] Finally, the church needs to be structured, or perhaps restructured, to facilitate the new kind of life ... The RESTRUCTURING will have to involve a greatly increased emphasis on small groups, e.g., home Bible-study groups ...” – Joseph R. Cooke, *Celebration of Grace* (p. 183-184).

+ + + +

“... Galatians 6:2: ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ’ ... The law of love is fulfilled only by bearing one another’s burdens. But how can Christians bear each other’s burdens if they don’t know what they are? Some way of sharing these burdens with others is obviously called for. It calls for honesty and openness with other Christians, and a mutual recognition that it is neither abnormal nor unspiritual to have burdens and problems in one’s Christian experience. Somehow the masks have to come off and facades that say ‘everything-is-all-right’ when everything is anything but right, have to be removed. Often this can be done best in small groups, meeting in homes ... characterized by such a spirit of loving, non-judgmental acceptance, that many deeply personal problems can be shared openly without fear of rejection or giving rise to scandal ... [They] would immediately discover at least two things: (1) that every other Christian in the meeting identified with his problem and held him in higher esteem than ever because of his honesty and forthrightness; and (2) a wealth of helpful counsel would be opened to him from those who had gone through similar struggles and had learned very valuable lessons thereby.” – Ray Stedman, *Body Life* (p. 115-117).

+ + + +

Body Life & Evangelism

“A healthy Body is necessary to do effective work. To attempt evangelism while the Body of Christ is sick and ailing is worse than useless.” – Ray Stedman, *Body Life* (p. 120-121).

+ + + +

Body Life & The Pastor

“If church life is ever to be known on this earth, the whole mentality that spawned the pastoral role must go.” – Gene Edwards, *A Plea for Church Life: Getting to the Bottom of Church Problems* (p. 29).

(continued on page 208)

The Production

God Assembles His Book

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE

Part III

by - Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Text: *Colossians 1:25*

In this lesson we shall take a brief look at the Bible believer's view of the production of the Word of God.

How was the Bible assembled? How was the "canon" established? How did we get the twenty-seven books of the "New Testament"? Was it by human standards? Or did God give it to us?

We are told by "Christian" tradition and theology that the Council of Hippo (A.D. 393) established the twenty-seven books of our "New Testament," and that the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) limited the "New Testament" canon to those twenty-seven books.

Yet we must seriously reflect, "Is our faith to be founded upon some religious councils that met some three hundred years after those books were written?"

The Bible believer would not be satisfied with such an explanation. This would be to base our faith upon human history and reasoning. Both are, of themselves, valueless when it comes to matters of faith!

We need to ask ourselves, "What about the saints who lived during the three hundred years prior to these councils? Where was the Bible during this period? Was there a Bible that was finished and complete that the saints possessed prior to the fourth century?"

Faith (Romans 10:17) requires God's instruction on these matters!

I. The Declaration

God Ordained a Completer for the Word of God!

Colossians 1:25 clearly tells us that God chose Paul to complete the Word of God!

Paul filled full the Word of God. Strong defines the word translated *fulfilled* as "crammed." The same word is translated in Colossians 2:10 as "complete."

The Lord did not give the responsibility of completing His Word to the Council of Hippo!

Mark it well! Paul's writings FILL FULL God's Word – when Paul was done, you couldn't put any more in it! When Paul wrote his last epistle, the Word of God was completed; it was full; it was finished; and the Body of Christ had in its possession the entire Word of God!

Anything written after Paul could not possibly be the Word of God because God commissioned Paul to complete it!

II. The Details

We can go to the Bible and look for the details of this information, now that we know it exists. The reason that this normally is not done is because of the blinding power of tradition.

Tradition tells us that the Bible was not complete until the fourth century. Tradition tells us that Paul was not the last Bible author (it has John writing some thirty years after Paul – thus undermining the ministry of Paul and the authority and completeness of the Bible).

Tradition has a way of numbing one to the truth. Men no longer hold on to *every* word of God. Tradition demands that the emphasis of the words be "down played." Thus the emphasis of doctrine is "down played," if not altogether destroyed!

