



"... The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."  
1 Timothy 3:15

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# THE BAPTIST PILLAR

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## THE LORD'S SUPPER

By J. R. Graves, 1881

### A Church Ordinance

It is admitted that the Supper can only be enjoyed  
by one:

1. Who has been scripturally baptized; and thus,
2. Has become a member of a scriptural church; and
3. Is in hearty fellowship with its doctrines; and
4. Is walking in gospel order. I wish to show:  
**That the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, and, as such, can only be observed by a church, as such, and by a person in the church of which he is a member.**

This statement indicates an observance of the Supper generally disregarded by our churches, as are other important matters connected with the sacred feast, as the character of bread and the kind of wine used, and it will, therefore, demand an investigation in spirit so unfettered by the prejudices of long usage and uninfluenced by the opinions of their powerful advocates, that comparatively few will be able to command; but, these few belong to the class of witnesses who have, through all ages, been the conservators of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and to whom the world is indebted for a pure gospel and scriptural ordinances. The truth of the proposition, as a whole, depends upon the truth of its first clause, i. e., that the Supper is a church ordinance. It becomes me to define a church, from a denominational and social ordinance. There is no denominational ordinance of divine appointment because such a thing as a denomination, in the sense of an organized body, embracing all the churches of a province or nation, was unknown in the first ages. I have denominated the Lord's Supper a denominational ordinance whenever it is opened to the members of any and all Baptist churches present. We do not allow a brother not a member, in however good standing, the right to vote in our Conventions, Associations, Presbyteries, Councils, or church conference, but we do confer upon him the rights of a member, without the knowledge of his character, when we observe the Lord's Supper, the most sacred of all ordinances

A social ordinance or act is one that may be en-

joyed anywhere by any number of Christians, as individuals, baptized or unbaptized, as singing, prayer, exhortation and religious conversation.

But, the essential qualities of a church ordinance

are,

1. That it is a rite, the duty of perpetuating which is committed to the visible churches, as such.

2. The qualifications of its recipients must be decided by the members of the churches as such.

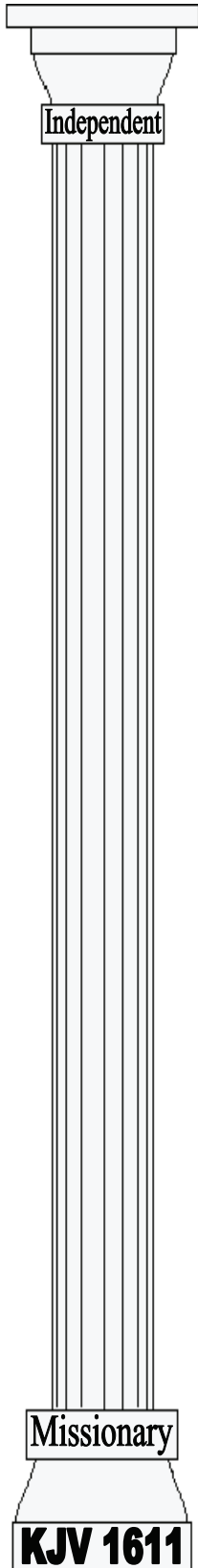
3. Any rite which symbolizes church relations can only be participated in by the members of the church celebrating, and is pre-eminently a church ordinance.

A church act or privilege is one that can be transacted or enjoyed by the constituent members of one particular church. Voting upon all questions relating to the choice of officers, the fellowship and government of the church, is a church privilege, or act, which, from the very nature and constitution of a gospel church, belongs to the members of that particular church alone, and can not be extended beyond its limits without peril to its very existence.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are universally admitted to be church ordinances, and yet few seem to apprehend why they are, or why they can not be administered by an officer of a local church without the action or presence of the church.

