

FORM OF DOCTRINE

In Romans 6:17 Paul expressed thanks for the fact that these brethren were no longer servants of sin having been made free from sin. How had this wonderful transformation taken place? Paul said that it had come about by their obeying *“from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”*

The word “form” is from the Greek word “tupos” (tupos). In defining this word Vine says: “the representation or pattern of anything... , that form (or mold) of teaching whereunto ye were delivered, (RV). The metaphor is that of a cast or frame into which molten material is poured so as to take its shape.”

By obeying from the heart the doctrine delivered them they had been molded by that doctrine. Just as the molten material poured into a form or mold is now conformed to the shape of that mold our lives must be conformed to this doctrine. Since Paul preached the same message in all the churches (1 Corinthians 7:17) we know the “doctrine” which was delivered to these brethren was the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Later in this same epistle, Paul admonishes these brethren to *“be not conformed to this world”* (Romans 12:2). Far too many allow the world to be the “mold” or “form” for their lives. Their speech, conduct, dress, values, etc. are all patterned after the world. When we obey the “form (pattern) of doctrine” Paul speaks of we will not be conformed to the world but, instead, we will be *“conformed to the image of his Son”* (Romans 8:29).

What had these brethren done to make it possible for Paul to say they had obeyed the form of teaching delivered them? To answer this question all we have to do is look at the preceding verses in Romans 6. Paul said, *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”* (Romans 6:3-6). Elsewhere in this letter Paul refers to their *“obedience to the faith”* (Romans 1:5) and *“the obedience of faith”* (Romans 16:26).

When these individuals acted upon their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God by being baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins (Romans 6:3; Acts 2:38) they were *“then made free from sin”* (Romans 6:18). Having been made free from sin their lives were to be continually molded by that teaching they had received. This means being *“servants of righteousness”* (Romans 6:18) and walking in *“newness of life”* (Romans 6:4).

Friend, have you obeyed that “form of doctrine” the Romans had obeyed? Have you been baptized into Christ? If not, you are not in Christ and you are not that “new creature” reconciled unto God (2 Corinthians 5:17,18). What will be the “mold” or “pattern” for your life? *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”* (Romans 12:2).

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