Yet we can see the assembly of the Word of God through the testimony of the Scriptures themselves. Here are some examples:

A. Acts 6:2, 4, 7

The apostles did not want to “*leave the Word of God*.” They wanted to give themselves to “*the ministry of the Word*.”

The apostles are writing their “Gospels” and “Hebrew Epistles.” We know this because the result was that “*the Word of God increased*.” What does this word “increase” mean? Strong defines it as (#837) “To grow, *i.e.*, enlarged.”

The Word of God is enlarging because *books* are being added!

B. Acts 10:36-37

Here we see that Cornelius knew the word of God spoken by Jesus Christ to Israel. How did he know this? Because it had been published! Now this word “published” is an interesting one indeed. This is not the word used throughout the “Gospels” which means to “pass the word along.”

This word is Strong’s #1096 meaning “To generate; to come into being.” The Word of God is being *generated* (given life – *i.e.*, inspiration!). It is coming into being! The Greek word for “published” is translated in Acts 15:25 in a most enlightening way, as “being assembled.”

These saints are busy *assembling* their “Hebrew New Testament”!

C. Acts 12:24

Here we are told that the Word of God *grew* (Strong’s #837 – “to grow, *i.e.*, enlarge”) AND *multiplied*.

The Scriptures are being added to (growing) and *copies* are being made (multiplication)!

D. Acts 13:49

Here we see, under the ministry of Paul, the word published being used again. However this is, again, another Greek word!

Now before we go to the definition of this particular Greek word, let us look at the interesting definition of our English word by Webster (1828).

He shows the root of the word “publish” to be *public* (*i.e.*, open to all) and then he defines it as, “to discover or make known to mankind or to a people in general what before was private or unknown.”

Does this not describe the distinct “mystery” ministry of Paul?

If that was not enough, let’s look at Strong’s definition (#1308): “to differ.” This same word is translated in I Corinthians 15:41 as “*differ*,” and in Philippians 1:10 as “*excellent*”!

E. Acts 17:2-3, 11

The Bereans already had the “Gospels” “records of Christ’s life to compare with the “Old Testament” prophecies.

F. Acts 19:20

Now we see that the Word of God grew (Strong’s #837 – “to grow, *i.e.*, enlarge”), and this time it grew *mightily*! It grew mightily because Paul has picked up the pen and begun to write; now some *excellent* Word is going out! The capstone of divine revelation is being hoisted to the top!

(I & II Thessalonians had already been written.)

G. Acts 20:32

Paul left the Ephesian elders with His Scriptures! Not just “Old Testament” Scripture, but with the Word of His grace!

H. I Corinthians 15:3-4

The “third day” that is “according to the Scriptures” is only found in Matthew and Luke, not in the “Old Testament.” This passage shows us that the “Gospels” were already in place and in use by the Corinthians!

I. Colossians 3:16

The Colossian saints had the Word of God – and it was *not* just the “Gospels” (c.f. II Corinthians 5:16). They had Paul’s epistles! (c.f. I Timothy 6:3).

(Paul had already written from six to nine epistles.)

J. Titus 1:9

Titus and the Cretian elders had the Word to *hold fast*!

K. II Timothy 4:1

Timothy had the Word of God *in his possession* to preach! Paul did not say “prophesy.” He said “preach the word.”

(This is Paul’s last Epistle.)

L. How did the early saints know that a book was the Word of God? They had special gifts in lieu of the Word of God not being complete! They could accurately identify and assemble the Word of God with these gifts!

With the completion of II Timothy, revelation and inspiration closes, the gifts cease, and the Word of God is completed. The so-called “canon” is sealed!

1. I Corinthians 13:8-10

The gifts were until that which was perfect came. (Perfect – that which has reached its end; that which is complete.)

2. Ephesians 4:13

The gifts were until the unity of the faith

came. (The Faith – the body of doctrine that Paul taught. Unity – that which is complete, that which has all its parts.)

3. I Corinthians 14:37

One of the functions of the prophets was to identify the Word of God!