Of the Lord's Supper, especially, few seem to understand why it ceases to be a church ordinance when administered to those without and beyond its jurisdiction, or when those without and beyond the jurisdiction of a local church are associated in its celebration. It is my conviction that misapprehension of the true nature and limitations of a church ordinance has given rise to all the discussions, misunderstandings, all the misrepresentations, and bitter prejudices excited against us by other denominations, as well as to all the present disagreement among Baptists. If all parties could understand clearly why the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, and why it must, from its very nature and in every instance, be observed by the constituent membership of each local church alone, it must be that all this unpleasant and harmful misunderstanding, and antagonism would be

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# Forget Not The Past

## VISIBLE, NOT INVISIBLE

By J.R. Graves, 1880

Let us now dispassionately inquire for some of the unmistakable and essential marks of the "pattern" after which Christ commanded his apostles and ministers to the end of time to build.

Moses at his peril would not have varied the tabernacle in the least thing, from the divine pattern, and may we dare to build churches altogether different from the pattern Christ has given?

### The Church and Kingdom of Christ is a Divine Institution

Proofs—Daniel 2:44, 45; Matthew 16:19; Hebrews 3:3-6.

I understand these Scriptures to teach that this organization, called here "kingdom" and "church" is the conception of the divine mind, the expression of the divine thought, and the embodiment of the divine authority on earth. No created being, angel or man, assisted in its origination or construction; it is the "stone cut out without hands;" it is a perfect product of infinite wisdom. For man or angel to presume to modify it in the least, by additions, changes, or repeals, is to profane it and offer an insult to its divine Founder; far more sacred and inviolable is it than God's altar of rough ashlers: "If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." (Ex. 20:25). And for man to set up any form of church as equal, or in opposition, to it, and influence men to join themselves to it, under the impression that they are uniting with Christ's church, is an act of open rebellion to Christ as the only King of Zion; while it is "offending"—deceiving, and misleading these that desire to follow Christ; and He has said, that "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Mt. 18:6). It must be true that those who originate such false churches, and those who support them by their means and influence, occupy the positions of rebels against the rightful and supreme authority of Christ. Designed as the "house and church of the living God" was by an architect possessing infinite wisdom, who saw the end from the beginning, every conceivable exigency that could effect it to the end of time, must have been foreseen and provided for; and the very intimation that changes have become necessary, the better to adapt it to fulfill its mission, is impiously to impugn the divine wisdom that devised and set it up.

If I am right in my conception of the character of this divine institution, then it follows that the sanctity and authority of its divine Founder are so embodied in its government, as they were in its type—the Jewish theocracy—that as men treat His church, its doctrine, its laws or its members, they treat its Author. To despise and reject its teachings is to despise the Author of those teachings; and those who hate or persecute its members for their obedience to its laws and fidelity to its principles, will be confounded at last to learn, that, inasmuch as they did it to one of the least of Christ's followers they did it to Christ Himself. (Mt. 25).

Christ enjoined it upon His apostles and ministers for all time to come, to construct all organizations that should bear His name according to the pattern and model He "built" before their eyes; and those who add to or diminish aught, do it at their peril. (Rev. 22:18,19). Organizations bearing the name of Christ devised and set up by men are manifestly counterfeits, and certainly impositions upon the ignorance and credulity of the people. Human societies are but the expression of human opinion; only human authority is embodied in their laws and regulations; and to observe and obey them is only obeying the men who established them; and it is written: "His servants—slaves—ye are whom ye obey." It is rejecting Christ as king, and choosing men for our masters when we unite with human societies instead of a church of Christ set up as the home of His children.

Now it cannot be truthfully denied that the Catholic and the various Protestant sects were originated and set up by men many ages after the ascension of Christ; since all their own standard Church Histories frankly admit the fact. They are therefore not

divine—but human institutions, which rival and antagonize—or, in the strong language of Bro. Bright of the Examiner-Chronicle, N.Y.: "They are an organized muster against the church and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." One thing can not be denied, so long as they had the power, they assaulted His kingdom and shed the blood of His brethren. Every reader can easily satisfy himself of the truth of this statement if he will but turn to Protestant histories. See History of "Religious Denominations."

### It is a Visible Institution

Notwithstanding the contradictory teachings prevalent, this is a self-evident fact that an institution or organization must be visible. But the church and kingdom of Christ is an institution, an organization; He, as God of heaven, "set it up," He built it, and it must therefore be visible. Every term selected by the inspiring Spirit to designate the institution Christ was to originate when He came to this earth, in both Testaments, is a term necessitating form, and therefore visibility, e.g., "Kingdom of God," "of Heaven," "of Christ," "Bride," "wife," "Church," "House," etc.

