

DIVINE CAUSE—DIVINE EFFECT

“And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

(Micah 4:2)

“Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” has never been a source of puzzlement to the biblical astute. All the creatures of God’s design were created in mature form. The chicken in all of her full-feathered glory was first upon the scene in God’s divine scheme of creation. The action of reproduction, of course, brought about the oval orb that was to be the promise of the continuation of the species—the egg. After all, the unlearned question of which precedes the other in creation results from not understanding divine cause and effect. Can it be possible beyond the poultry puzzle that men often find themselves blinded to divine cause and effect in other areas? We might be surprised at the answer.

Which came first, Holy Ghost baptism or repentance? Again, the true bible student experiences no consternation to such a question. John the Baptist refused to baptize a group of people one time. He told them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance first; in other words, don't get baptized just because you think it is the thing to do since everyone else is doing it or has done it. First, repent and make a commitment on your part to change everything that you have control over, and I will assure you that God will take care of the rest. It is no accident that the command of Acts 2:38 begins with "Repent." The threshold of the New Birth is repentance, and it is impossible to bypass this divine requirement and leapfrog one's self into the baptismal pool of water or of the Spirit! How plain the Bible is when we seek to follow its blood-bought route to salvation! Because this a plain example of divine cause and effect, the question remains— are there yet other areas where men thirsting for the effect leap over the cause?

It has been noted, by more than one Bible student, that the New Testament does not describe the order of even one church service.

God, in His infinite wisdom, left the “order of service” program blank to prohibit a set sequence of events in all worship services. The leading of the Holy Ghost is always to be the prime mover and director in the midst of any assembly of worship; therefore, a preplanned program is not acceptable. Pentecostal jargon includes the phrase, “a move of God.” The phrase is understood by most any spiritually aware saint that has experienced the Spirit of God “moving,” much like the Genesis account of the creation, which began with the Spirit moving on the face of the deep. It is this “effect” that we earnestly desire in each and every service, for without this move of the Spirit, it is impossible to have divine results. Is there a cause to bring about this so necessary effect?

Is it possible, one wonders, for the chicken, earlier in question, to make all the cackling sounds and the beating of wings of having lain an egg and still have an empty nest? The sounds and actions of egg-laying do not necessarily, of and by themselves, produce an egg. If the biological “cause” working in the inward parts were bypassed, there is no resultant egg—the desired effect. Can it also be possible that the

sounds and animations of a “move of God” can be mimicked, and still we find our nest empty of results? It is possible!

While it is understood that the world of trinitarianism fails to preach a message of salvation yet, we witness among them a common fallacy that seems to have edged its way into many Oneness assemblies. Consider the following quotes about the much-advertised Brownsville Revival:

"Let me tell you something else about this revival," Kilpatrick said. "This move of God is not about preaching." He said that while he and evangelist Steve Hill do preach sermons that are simple and easy to understand, the signs and miracles are what actually turn people to Christ, not the Word of God." (The Brownsville/Pensacola Outpouring. Revival or Pandemonium? Matt Costella, Foundation Magazine, March April 1997).

“In John Kilpatrick’s entire sermon, not a single Scripture was referenced, the Gospel was not preached, and the bizarre manifestations

appeared to be the point of the whole evening.” (an observation from an attendee).

Considering this human tendency, in our quest for the “effect,” have we stumbled into the error of leaping over the “cause” and found ourselves emulating the sounds and actions of a “move of God,” which fails to produce the fruit of divine intervention?

It has been witnessed, in certain meetings, that the sole intention of the service seems to be to bring about nothing more than an emotional response—to nothing! As apostolics, we believe in “power in the pulpit and action in the pew.” Often, however, the “power” in the pulpit has become nothing more than a “pump” in the pulpit and the “action” in pew nothing more than “ape-ing” in the pew! Elder Cavaness made the statement once, “You want the people to say ‘Amen?’ Then say something worthy of an ‘Amen!’” It is essential if we want saints to respond biblically; ought not we to stimulate them biblically?

“While Peter yet spake” is the New Testament “cause” for a move of God. Have we lost the focus

of the Word? Are we shouting while the ark is brought into the camp, little realizing the presence of God is departed? Have we made such an emphasis on feeling that we forgot what to feel? Is our worship becoming horizontal rather than vertical? Are we deceiving ourselves that an emotional display is a sign of God's approval? Are we judging with an emotional yardstick rather than the divine plumb bob?

All these questions are not easily sorted out or dealt with. But if we truly are interested that “no flesh should glory in His presence,” we must deal with them now, or they will eventually deal with us.

