

Twelve Marks Of The Apostolic Church

Written by Sylvester Hassell

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Shorter, Condensed Text

1st Mark. The apostolic church consisted only of those persons who had been convicted of sin by the Holy Ghost, and who had given signs of repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

2nd Mark. True baptism,--the immersion, of believers in water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

3rd Mark. The members being baptized believers, came frequently around the Lord's table, to commemorate the sufferings and death of their precious Redeemer, by partaking of the common bread to represent His broken body, and common wine, to represent His shed blood for them.

4th Mark. The maintenance of strict discipline.

5th Mark. The independent or congregation polity or government of each local church, subject only to the Headship of Christ; all the local apostolic churches being united by no outward bond of force, but by an inward bond of love.

6th Mark. The religious liberty, soul-freedom, a complete separation of church and state, the entire independence of each church from all state control, so far as regards the membership, ministry, organization, faith, worship and discipline of the church.

7th Mark. With a few exceptions, the members were generally poor, obscure, unlearned, afflicted, despised and persecuted.

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8th Mark. The fraternal equality, the essential priesthood, of all the members, in accordance with which fact they choose to office among them those of their number whom they perceive to be already qualified thereunto by the spirit of God--there being but two classes of officers, bishops, or elders, or pastors, and deacons; the fraternal equality of all the members involving the eternal equality of the ministry.

9th Mark. Possession of an humble, God-called and God-qualified ministry.

10th Mark. That while the ministry received voluntary help from the churches, they were not salaried, but labored themselves, more or less, for their own support.

11th Mark. The sending out of the divinely called and qualified ministry by the Holy Spirit in themselves and in the churches, their going forth, withersoever the Lord directed them, in simple dependence upon Him, and their preaching the gospel to every creature, whether Jew or Gentile, and especially shepherding the lambs and sheep of Christ.

12th Mark. That it--the church--was absolutely the only divinely recognized religious organization in the world.