

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH ?

A great deal is said and written about the church ; you will see that word in newspapers and hear it on the streets ; you will see in every city and town buildings which are called churches, and the word is used in so many ways that it is necessary to ask, what is the church of God ? and, what is meant by belonging to it?—for the church has to do with God, and it is only in His Word that we can find what the word really means. Suppose a hundred unsaved men and women band together and form what they call a 'church,' hire an unsaved man to preach to them, build a large building with a tall steeple to hold meetings in, would these things make them a church of God? would God have anything to do with blessing such a society?—Would those belonging to it please Him at all in anything they did so long as they remained unsaved?—Suppose half of these people were saved, would that make it any more pleasing to Him? or would that make it any more a church of God? Reader, these are solemn questions.

You may be a member of such a church, and if you are I want to set before you what it involves. Soon you will have to stand before Him, and now it behoves you to test your position and ways by His Word.—Have you ever read your Bible to learn what the church is ?

If you search the Bible you will find that God Himself has made the church, that no one is a member of it unless he has been born again, and that denominations are something

unknown to Scripture. You will find that the church is something unknown till it was announced by Christ, the headings of the chapters to the contrary notwithstanding. These headings were written by uninspired men and have no authority. They are to be tested like all things by the Word itself. In Matt. xvi. 18, Jesus said, "I WILL build my church," not have built it. In the book of the Acts of the Apostles you get a history of the founding of the church, and the second chapter tells the very day when the church was formed. Jesus had to die and be raised from the dead, had to ascend up to heaven before the Holy Spirit could come down. Remember this that the Holy Spirit could not come down until Jesus ascended up to heaven, and there could be no church until the Spirit came to form the church, it could not be formed.

But who are the real members of the church? The people of God.—And what marks off the people of God from the world? They are born again people. Their sins are forgiven. The Holy Spirit of God dwells in them. By Him they are baptised into one body, and that body is the church. An unbeliever cannot be in the church of God. You may be a member of a so-called church, but if you are not born again, if you have not repented and accepted Christ as your Saviour, your belonging to a church will only increase your condemnation. Joining a church will not bring you one step nearer salvation. This is not God's way of salvation. You can find nothing in the Bible about joining the church to get saved or joining a church formed by