It is always necessary, in dealing with the various aspects of living for God, to erect boundaries —consisting of the “below par” acceptable limit and also the “overboard” limit as well. Saints must learn what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in both areas. We are reminded that God told Moses to tell the people to refrain from giving because it was more than enough. It is necessary to deal accordingly with “not enough” and also with “more than enough.” The simple fact is—saints are prone to overshoot

some things if they gather enough momentum. We are concerned most of the time with getting saints going instead of getting them stopped! Nevertheless, there are times when the “overboard” must also be taught.

When things get out of kilter with worship, the situation begins to breed other strange actions. You get someone to laugh without them having something to laugh about, to produce the sound of laughter, and you will witness weird-sounding laughter. No one has to try to laugh when they are truly energized by something humorous; it just happens. Same with real worship, but when it is not resulting from a true heart condition, it will begin to take on weird manifestations. People that cannot tell the difference between their spirit and the Spirit of God are prone to do most anything and think themselves as very spiritual. The late Elder Cavaness also said on numerous occasions, “There are two types of people that are hard to do anything with, the highly emotional and the ignorant.” Then he would always say, “If one is both, forget it.”

These aforementioned situations only come about when we seek to leapfrog over the divine

cause in order to obtain the desired result. To incite a demonstration is not the same as a spiritually occurring demonstration. In other words, to cackle and beat the wings in order to lay an egg is not the same as a cackle and wing beating because an egg was laid. Individuals in the business of selling eggs do not seek to promote the sounds and actions of egg-laying but rather feed and nurture their poultry in order to cause the desired result. Likewise, a move of God is acquired when the divine cause is allowed to produce the divine effect. It is a biblical fact that when the church is fed a scriptural diet that she produces spiritual fruit.

It is not proposed here that exuberant worship is wrong; God forbid, true worship is as necessary to the body of Christ as breath is to the natural body. Spiritual worship and praise is a response brought about by spiritual knowledge, spiritual understanding, spiritual joy, and spiritual appreciation of God and His ways and acts that are made known via the Word of God. The question, being entertained, is, "What brings about true apostolic worship?" A true spiritual atmosphere is produced when God fellowships intimately with His church. Is

always preaching a part of every service? Yes, and no. Yes, in that no real Holy Ghost service can transpire without Word guidance. Something about God's desire and God's will must be a part of every service; therefore, proclaiming these matters is indeed preaching, whether it takes two minutes or two hours. No, in that the familiar style of preaching such as reading a text and announcing a subject must take place in every service. A move of God is a result of the will of God expounded and sought after; it never happens just because someone mimics the sounds and actions of worship. This is the reason the charismatic movement cannot achieve true worship, "They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth." They, the Charismatics, go through motions, but they have never discovered the real divine cause!

As in all things spiritual, once the true source is lost or not known, the actions tend to become perverted. Worship that becomes an action for action's sake soon takes on weird and mutated forms. Worship's object and the primary subject is always to be God. When the true cause becomes something other than God, the worship ceases to be vertical and soon becomes

horizontal. Paul was quick to tell the individuals that fell before him in worship that their worship was misdirected. “And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:” Acts 14:8- 15. Failure to direct worship to its real object is idolatry.

It is also an incorrect assessment to judge a service on the amount of human activity that is produced. This error leads down the path of emotion for emotion's sake. This situation can also become the judge that either pronounces success or failure—much activity announcing success—little activity announcing failure. Services can be judged, by this criterion, as great successes when in fact, they may be far from the will of God. A true spiritual impact produces a human response on many different levels. We must allow the divine cause to work its divine effect. We are not able to judge a work of God from only a set style of service that we equate as to what is a failure and what is a success—that judgment belongs to God alone. “And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.” (Ez. 2:7)

“The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” The mistake of trying to force the effect, thinking that it will produce the real effect, is a very common error. This is not cause that produces an effect; rather, it is an artificial effect vainly striving to become the real thing.

When the true cause is absent, the effect will be nonexistent. This erroneous situation is not merely getting the cart before the horse; it is not having a horse at all! We must remind ourselves frequently that only the apostolic cause births an apostolic result.

There appears to be a need today to return to apostolic preaching that brings about apostolic results. Have we neglected Bible teaching because too many equate “teaching” with dullness? Do we feel we have a more sure way than a sure word? “While Peter yet spake. . .” Sometimes we overlook the cause and try to promote the effect and thereby producing only the sound and actions of the intended effect but never accomplishing the desired results. May God help us to return to faith in the preached Word and allow Him to provide the signs following “those that believe!” “They went everywhere preaching the Word the Holy Ghost working with them.” In Jesus Name!