And this, too, is manifest, that the only church that is revealed to us is a visible church, and the only church with which we have anything to do, or in connection with which we have any duties to perform, is a visible body. It has a specified organization, officers, faith, laws and ordinances, and a living membership, and therefore it must be visible. Christ never set up but one kingdom, was never constituted King of but one kingdom, and His Word recognizes but one kingdom; and if this is visible, He has no invisible kingdom or church, and such a thing has no real existence in heaven or earth. It is only an invention employed to bolster up erroneous theories of ecclesiology.

### Its Locality is upon this Earth

Since I have used the terms church and kingdom, it may be well to explain here what I understand by them and their relation to each other. They were used as synonymous terms by the evangelists so long as Christ had but one organized church for they were then one and the same body. So soon as "churches were multiplied," a distinction arose. The kingdom embraced the first church, and it now embraces all the churches. The churches of Christ constitute the kingdom of Christ, as the twelve tribes, each separate and independent of itself, constituted the kingdom of Israel; as the provinces of a kingdom constitute the kingdom; as all the separate sovereign States of these United States constitute the Republic of America. Now, as no foreigner can become a citizen of this Republic without being naturalized as a citizen of some one of the States, so no one can enter the kingdom of Christ without becoming a member of some one of His visible churches.

Baptism is an ordinance of, and in, each local church—not of the kingdom, and Christ himself says: "Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." It was of a visible earthy organization He spake—His church. (See John 3:12.)

The locality of Christ's church, and therefore kingdom, is this earth; all the subjects of His kingdom are here; all the work of His church is here. This earth was given to Him by His Father to be the sole seat of His throne and His kingdom. (See Psalms second chapter.) All authority, power and judgment over all flesh were vested in Christ, and He was appointed to reign on this earth until He should put all His enemies under His feet, and then will come the end when He will give up his kingdom to His Father, when the Godhead will rule with undivided scepter over it, as before sin entered it. Christ, then, has no church in heaven—never had; nor has He, as Messiah, any kingdom in heaven, or will He ever have; nor, if we will believe the Scriptures rather

(Visible continued on page 6)

(The Lord's Supper continued from page 1)

settled and pacified: and certainly this would be a consummation devoutly to be wished by every true child of God in every denomination.

In the not vain hope, I trust, of contributing something toward this so desirable a result, I submit this.

My first argument to show why the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, and can not be scripturally observed only by the members of one particular church, is,

1. That each church under Christ is absolutely independent.

The first church organized by Christ was a complete and perfect church, and yet it existed for years before other churches were formed. There were no new ecclesiastical relations originated, nor the slightest modification of the character of this church made, by the multiplication of churches. During the apostolic age, nor for ages after, was there the shadow of any confederation or con-association or constitutional inter-dependence recognized, any more than between the families of children of a common parentage. Love for the brotherhood and active charity for all in distress, and the doing of good, especially to the household of faith, was only enjoined. The idea of a constitutional inter-dependence, which is now imperceptibly taking root in the minds of the cultured leaders of our people, in the fourth century begot confederations and con-associations of churches, and these soon brought forth the centralized ecclesiastical hierarchism under the auspices of Constantine, which is known as the "Great Apostasy."

[A. D. 100-193]. "All congregations were independent of each other," etc. (*Gieseler*, chap. 3: p. 53.)

"All the churches in those primitive times were independent bodies, and none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. It is as clear as noonday that all Christian churches had equal rights, and were in all respects on a footing of equality." (Mosheim, A. D. 100.)

[A. D. 200.] "During a great part of this century all the churches continued to be, as at first, independent of each other, or were connected by no con-associations or confederations; each church was a kind of little independent republic, governed by its own laws."

[A. D. 300-400.] "Although the ancient mode of church government seemed, in general, to remain unaltered, yet there was a gradual deflection from its rules, and an approximation toward the form of monarchy. This change in the form of government was followed by a corrupt state of the clergy."

This was the vile offspring begotten by the idea of the inter-dependency of churches, which is finding strong advocates in our day. They sink the idea of churches into that of a Denomination.