III. We Have All the Word of God!

A. None of the Word of God can be lost from us.

The doctrine of divine preservation assures this (which we shall look at more closely in Part IV).

Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.”

B. The Apocrypha is *not* a part of God’s Word.

It is not a part of the Bible for the following reasons:

1. They were not recognized by Israel as being a part of God’s Word and therefore were never included in the “canon” of the “Old Testament” Scriptures.
2. They were not recognized as Scripture by Christ or any of His Apostles. They were never quoted by any of them.¹
3. Divine authority is not claimed by their authors, and by some it is virtually disowned.
4. They contain statements that are contrary to the history of the Scripture.
5. They contain statements that are contrary to the doctrine of the Scripture.
6. They are self-contradictory.
7. They were first declared to be Scripture (the Vatican Version) by the council of Trent on April 8, 1546 under the direction of the Pope.

C. Other Books Mentioned in Scripture

What about the references in the Bible to

1. The writers of the “New Testament” quote or allude to the Books of the “Old Testament” well over 600 times. None of them ever quote or allude to the Apocryphal writings.

other books and writings? Were they at one time a part of God's Word?

Below is a list of some of the passages containing such references:

BOOK OF JASHER – Joshua 10:13; II Samuel 1:18
BOOK OF NATHAN – I Chronicles 29:29; II Chronicles 9:29
BOOK OF GAD – I Chronicles 29:29
BOOK OF SHEMAIAH – II Chronicles 12:15
PROPHECY OF AHIJAH – II Chronicles 9:29
VISIONS OF IDDO – II Chronicles 9:29
EPSEPISTLE FROM LAODICEA –
Colossians 4:16
AN EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS – I Corinthians 5:9

It is important when considering this subject not to read more into these statements than is there. These books are not said to be a part of the Word of God. They are all simply being referenced. Satan's words are referenced in the Bible also, are we then to assume that his statements are the inspired word of God? No, in no wise. The statements of Satan recorded in the Bible are a divinely inspired reference. So it is with these above references. (Please review Section A.)

D. We have all the “Old Testament”

Important note:

The old Hebrew “Old Testament” had only 24 books listed. Our English Bible lists 39. It is important for us to understand that this is not a contradiction. The Hebrew Bible had a different combination, arrangement and classification, but the exact same textual content. Let's take a look at the old Hebrew Bible:

1. The Law:

Genesis	
Exodus	
Leviticus	
Numbers	
Deuteronomy	5 books

How A Couple Become Husband and Wife

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOME

Part IV

by - Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
Text: Hosea 2:19-20

According to the Bible how do a man and a woman become a husband and a wife? By covenant! This covenant is known as betrothal or espousal (note that the root of espousal is “spouse.”)

“Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant” (Malachi 2:14).

Such a covenant of commitment, written or otherwise, could be viewed as having four interrelated elements (as seen in our text):

I. Commitment of Permanence

“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever”
(Hosea 2:19a).

The husband/wife relationship is designed by God to be a lifelong relationship. It is *only* the hardness of heart that changes such a relationship (Mark 10:5).

II. Commitment of Purity

“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness” (Hosea 2:19).

All motives and actions of the relationship are to be based upon that which is right and proper in the eyes of the Lord!

III. Commitment of Love

“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness,

and in judgement, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.” (Hosea 2:19).

Love is a value system of positive action produced by the will and is manifest not in mere feeling but in concrete active service. (We shall speak more of this in later lessons.)

IV. Commitment of Faithfulness

“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord.” (Hosea 2:19-20).

Faithfulness holds the marriage relationship in place. It is a commitment of trust.

A. The Result of the Covenant

Note that a result of the covenant is that: *“thou shalt know the Lord.”* This covenant leads to a “marriage” which is a relationship of uninhibited, intimate knowledge of one’s mate: *“And Adam KNEW Eve his wife; and she conceived.”*

B. The Binding Nature of the Covenant

The biblical view of this covenant is that the parties entering into it are *bound* to it. Therefore, there must be a bill, or writing, of divorce to break the espousement (c.f. Matthew 1:16-24) of husband and wife, even if marriage has not followed. (We shall also deal with some of these issues in future lessons).

