

manner to accept the facts concerning Jesus, the Christ, and commence to carry out His instructions. The only formality accompanying the act was one as simple as can well be imagined, viz., the application of water to their persons, as a public recognition on the part of all that they did so accept Jesus as their teacher and guide.

There was no sacred fount for plunging the converted ones into, no auricular confessions, no penances, no laying on of hands, no learning of creeds and catechisms, no private or public examinations by question and answer to ensure their soundness in the faith, no penitent benches, no altar services, no three, six or twelve months' probation, and no public receptions of a prescribed character—all these and many more have been added without the sanction of Christ or apostle; they are simply and purely human inventions.

But are they all wrong because of this fact? Not necessarily. There is just as much sanction for auricular confession as for an altar service, as far as the Bible is concerned. They are simply means to definite ends, and must be judged on their individual merits.

Any one of the long list given above may be harmless, hurtful or helpful, just according to the character and surroundings of the parties using them.

Granted that the confessional has been abused, and used for improper purposes, so has the evangelical altar service. We ourself have seen it turned into a flirting place, and have witnessed improprieties on the part of minister and people, in its use, which shocked our sense of propriety. We know of one minister who gave it up many years ago because of such abuse.

However, it does not follow that any practice should be thrown aside because of occasional abuse. Nor do we make a point here against these things because of these sad incidents. If there is intrinsic worth in any institution, the crusade should always be against its abuse, not against the thing itself.

And yet we have introduced the subject of these abuses for a purpose, which is: to emphasize the truism that all these *addenda* are of human origin and are

post-apostolic. This fact of their later origin is significant, and demands close and exhaustive study.

Now, it does not follow that any one or all of them are not improvements upon original practice because of such later origin. And, indeed, they could be accepted without hesitation as improvements, provided they were connected with improved results.

If, then, in the use of the confessional, altar services or inquiry rooms, those using them can point to results superior to Pentecostal times, the only criticism called for would be that which would strive to make still more perfect that which could then be received as an improvement on the first crude efforts of the first preachers of Christianity.

But we are met everywhere in the use of these excrescences with the admission that the results now witnessed do not even measure up to Pentecostal days. Indeed, all, without exception, seem to be labouring, not to surpass or even to equal apostolic work, but only to approximate thereto.

This our contention is so obvious to any on-looker that it is only necessary to state the fact. It will be time enough to offer proof when any are found who dispute it.

Hence the admission is everywhere made that, with all or any of the modern revival or ordinary church appliances, Pentecostal days are only an aspiration, never a complete, satisfactory realization.

This being the admitted fact, we may well criticize these *addenda* as means inadequate to the ends in view. There must be something radically wrong in them all. What that is we now undertake to investigate.

SIMPLICITY IN APOSTOLIC DAYS.

Let us dwell for a time on the Pentecostal times to see more clearly wherein consisted there simplicity, that we may gain knowledge by the contrast between those times and ours.

As we have made evident in former articles, the simple Gospel in those days consisted in accepting Jesus as the head,