

1896

# The Christian life of the apostolic age

---

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/47687>

*"Downloaded from OpenBU. Boston University's institutional repository."*

THESIS.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

GEORGE R. GROSE.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY,

1896.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

Bibliography.

"The Beginnings of Christianity." Geo. P. Fisher D.D.

"Christian charity in the Ancient Church."

Dr. Gerhard Ullhorn.

"Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism", same author.

"Planting of Christianity." Heander.

"Early Years of Christianity." E. De Pressense D.D.

"Apostolic Times." Gotthard V. Lechler D.D.

"History of the Early Church." Henry Sheldon D.D.

"Studies in the Apostolic Church." Charles W. Rishell Ph.D.

"The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church." Weizsäcker.

"History of the Christian Church" Schaff.

"History of Christianity." Prof. Rudolph Sohm

"Growth of the Spirit of Christianity." Geo. Matheson M.A.

"The Faith and Life of the Early Church. W.A. Slater.

Noyes' Essays.

"The Official Recognition of Woman in the Church."

Charles W. Rishell Ph. D.



affiliated.

The second view is that the first century of the Christian Era presented the ideal Christian life, the true type for the Church of succeeding ages.

An historical study of the Christian life of the Apostolic period shows both views to be wholly unfounded.

The sources for such an historical investigation are mainly the Acts of the Apostles and the New Testament Epistles.

Before proceeding further it will be necessary for us to determine the limitations of the term Christian life. It has such wide latitude of meaning that, unless the sense in which it is used in this discussion be fixed upon, no little confusion will result.

By the Christian life I mean not the liturgic development on the one hand, nor the transporting effects of Christianity on the other hand. Both are merely phases of the manifestation of the life, but not the life itself.

I shall treat the subject under the two categories, -- Subjective Reality and Objective Manifestations. Under these two categories may be included all the phenomena necessary for a treatment sufficiently exhaustive to enable us to determine the real character of the Apostolic Christian life.

### I. SUBJECTIVE REALITY.

The history of christianity in all periods centers in its divine Head, Jesus Christ. Without the life of a divine-human Being such as is portrayed by the evangelists in the Gospels, the Christian life of the first century is wholly inexplicable. A divine-human life, the embodiment of the high ideal which Jesus Christ presented, and as such the exemplar of the new Humanity, is the necessary postulate of Apostolic Christianity.

I. Jesus Christ imparted to each one of his followers a new life-force or principle. He revealed the divine ideal of life which had hitherto been almost entirely veiled to the heathen, and to the Jew partly obscured, and then gave power for its attainment. The ideal of life held up by those Galilean peasants immeasurably transcends that of the noblest philosophers of Greece. The early Christians always confess that the power to live this higher life is not their own, but is given them by Christ. "That life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God," was the confession of all. They unqualifiedly accepted the statement of their Master, "Apart from Me ye can do nothing." (Jno.15/5). Their joyful boast was, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." (Phil.4/13). See also Rom.6/11; IICor.5/17;

Phil. 1/21.

2. The next element in this subjective reality is an inexpressible love for and devotion to Jesus Christ. The association of Jesus with His disciples abounds in beautiful and tender expression of loving devotion, Mary's anointing the saviour for His burial, (John 12/1--9), Peter's avowal of faithfulness even unto death (Jno. 13/37), Paul's declaration, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," (Phil. 3/3), are in no way exceptional, but only illustrate the peculiar love which glowed in the heart of every believer in Christ. (See also I John 4/19; II Cor. 5/14; I Peter 1/8; Jno. 21/15ff; Acts 5/41--42).

### 3. The Spirit of Fraternity.

No element of this heaven-born life was more distinctly new than the brotherly love which all the early Christians had for one another. Christ found the world without love. Society was egoistic and thoroughly selfish. Men who had been coldly selfish or indulging in bitter hate were now drawn together by a fraternal tie stronger than any social or natural ties. "See how those Christians love!" was the astonished exclamation of Jews and Gentiles. They were taught to love one another even as Christ had loved them (John 13/34), and that "love is the fulfilling of the law." The love of one another was regarded

as the test of the presence of the new life (I Jno. 3/14; 2/10; 1 Peter 1/22).