(This is part of a continuing series on the Home.)

A Selection of *The Last Words of the Dying*

Part II

CEILLER, WILLIAM (British physician)

“I wish I had the power of writing; I would describe how pleasant it is to die.”

(*Last Words of Saints and Sinners* by Herbert Lockyer, p. 123)

CHARLES IX (King of France)

“I know what I am – What shall I do? I am lost; I see it well!”

(*Dying Testimonies* by S.B. Shaw as recorded in *Voices from the Edge of Eternity* by John G. Myers, p. 33)

CROMWELL, OLIVER

“The devil is ready to seduce us, and I have been seduced.”

(*Voices from the Edge of Eternity* by John G. Myers, p.99)

DARROW, CLARENCE

It is interesting to read in a syndicated newspaper column by a medical doctor that even Clarence Darrow, the famed agnostic lawyer, was troubled in his soul as he lay on his death bed.

“Get me three clergymen.” Darrow said to his law clerk.

When the ministers arrived, Darrow, who had laughed at the Bible beliefs of William Jennings Bryan during the heated Scopes Trial in Tennessee, this same Darrow said:

“Gentlemen, I have written and spoken many things against God and the churches during my lifetime. Now I wish I hadn’t! For I realize it is entirely possible that I may have been wrong. So I should like to ask a final favor - that each of you intercede for me with the Almighty.”

(The Log of the Good Ship Grace as recorded in *Voices from the Edge of Eternity* by John G. Myers, p.140)

DUNCAN, ISADORA (1878-1927; American actress)

At her automobile accident she said “Goodbye, my friends, I am going to glory.”

(*Last Words of Saints and Sinners* by Herbert Lockyer, p. 127)

EDISON, THOMAS A

“It is very beautiful over there.”

(Mrs. Thomas Edison as recorded in *Voices from the Edge of Eternity* by John G. Myers, p. 46)

ELIZABETH (Queen of England)

“All my possessions for a moment of time!”

(*Voices from the Edge of Eternity* by John G. Myers, p. 92)

ETTY, WILLIAM (British painter)

“Wonderful, wonderful, this death!”

GIBBON, EDWARD (Historian, infidel writer, "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire")

"All is now lost, finally, irrecoverably lost. All is dark and doubtful."

(Dying Testimonies by S. B. Shaw as recorded in *Voices from the Edge of Eternity* by John G. Myers, p. 200)

GOODWIN, THOMAS (Puritan; president of Magdalene College, London)

"Ah, is this dying? How I have dreaded as an enemy this smiling friend."

(*Last Words of Saints and Sinners* by Herbert Lockyer, p. 56)

GORDON, A.J. (Preacher and hymn writer)

"Victory!"

(*Voices from the Edge of Eternity* by John G. Myers, p. 188)

LUTHER, MARTIN

"Into Thy hands I commend my spirit! Thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth."

(*Last Words of Saints and Sinners* by Herbert Lockyer, p. 73)

Continued from page 201)

+++ +

Body Life & the Ushers

"Often our principal contact in a new church is with an official greeter, dutifully commissioned and recognizable by his carnation and ribbon. It is his assigned official duty to be nice. The non-greeters sit with their own group and rarely venture forth to meet new people." – David Smith, *Men Without Friends* (p. 177).

Don't Quit

When things go wrong
as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging
seems all up hill,
When the funds are low
and the debts are high
And you want to smile,
but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When we might have won
had he just stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow
You may succeed with another blow.

Success is failure turned inside out -
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight
when you're hardest hit -
It's when things seem worst
that you must not quit!

(Author Unknown)

+++ +

Unity of the Body

"He (Paul) not only proclaimed the message about Christ and brought people into an intimate relationship with God, but drew the consequences of that message for the life of his converts and led them into a personal relationship with one another ... For Paul the gospel bound men and women to one another as well as to God ... To embrace the gospel, then, is to enter into community." – Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (p. 33).

(This is a continuing series on the Church.)