The learned Dr. Owen, of England, asserts: "That, in no approved writer, for two hundred years after Christ, is mention made of any organized visible professing church, except a local organization." *Croztell's Church Manual*, p. 36.

Each church being absolutely independent, it must, from the very nature of the case, absolutely control its own acts; and can be responsible to no authority save Christ. It can not constitutionally allow the members of other communities to share its prerogatives, since such license would endanger its own independency and responsibility.

Should a church so far forget its trust as to fall into the general practice of inviting, as an act of courtesy (which implies a discourtesy in refusing to do it), the members of all sister churches present to vote in the reception and exclusion of members, discipline, and even choice of pastors, as one prominent Baptist author advises, how soon the independency of the churches would be subverted! Usage would soon crystallize into precedent, and custom into law.

The independency of the churches is of Christ's special appointment, and it is our sacred duty to do nothing tending to imperil or contravene it. No one will presume to claim that Christ invested his churches with the power to contravene, at their pleasure, any one of his appointments. Their powers are all delegated, and delegated powers can not be relegated. A local church can not confer upon members of other communities any privilege or franchise that belongs exclusively to her own members.

But it is further demonstrable that the Supper, as well as baptism, is a local church ordinance, because:

2. To each local church is committed the sole administration and guardianship of the ordinances.

This will not be questioned, save by the few who hold that baptism, at least, was committed to the ministry as such; that they alone are responsible for its proper administration; and they can, therefore, administer it without the presence and voice of the church whenever and wherever they please. This must be settled, not by the will or opinions of men, but by the Scriptures.

Let us see what one apostle thought concerning this issue between a part of our ministry and the churches.

TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH.

"I have received of the Lord Jesus that which I also delivered unto you." (1 Cor. 11: 23.)

All the instructions and directions, both as respects the doctrine and the ordinances, Paul delivered, not to the ministry, but to the churches.

"Now I praise you, brethren [not you, ministers of the churches], that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you." (1 Cor. 11: 2.)

Now note his command to this church, not to its ministers. "Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1.)

"I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause I have sent unto you Timothy, my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." (1 Cor. 4:16, 17.)

TO THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI.

"Brethren, be ye followers of me, and mark them who walk so, as ye have us for an example."

He enjoins it upon the church to follow the directions he had given it, as well as to "mark" those who did not.

TO THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE.

"Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and obeying your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. 2:5-8.)

TO THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA.

"Therefore, my brethren, stand fast and hold the tradition [which embraces all the instructions and ordinances] which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle. (2 Thess. 2: 15.)

"And we have confidence in the Lord touching you [the Church], that ye both do and will do the things we command YOU." (3:4.)

It would be useless to reason with those who could deny, with these Scriptures before their eyes, that the ordinances were not delivered in sacred trust to the churches, as such, and not to their officers; and that they are held responsible for their right observance.

It is further established, with respect to the Supper, by the duties especially enjoined upon each local church, as such. It is commanded to allow only members possessing certain qualifications to come to the Supper.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves [as a Church] from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions [instructions] which he received of us." And what ingenious mind will deny that this command equally excludes all such from the pulpit as well? "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." (2 Thess. 3:6, 14.)

This withdrawing and having no company with the disobedient and disorderly, certainly involved exclusion from the Lord's table.

"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no, not to eat."

The apostolic churches were peremptorily commanded to prohibit the table to all these, and such like characters, to allow

no leaven to be mingled in the feast. For this purpose, each church is made the sole guardian of the Supper. It can not alienate the responsibility. It can not, under any, plea, contravene the law. To execute it with fidelity, it must keep the feast within its jurisdiction; its permission to partake can not be extended beyond the limits of the Supper, since all who can be entitled to the Supper must be subject to its discipline.

It is conceded by all that members of other communities have no scriptural or any other right to eat the Supper in any church save their own. No one claims that it is the duty of any local church to offer the Supper to any but its own members. What, then, do I conclude?

1. That Christ has not given me the right to commune in any church save the one which has the watch and care over me, and that my privileges are limited to my church.