#### 4. Enthusiasm for the Truth of Jesus Christ.

The early disciples were possessed not only with a burning love for their Master, but with a consuming zeal to spread the truth of Christianity to others. They were willing to be all things to all men that they might lead them to Christ (I Cor. 9/22). Not merely the Apostles and those commissioned as teachers, but all the early Christians were eager to spread the truth of Christ.

The missionary enthusiasm of the early Church has truly been the wonder of the Christian centuries. When there was yet no organization, it was far more efficient as a propaganda of religious truth than ecclesiastical ambition or Mohammedan fanaticism.

1). The enthusiasm of the early Christians for the Gospel did not grow out of mere intellectual appreciation of the truth of Christianity. They were not men of such mental grasp or discipline as to appreciate Christianity in its intellectual aspects. They were mostly men from the lower walks in life and not scholars. Paul was perhaps the only man in the Apostolic Age who was capable of a profound appreciation of Christianity as a system of truth. And yet here is a devotion to the Gospel displayed which is more than the

enthusiasm of the scholar.

2) Their enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel grew out of the consciousness of what the Gospel had done for them. It was a zeal born of experience. With the joy of forgiveness filling heart and mind they flew to tell others of their Saviour.

These four elements--a new life-force, a loving devotion to Jesus Christ, a spirit of universal fraternity, and an enthusiasm for the truth, may be regarded as forming the subjective reality of the early Christian life, each element of which has its own subjective forms of manifestation.

The out-working of this new life, or its external manifestations we will now consider.

## II. Objective Manifestations.

Every subjective reality in human experience has a corresponding outward expression. So religion touches not only the fountain-heads of Character, but the main-springs of conduct.

1. The objective manifestations of this new life-principle. If we really have in the early Church the life of God incarnated we should naturally expect some characteristic manifestation of that life. This indeed appears in the Apostolic Age, the distinguishing characteristic of which is the prepon-

derance of the super-natural over the human. The Apostolic Era was distinctly super-naturalistic, as will appear from the further elaboration.

The external results expressive of the new life within are so multi-form as almost to baffle an attempt at complete classification. The most important, however, may be included; 1) Under their worship, 2) Their super-natural gifts.

#### Worship.

The first distinctly Christian worship was more of the character of family worship than of a formal church service. The meeting was held in a private house, the home of one of the christians. The service consisted of prayer, praise, effusions of song, reading of the Scriptures, fellowship, and the breaking of bread. The whole service was characterized by the greatest simplicity, spontaneity and joyfulness. So prominent were these elements that they may be said to constitute the distinguishing peculiarity of the Christian worship.

#### a) The simplicity of their worship.

The religious life of believers as it appeared, in their domestic social gatherings consisted of four essential elements. (Acts 2/42). 1. The didaché ton apostolon,--the teaching of the Apostles. This was not a discourse before

unbelievers, as Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, but teaching addressed to believers only. Nothing is said as to the character of this teaching, and the term used gives no hint as to its nature. In I Cor. 12/8, logos sophias and logos gnoseos are mentioned as spiritual gifts, while in 14/6 didache and gnosis are plainly related. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that these two gifts were included in the Apostolic teaching. It is difficult, however, to distinguish between them. The word of wisdom may be said to be the divine philosophy of the world, including God's plan and purpose in creation and redemption, so far as He has revealed Himself. This philosophy was not merely theoretical, but eminently practical, for its ultimate object was the regulation of human life. So far as the New Testament use of the term allows us to determine, the word of wisdom consisted in the exposition of the Holy Scriptures and the determination of their hidden meaning by means of rational thought, guided by the Holy Spirit.

The word of knowledge according to Weizsacher's interpretation, "consisted in intuition" as contrasted with rational thought. The one was a conscious thinking of God's thoughts, while the other was "an illumination by the Spirit of God" in virtue of man's possessing that Spirit. (I Cor. 2/9--16;

II Cor. 10/5; 11/6). This inner consciousness was the basis of all spiritual knowledge. Through this gnosis the soul came to a knowledge of God and his thoughts, and the nature of Jesus Christ. (II Cor. 2/14; 4/6). This last element qualified every believer for some form of teaching; for although all did not possess the word of wisdom, all did possess the word of knowledge. Consequently the work of teaching, which naturally fell to the apostles (Acts 6/4), was not restricted to them, but any was permitted to teach. (Acts 13/1; Col. 3/16; II Tim. 2/2; Heb. 5/12).