2. That Christ has not made it the duty of any church to open the doors to this ordinance to any not subject to its discipline; but, by making it a church ordinance he has manifestly forbidden the practice, since, by the act, the participant declares he is a member of the church with which he communes "we are one loaf," i. e., one church.

3. And it may be safely affirmed that those churches that stately offer and invite to their tables all the members of sister churches who may chance to be present in the congregation, openly violate the command of Paul, to allow no disqualified persons to participate in this ordinance, since it is morally certain that such are often, if not ever, present, and are the most certain to accept.

But the Lord's Supper is unquestionably a church ordinance, because:

4. It symbolizes church relations, i. e., that all who jointly partake are members of the one and self-same church. I only assert this fact here, and submit an eminent authority, that of Prof. Curtis, who has treated this subject with unsurpassed ability, and reserve the discussion and proof of it when I treat of the symbolism of the elements in the next Tract. That the Supper is a church ordinance in the sense that it can be worthily celebrated by only one church and participated in by the members of only one church, Prof. Curtis argues most conclusively from the symbolism of the Supper, as well as from the fact that it is under the sole guardianship of the churches.

He says, in "*Communion*," page 85, "We desire to show that this is the true view of the Lord's Supper, [i. e., that it is a church ordinance, and a symbol of church relationship]. 'When ye come together therefore into one place,' says the apostle, 'this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other, etc. . . Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.' (1 Cor. 11:21-23.) The apostle here clearly alludes to it as the universally current opinion that the Lord's Supper was a church ordinance, so far as this, that it was completely celebrated in one place, by one church. . . ' When he bids them 'tarry one for another' he clearly intimates that the regulation of the Supper, as far as time and place are concerned, is lodged in each particular church; that it expresses the relations of the members of the church to each other, as such."

"That the Lord's Supper is a symbol of church relationship, subsisting between those who unite together in the participation of it, can be shown in various ways."

"Admission to the Lord's table, therefore, implies admission to it by a particular church, and this in fact settles the question that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance."

The Lord's Supper, then, being a church ordinance, indicates church relations as subsisting between the parties who unite together in its celebration.

It must be conceded that the Lord's Supper is ever the symbol of particular, visible church relations." Page 138.

"It expresses the relations of the members of that church to each other, as such."

"A fellowship in church relations, professed with those Christians with whom we visibly celebrate."

If the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, as must be admitted, and a symbol, among other things, of our visible church relations in the same particular church with which we celebrate it,

then it is a violation of the truth symbolized to invite members of other Baptist churches to participate in it.

When Baptists, in reasoning with affusionists, urge the symbolism of Baptism, i. e., that it represents a burial, as conclusive that the act must be an immersion, they think candid Pedobaptists should see and admit so evident an argument. Will not all candid Baptists admit this ?

4. It was instituted by Christ to be observed as a church ordinance.

I claim it as an AXIOM, That a church ordinance must be instituted by Christ. AND **That the symbolism of the ordinances was instituted by Christ.**

Should we observe ordinances originated by man, our worship would be unacceptable to Christ, and as vain as it would be sinful. Christ has said: "In vain do they worship me who teach for doctrines the commandments of men."

Should we change the symbol of an ordinance by the slightest modification, we would vitiate it; and to vitiate the symbolism of an ordinance in the least, is to vitiate the ordinance.

"Ye do make the commandment of God of none effect through your traditions." Christ.

That Christ did institute the Supper to be rigidly observed as a church ordinance, Prof. Curtis declares: "So when our blessed Savior instituted the Supper, as he did, upon one of those Paschal occasions, it was, we say, as a church ordinance that he ordained it."

And he justly says, to claim the right to change it in the least, is to claim the right to **legislate**. If it is ever a symbol of particular church relations professed with those Christians with whom we visibly celebrate, as he declares, then to celebrate it with those not members of the same church, is to vitiate the symbol and change what Christ hath appointed.

5. The Lord's Supper was observed by the apostolic churches (A. D. 100) as a church ordinance; i. e., as a symbol of church relations.

Paul, we have seen, could not have delivered this ordinance unto the churches as he had received it from Christ, unless he had delivered it unto them as a church ordinance; for it is admitted that Christ ordained it as a church ordinance. (Curtis and others).

The apostolic churches could not have observed this ordinance as Paul delivered it unto them unless they had observed it as a church ordinance, i. e., by one church only, and with the members of one church only.

But the churches did observe this, as well as the other ordinances, as Paul delivered them, because he praised them for so doing.

To the church at Corinth he wrote,

"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." (1 Cor. 11:2.)

To the church at Colosse he could say,

"I rejoice, beholding your order and the stability of your faith."

The churches at Thessalonica he only exhorts:

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."

Which clearly implies they had been, and still were, faithful in their observance.

The church at Corinth for a season perverted the design of the Supper, and Paul promptly rebuked it [not its pastor or elders], and again set it in order, and we must believe that he corrected every departure from his instructions.

But suppose I grant that he did not deliver it to the churches as symbolizing the relations of all the participants to one and the same church, still I claim that the positive instructions Paul gave to the churches forbade them from inviting to their tables the members of all existing churches, without personal knowledge of their faith or character, as is the practice of this age. He placed the Supper under the sole custody of each church, and commanded it to purge away from its table all leaven of malice or wickedness. He taught them that false doctrine of all description, and all ungodly conduct (1 Cor. 5.), and all works of the flesh

(Gal. 5.), was leaven that must not be allowed to defile the feast.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (2 Thess. 3:6)

If it is said "I that this was spoken to the church with reference co her own members," I will grant it, and demand if it does not equally teach that it should equally withdraw from those not members walking disorderly? That there might be no doubt, read the fourteenth verse: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, [the most approved rendering] note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.." All will admit that this command forbade them to invite all false teachers, as well as unsound and disorderly brethren, to the Lord's Supper.

Now false teachers and heretical brethren, abounded in Paul's day, all members of sister churches in good standing, and thousands of these belonged to the church at Jerusalem; and had it been the custom of the church at Corinth to invite "all members of sister churches" to its table, would it not have violated the instructions of Paul?

For centuries after the ascension of Christ, the Lord's Supper was rigidly observed as a church ordinance.

I care little for the argument from post-apostolic history. It is enough for my purpose, and it must be quite enough for every conscientious Bible Christian, to learn that Christ appointed the Supper to be observed as a church ordinance, and that the apostles so delivered it to the churches, and the churches all observed it as such while they had the personal instructions of the apostles. Suppose, from the day the last apostle died, every church ceased to observe it as a church ordinance; how should that fact affect our present practice? Would it warrant a church to observe it, even once, in some other way, that would vitiate its symbolism? The fact granted would in no way vitiate the claim that there have been Baptist churches from the day of the defection. The church at Corinth had for years utterly perverted the Supper, and yet Paul addressed it as a church of Christ. It was disorderly in this respect, but a perversion of the Supper did not forfeit its existence.

My space does not allow me to treat this question historically. Let the statements of so cautious and eminent a scholar as Prof. Curtis suffice in support of my proposition. He says

"There is sufficient proof to convince any close student of church history of the first three centuries, that in the very earliest ages, the Lord's Supper was regarded as strictly a church ordinance, as we have defined the phrase." *Communion*, p. 88.

"The records of church history plainly show that originally the Lord's Supper was everywhere regarded as a church ordinance." *Communion*, p. 137

I will add the remarks of Dr. D. Spencer, in his treatise on "Invitations to the Supper," after showing that no invitations were given by the first churches, nor yet in the days of Justin Martyr, in the second century.

"How, then, did invitations originate? The answer is plain. They originated with the perversion of the ordinance. When the ordinance came to take the place of Christ, the churches began to invite to it, as they had formerly invited to Christ. Hence in Romish churches today you hear plenty of invitations to ordinances, but none to Christ."

I have not granted, in this discussion, that the unapostate churches, whom we account our ancestors, deflected at an early day into denominational Communion. It is my impression that this laxity is a late practice.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS ARGUMENT.

- I think I have conclusively shown,
- 1. That Christ appointed his Supper to be a church ordinance.
- 2. That any rational definition of church ordinance or privilege limits the enjoyment of it to the membership of, or to those approved for membership by a local church.
- 3. That when an ordinance or act symbolizes or implies church relations, it is pre-eminently a church ordinance, and must be confined to the members of a particular church only.
- 4. That the Lord's Supper, among other things, specially symbolizes church relations, as all standard writers admit, and, therefore, it can be scripturally observed by the members of one

church only.