The Old Testament was regarded in the Apostolic Age as the Holy Scriptures (Rom. 1/2), and was read in all the services. While the Gospels were not yet committed to writing, the facts of the gospel story were repeated till they were familiar to all. In the later Apostolic Age, the Epistles were circulated and read, (I Thess. 5/27; Col. 4/16); but at first the high degree of divine inspiration ascribed to the Old Testament Scriptures was probably not ascribed to them: (I Cor. 5/9; 16/3, cf. II Cor. 7/8; 10/9--11).

2. The koinonia,--brotherly fellowship. This fellowship has been variously interpreted. Leckler understands by it "an inner community of spirit and faith." Wordsworth, "visible

communion with the Apostles." Meyer, "mutual brotherly association."

Whatever the form might have been, the essential element in this part of the service was the expression of that sincere and fervent love for one another which Christ had imparted to them. (I Peter 1/22).

3. The *klasis tou artou*, the breaking of bread. This was neither an ascetic mode of living, nor was it the formal celebration of the Lord's Supper. It was a fellowship meal with the Lord, a "joyful thanksgiving service for food." The meal was provided in common, eaten together, and at the close, the bread and wine were used in a sacramental sense. Its significance was due to two facts: 1) It was in imitation of the habit of Jesus in breaking bread with his disciples, 2) It was also an expression of their love and sympathy for one another.

The bread and wine were not regarded as a sacrifice in any sense, for Christ their Passover was sacrificed once for all. The early Christians knew no sacrifice but self-surrender, (Rom. 12/1, cf. Phil. 2/15,17), no gifts except those prompted by love: (Phil. 4/18),

4. The *proseuchai* were mere prayers in common, probably mingled with praise. (Acts 1/14, 24; 4/24, cf. Jas. 1/5; Luke 24/53)

We have no trace of the use of the Lord's prayer except in the first and third gospels. "There can be no doubt", as Bingham says, "that prayers and hymns immediately dictated by the Spirit formed a part of the ordinary service." (Antiq. XIII. 5/1). The Psalm was not one from the Old Testament, but sometimes an original one recited by the speaker; again, it was a traditional one. The songs of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon belong to the Apostolic Age in character.

In the memorable letter of Pliny, the younger, to Trajan, the Emperor, we have an important statement respecting the worship of the early Christians. "The Christians", he says, "affirmed that it was their custom to meet on a stated day before sunrise, and sing a hymn to Christ as to a god; that they further bound themselves by an oath never to commit any crime, but to abstain from robbery, theft, adultery, never to break their word, nor to deny a trust, after which they would separate and then reassemble for the purpose of eating in common a harmless meal." According to the testimony of Justin Martyr, the most prominent parts of their worship were the reading of the Scriptures, the discourse of the president, the prayers and thanksgivings, the sacramental bread and wine, and the free-will offering for the poor.

b) The spontaneity of their worship.

In worship every member had his part and participated freely for mutual spiritual benefit. Almost every feature of the service was voluntary. This spontaneous and peculiar form of worship had its basis in the supernatural gifts imparted by the Spirit. (I Cor. 12/4--11, 27--30; Rom. 12/6,7). "Such unrestricted intercourse", as Weizsäcker aptly says, would have been inconceivable without a spiritual life wholly extraordinary." (Vol. II. 257).

c) Joyfulness. The key-note of their worship, as well as of all other manifestations of the new life was a holy joy. In the midst of squalor and wretchedness all <sup>around</sup> them and the fierceness of opposition, their exuberant joy is all the more noteworthy. Perhaps the largest element of their religious experience as it manifests itself in worship and conduct is a holy joy, which grows out of a consciousness of redemption by the sacrificed and risen Christ. (Acts 2/11; 4/31; 2/47; 3/8; 2/46; I Thess. 2/14; 1/6). Jesus Christ, as the revealer of God and their Saviour, was the supreme source of joy. (Rom 5/1ff)

It is especially noteworthy that the Christians did not abandon the temple services. The regular temple services were observed with faithfulness by the Jewish Christians,

especially in the early part of this era. They believed this to be a necessary part of their religious service. (Luke 24/53; Acts 2/46; 3/1,11, cf. 20--25; 22/17; 21/27,30). In this respect the disciples simply followed the example of Jesus (Matt. 4/23; 9/35; 13/54). The synagogue service was observed with equal faithfulness. "This was", as Nitzsch observes, "a temple service transformed into prayer." (Acts 15/ 21; 16/13; 21/20). From the Acts the Christians appear, 1. As a praying band (1/14), 2. As separating themselves from the rest of the Jews, because they were a false generation. With the exception of these two particulars, they remained loyal Jews (Acts 8/2; 10/14; 21/23ff).

The formation of a new system of worship was the farthest thing from the thought of the early Christians. Their meetings were held simply for the "mutual expression, confirmation, and exposition of their faith in Christ." But as their Christian consciousness developed, and the opposition from the unbelieving Jews became more bitter, and finally the center of Jewish worship was destroyed, the new life at last developed a distinctively Christian worship.

Without entering into the discussion of the separation from the Jewish Church, suffice it here to say, 1. In the very nature of the case the split could not have been immediate, ( #. Weizsäcker.)

2. The plan followed was in harmony with the growth of the kingdom. As Lechler observes, "While thus shut up in the bosom of the old theocracy, there were growing up those divine virtues, brotherly fellowship and Christ-like spirit which were to be the distinguishing characteristics of the new life." (pg. 51).

The Gentile Christians had a religious development peculiar to themselves, because they were driven out of the synagogues. Hence their worship was comparatively free from Jewish taint. In the Gentile communities Paul did two kinds of work,-- general preaching (as the sermon on Mars' Hill, Acts 17), and teaching from house to house. The latter was restricted to believers only. (Acts 20/20). There are traces of the use of the Jewish Scriptures, inasmuch as familiarity with the same is implied in the Epistles. (I Cor. 9/9; 10/1; II Cor. 3/7; Rom. 1/2).

So, in summarizing, the worship of the Christian Jews in Palestine may be said to be not entirely Jewish, neither was the Gentile worship entirely free from Old Testament elements. While not entirely destitute of liturgical forms, it was characterized by simplicity, spontaneity and joyfulness. This peculiar form of worship arose as the result of the peculiar nature of the new life. It was as Harnack says, "The product of the impulse of the Spirit, and the embryo of

ecclesiastical service."

2). The second form of the objective manifestation of the new life-force was the Charismata, the supernatural gifts. All the offices, both for government and for edification, were regarded as charismata. In this fact, as Dr. Rishell has pointed out, is evidenced the supernaturalistic character of the Apostolic Christian life. These gifts were, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues, teaching, ministry, government, love. The object of these gifts was spiritual profit. (I Cor. 12/7). Everyone was not endowed with all the gifts, nor were they bestowed without regard to natural ability. The natural ability and personal adaptations of each seem to have been the grand work of the peculiar gifts bestowed. While we are taught that one and the self-same Spirit wrought in the believers all these spiritual gifts, (I Cor. 12/11), full justice is done to the language of Scripture by concluding that the Spirit so elevated and vitalized the special natural gifts of each believer that he was not only fitted for his peculiar work, whether teaching, healing, or government, but was able to do work which he otherwise could not perform.

The teaching was didactic instruction in which reflection was predominant.

Prophecy was hortatory appeal, predominantly emotional, and not the foretelling of future events. It was not the prerogative of the Jew, but all were exhorted by Paul to use this gift. (I Cor. 14/1,39).

The discerner was a monitor who determined what was erroneous in the teaching and prophecy, clearly showing that these two classes of workers were not infallible.

A mere statement of the nature of the charismata just named must suffice. We will now pass on to the consideration of that special charisma, the glossolalia, in which especially the supernaturalistic element appears. The New Testament abounds in references to this gift. (See Acts 2; I Cor. 12 and 14).