5. That for the members of various churches to participate in its joint observance, even though upon the invitation of a local church, as Associations and Conventions are wont in some places to do, would be to vitiate the symbolism, and consequently to render the ordinance, null.

The only issue now before Baptists is fairly stated by Dr. A. P. Williams: "If he [a member of one church] ever has a right anywhere else, it must be either by a transfer of membership or by courtesy," etc. *Lord's Supper*, p. 94.

In his "Tract on Communion," as though he would correct, in part, at least, the admission made in his book on Communion, he says: "But this courtesy can not be exercised in violation of church discipline or of divine authority."

It is demonstrable that it is in palpable violation of both:

1. It is always done at the expense of good discipline ; for when a church invites to her table the members of all other Baptist churches present, she inevitably will invite those she would feel herself bound to exclude, if her own members; and she would often invite those whom she considers unbaptized, and would refuse their application for membership; and oftentimes she would invite back to her Communion persons she herself excluded, who are now members of other churches, in good standing. Can this be called good discipline?

2. Such a courtesy can never be extended and accepted, except in violation of divine authority, since Christ appointed the Supper to symbolize the organic unity of the body partaking, i.e., particular church relations of all the participants with that one church.

It is claimed that the churches have the right to extend such invitations through courtesy. I answer that such a claim is not even supposable; for:

1. It can not be supposed that Christ would allow his churches to adopt any practice that would contravene any one of his own appointments even if we can suppose he sometimes allows it to exercise legislative powers, by adding to, or modifying, the form of one of his ordinances.

2. But invitations to all Baptists present to par, take of the Supper with the local church celebrating it, does manifestly contravene Christ's appointment of the Supper as a church ordinance.

3. Therefore it can not be supposed that Christ has allowed his churches to extend invitations to all Baptists present to partake of the Supper with them.

From the considerations submitted in this, the reader will see that I have done what I have been called upon to do, proved that all those brethren who admit that the Supper is a church ordinance, do yield the question at issue between us, and, to be consistent, they must admit that Intercommunion of Baptists of different churches is unscriptural and inconsistent. □



(Visible continued from page 2)

than mere theorists, will He always have a kingdom on this earth: "Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Did He not teach His disciples to pray: "Our Father, who art in heaven; thy kingdom come"? Not Christ's kingdom, for that had already come, and the disciples were in it; but the Father's kingdom; and when the Father's will shall be done on this earth as it now is done in heaven, will not this earth then be a heaven as much as any other place in the universe?

### It was a Local Organization, a Single Congregation

Now, there are three theories concerning a church, and upon one or the other of these all organizations claiming to be churches are built; but, according to Bishop Doggett, only that one can be a Christian church that is in all respects conformed to the scriptural model, so particularly described by the inspired writers. Let us examine these theories:

*The first is the Catholic or Universal church theory.* According to this, there can be but one church, of the denomination adopting it, throughout the world. No single congregation is a church in any sense, but an infinitesimal part of the universal idea. The Greek Catholic Church is formed upon this theory, having the Grand Patriarch at Constantinople for its Supreme head.

The Latin, or Roman Catholic Church, is constructed upon this idea. No local congregation in one place is a church, but only a minute part of the great whole, the seat of which is at Rome, and the absolute governing power, the Pope.

The reader will notice that, according to this theory, (1) the word can not be used in the plural—there is but one Roman Catholic, and but one Greek Church in the world; (2) that the local congregations are not churches; and (3) that these universal churches never were, and never can be, assembled in one place for any purpose.

*The second is the National or Provincial theory.* This is like the universal, only limited. All the local congregations in the nation, province or country, in some way associated, constitute the *one church* of that nation or province.

The Church of England is an illustration of this theory. The thousands of local societies scattered throughout the empire of Great Britain are not churches, but only parts of the one great state church, of which the reigning king or queen and Parliament is the supreme head, determining the faith and enacting the laws for the government of the body.