As to what was the exact character of this phenomenon scholars differ widely. Fisher calls it "an ecstatic outburst of prayer and praise, inarticulate." But if Luke refers to the same kind of phenomenon mentioned by Paul in I Cor. 12:14, that interpretation is not in harmony with Acts 2/8. Neander holds that it was not a foreign language; but the language of the tongues of the Spirit. This view makes the jeering mob participants in the miracle in that they were able to understand the new language. This view is therefore untenable.

Weissäcker, that the miracle on the Day of Pentecost

consisted in speaking foreign languages, but the phenomenon described in I Cor. 12 and 14 is entirely distinct. That is, "a new language was created by the new faith,"-- one which would be suitable for intercourse with God. While the phenomena described in Acts and in I Cor. may not be identical, is it at all probable that there were two distinct forms of this one gift? Besides, the Acts describe the speaking with tongues as if it were identical with the phenomenon known to Paul.

Pressense claims that in the first era of the Apostolic Age, foreign languages were spoken, but as the supernatural was gradually supplanted by the human, the tongues of Paul's time (I Cor. 12 and 14), had become senseless jargon. That the power to speak foreign languages belonged to the charism mentioned in Acts 2nd Ch. can not be doubted. And that the phenomena described by Luke in Acts and by Paul in I Cor. are identical seems equally clear. But that this gift has degenerated into senseless jargon, as Pressense holds, or is "a new language, created by the new faith," "the product of spiritual excitement," as Weizsäcker claims, is a purely gratuitous assumption. Nothing <sup>in</sup> ~~but~~ Paul's reference to the glossolalia in I Cor. would indicate that the gift exercised in Corinth was a degenerate one in contrast to a pure gift once imparted.

He speaks of it as having been imparted by the Spirit (I Cor. 12/ 4,6,7,cf.v.10). He even commends this gift,--"I would that ye all spake with tongues." (I Cor. 14/5).

The more natural interpretation, as it seems to me, and one which harmonizes with the accounts in Acts and in I Cor., is that in both cases the gift consisted in the ability to speak strange languages, and that in the case of the Corinthians, the glossolalia were not spurious, but over-estimated and abused, consequently it led to excesses in that Church, was not edifying, and therefore had to be restrained.

These extraordinary charisms constitute the splendor of the Apostolic Age." They are but the outward expression of the mighty impulse which gave to the Church its all-conquering strength. While the "forms of all these gifts were transitory and belonged only to the period of intuition," The new life of those born in the Spirit is forever the same, and yet forever unfolding itself in ever-varying phenomena.

2. The second element in this new life, loving devotion to Jesus Christ, manifests itself in the changed conduct of believers. No miracle of Christianity is more astonishing than that of an unholy life suddenly transformed into a holy life. This appears all the more wonderful when we consider the utter moral rottenness of the society from which the

Christians came and of which they were a part. Men whose lives had been actuated by beastly passion, and familiarized with all the degrading vices born of greed, suddenly held up Jesus Christ as the holy ideal of conduct, and patterned their life, both in act and spirit after Him. (Acts 19/19; II Cor. 5/17; 7/1; I Cor. 6/10,11, cf. Col. 3/7; Eph. 4/28). They refrained from all immoral occupations and from cruel and licentious amusements. (Acts 19/19). Their attitude toward civil rulers was unquestionably one of respectful obedience, (Titus 3/1 ff; I Pet. 3/10<sup>#</sup>). They were not taken out of their regular callings, but made more faithful in them. A holy man at a holy task is Christianity's ideal of society. (I Cor. 7/20,24; I Thess. 4/11; II Thess. 3/10 f.).

We must not suppose, however, that the moral conduct of the early Christians was ideal. The record was soon stained by the unfaithfulness of Peter, the hot disputes of Paul and Barnabas, the schisms at Corinth, and the crime of Ananias and Saphira. The addresses to the seven churches in Asia, found in Rev. give a picture of the religious life toward the close of the first century. All these churches except Smyrna and Philadelphia were almost bitterly arraigned for some form of sin. (See also I Cor. 1/10; 3/1 ff.; 5/1; 11/17 ff., 20 ff; 6/1 f.). (#. cf. Acts 5/29; 4/20).

But while these imperfections appeared to some extent in all the communities, their life in ideal was holy, and earnest in godly strivings. The controlling motive was to imitate Jesus Christ, the supreme desire was to be like Him in thought, word and deed. (I Cor. 11/1; Eph. 5/1; Phil. 2/6; Thess. 1/6).

The imperfect conduct is to be attributed, not to a wilful purpose to sin, nor to the insufficiency of the saving power of the Gospel; but as all the Epistles indicate, to ignorance of the right, to a low standard of conduct. While the Gospel presented a new ideal, the old standard could not be displaced at once.

One of the most powerful factors in giving the early Church its peculiar character, was the almost universal belief in the immediate second coming of Christ. Their simplicity of life and peculiar earnestness were largely inspired by the confident expectation of the Lord's early return. This gave them a spirit of other-worldliness which manifested itself in all their conduct. They regarded themselves as sojourners here, having their real citizenship in heaven. (I Pet. 2/11; Heb. 11/16). This belief in the immediate return of Christ was shared by nearly all the Apostles. (I Cor. 4/5; 1/7, f.; 7/29, 31; 10/11; Phil. 3/20; 4/5; I Tim. 6/4; Heb. 16/25, 37; I Thess. 1/10; 3/13; II Thess. 1/7; I Pet. 4/7; II Pet. 3/3, 10, ff; Jude 1";

Jas. 5/3,8; I Jno. 2/18). With this Millennial dream filling mind and heart it is not strange that their attention was absorbed by the heavenly life, while the earthly life was regarded with comparative indifference. Their new life was not only heaven-born and heaven-sustained, but heaven was its ever-yearned-for goal. These facts largely determine its peculiar character.

3. The spirit of universal fraternity found outward expression, 1. In charities, 2. In the change of social customs.

The early Christians regarded themselves as brethren of one family. They greeted one another with a holy kiss. As allusions to the fraternal feeling existing between the Christian believers see Rom. 12/10; Rom. 15/5,7; 14/10; I Cor. 6/6; 16/20; II Cor. 13/12; Eph. 6/5--9; Phil. 1/14; I Pet. 2/17; I Pet. 5/14; I Thess. 5/26. Their close fraternity is indicated, 1. By the love-feast and weekly sacrament, 2. By their common treasury. (Acts 2/44,45).

This was not, however, a monkish fraternity requiring the giving up of property, nor was the community of goods absolute and universal for a while and then the usual social order restored. The gifts were purely voluntary. (II Cor 9/7).

The common treasury did not imply the giving up of all claims to private property as Acts 2/44,45; 4/34--37 might seem to

indicate. Right of control was still exercised as is evident from Acts 5/4. Full justice is done to each scriptural reference to their community of goods, when we infer that the property of the people was so consecrated to the common good, that the needs of all were supplied as in a family. The charity of the early Christians formed as much a part of their worship as the Eucharist. (Acts 11/29). Justin Martyr gives a beautiful picture of their brotherliness; "We who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock, and on account of their different modes of taking food, would not associate with men of a different tribe, now, since the appearing of Christ, we have become fellow-eaters and pray for our enemies." This charity appears the more remarkable when we remember that it was not local, but extended to all believers in need. Collections were taken for the needy of other lands. (Gal. 2/16; II Cor. 9/12--15; Rom. 15/25--27). This virtue will appear only in its true light when we remember, as Boeckle says, that "charity was unknown to the ancient world." There were of course individual instances of benevolence, but many of these were selfish in motive. The famous Corn Laws of Rome were of a purely political character. In the ancient guilds there was not even an approach

to real charity. There was no systematic beneficence. The charity of the heathen world was both exceptional and sectional; Christian charity was universal. But the remarkable fact is not that charity was exercised in the Christian community, but as Ulhorn says, "that a communion existed whose vocation was to exercise compassion."

2. The strength of this fraternal bond is seen again, in breaking down all barriers, whether of race, national, social or religious prejudices, which had separated men, and bringing them into one holy fraternity. In Christ Jesus there "was no Jew nor Gentile, no bond nor free, no male nor female." (Gal. 3/28; Eph. 4/3). The institution of slavery was not directly attacked, but a new love was put into the hearts of slaveholders which made final and complete overthrow of slavery inevitable. (Eph. 6/9; Col. 4/1; I Cor. 7/22; Philemon; Acts 12/13).

The strength of this tie again appears in the emancipation and elevation of woman. (I Pet. 3/7). Libanius on seeing the mother of Chrysostom exclaimed, "What women the Christians have!" Not only was there no distinction of sex in the redemption of Christ, but both male and female "stood on the same level in matters pertaining to the highest religious privileges." Both men and women spoke with tongues and prophesied.

(Acts 2/17, cf. 21/9; I Cor. 12/14; I Cor. 11/5; 14/23,24).

From these scriptures it is evident that "the Holy Spirit did not discriminate against women, either as to the offices they should occupy, or the sphere in which they should exercise their gifts." Undoubted official recognition was given to women in the early Church; undoubted restriction was also placed upon her activity, but this was due, so far as the Scriptures intimate, not to prejudice in Paul's mind against the female sex, neither to a misapprehension of the divine economy, nor to the fact that such activity on the part of women was wrong per se, but it was due solely to local and temporal conditions.

4. The fourth element in their subjective Christian life manifested itself, 1. In heroic efforts to spread the truth, 2. In the spirit in which they bore persecutions.

The heroism of the first Christians in spreading the truth, is seen in the general and incessant missionary activity of believers. They became homeless and comfortless wanderers, gladly enduring every hardship for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. The missionary efforts of the first century present the sublimest spectacle of heroism ever witnessed.

But again, this enthusiasm for the truth manifested

(1. Rishell's official Recognition of Woman  
In the Church. pg. 18.)

itself in the spirit in which they bore hardships and suffered persecution. They "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." (Acts 5/41; II Cor. 11/24--27, cf 12/10). Paul, facing imprisonment and death, exclaimed, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 20/22, ff. See also Acts 21/13; II Cor. 4/8 ff, v. 17; Acts 5/ 30).

To sum up: The Christian life of the Apostolic Age was a divine reality, centering in and proceeding from the divine-human Christ as its Source, and issuing in four subjective activities with as many objective manifestations. A supernatural life expressing itself in a peculiar worship and in extraordinary supernatural gifts; a love for Jesus Christ which made Him the holy Ideal in conduct, and imparted to the believer an earnest purpose to be holy in life; a brotherly feeling which broke down all distinctions and made all men of one family, each responsive to the other's needs; and an enthusiasm for the truth of Christ which sent His followers over, all seas, into all lands, suffering every hardship patiently, even rejoicing in death, glorying only in the "cross of Jesus Christ."

The Christian life was preeminently supernaturalistic

in its source and in its expression, earnest in purpose, rigid in discipline, and joyous in experience and anticipation.

The second and third periods of the age marked the gradual decline of the supernatural and the gradual coming into prominence of the human. Miracles became fewer and the extraordinary less common.

To what is this change in the ratio of the divine and human elements in the Church to be attributed? To a decline in faith? to a spiritual deterioration? This answer is based on a false assumption. While certain periods of the history of the Church marked the rapid growth of ceremonialism and ecclesiasticism, the growth in true spirituality has far surpassed these excrescences. No age ever presented such mighty faith and vigorous life as the present.

To my mind the gradual supplanting of the supernatural by the human element was due, not to a decline in faith, but rather to the unfolding of God's providential plan for His Kingdom on earth. The predominantly supernatural Christian life was God's plan for that age, but it certainly is not the normal Christian life for the succeeding centuries. The true sphere of the supernatural in life is not the complete overshadowing of the human by the divine as in Apostolic times.

The predominance of the divine over the human was wholly normal for that age, because it was needed by that age to lead it to faith in the divine-human Christ. But to this age it would be abnormal, because the divine plan seems to be not the supplanting of the human by the divine, but the permeating of all human relations and the control of all human activities by the Divine. In other words, it is the re-incarnation of Jesus Christ in the individual and corporate life. The complete animation of the human by the divine, such as characterized the divine-human Christ,-- this is the glorious ideal of redemption.

George R. Grose.