The Old School Presbyterian Church of this country conforms to this idea. Before the division of the Old School body, all the local bodies in the United States, with all the Presbyteries and Synods, constituted but one church, of which the General Assembly was the central head and ruling power.

The Methodist Episcopal Churches of America also illustrate the provincial theory. There are only two Methodist Episcopal Churches in these United States, the one North and the other South. Before the division there was but *one*. The local societies, to which the members, *but not the ministers*, belong, are in no sense churches—have none of the prerogatives of churches. They have no voice in determining the doctrines they must believe; they can not elect their own ministers to teach them, nor can they dismiss them when they prove inefficient, or discipline them should they fall into the grossest vices; they are not even allowed to hold the titles to the houses of worship which they build and pay for with their own money; and no acting minister, circuit rider, presiding elder or bishop belongs to one of these local societies to which the lay members belong; but these ministers belong to the *Annual Conference*; so that if the local societies are indeed churches, the ministers do not belong to a church; if they are not, the members do not belong to any church!

But this point needs no argument, since it was forever settled by the Supreme Court of the United States, in accordance with the instructions of the bishops, North and South, that no Methodist society is a church in any sense, or even a constituent part of the Methodist Church. Of this "church," the General Conference, which meets once in four years, is the supreme head and all-

governing power, and, according to the above cited decision, is *alone the Methodist Church*; but, strange for a church, no minister or member is, or can be, a member of it, save the bishops only, except appointed by some Annual Conference!

Let it be borne in mind that, according to this theory of church building, (1) "*ecclesia*" can not be used in the plural, and (2) the church can not be gathered into one place to discipline its members or to observe the ordinances.

*The third is the Baptist, or scriptural theory; viz.,* the church is a *local* organization. This implies that the primitive model was a single congregation, complete in itself, independent of all other bodies, civil or religious, and the highest and only source of ecclesiastical authority on earth, amenable only to Christ, whose laws alone it receives and executes—not possessing the authority or right to *enact* or *modify* the least law or ordinance, or to discipline a member, save for the violation of what Christ himself has enjoined. This church acknowledges no body of men on earth, council, conference or assembly as its head, but Christ alone, who is invisible, as "head over all things" to it.

Proofs.—1. *The term ecclesia itself.*—The Holy Spirit selected the Greek word, *ecclesia*, which had but *one* possible literal meaning to the Greek—that of a *local* organization.

2. *New Testament use.*—It is used in the New Testament 110 times, referring to the Christian institution, and in 100 of these it undoubtedly refers to a local organization; and in the remaining 10 instances it is used *figuratively*—by synecdoche—where a part is put for the whole, the singular for the plural, one for all. In each of these instances what is true of all the churches is true of any one—*e. g.*, Ephesians 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23-25, 27, 29, 32; Colossians 1:18. There is no occasion whatever for any *misapprehension* touching this use, nor is there one passage that affords the shadow of a ground for the idea of an invisible church in heaven, any more than for a huge universal, national or provincial church on earth, but a multitude of passages preclude the idea.

3. *Ecclesia in the plural.*—It is used in the plural thirty-six times, which fact is demonstrative that the universal or provincial idea was not then known.

4. *The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.*—This is impossible for a universal or invisible church to do. It was often required to assemble. (Mt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 11:18; 14:23.) Discipline, baptism and the Lord's Supper could only be administered by the assembled church.

5. *Ecclesia in a single city and house.*—"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2); "the church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 11:22); "the churches of Asia salute you;" "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house" (1 Cor. 16:19). "Salute . . . Nymphas and the church which is in his house" (Col. 4:15); "and to the church in thy house" (Philem. 2). Now a complete church was composed of the members of these individual households, and, probably, a few others, and were wont stately to meet in the houses of these brethren for worship and the transaction of business, and it is certain that it could have been nothing else than a *local society*.

6. *Historical testimony.* The earliest writers knew nothing of an invisible, universal or provincial church.

Clement, A. D. 217: "To the church of God which sojourns at Rome," "To the church of God sojourning at Corinth."

Eusebius referring to this epistle says: "There is one acknowledged epistle of this Clement, great and admirable, which he wrote in the name of the *church of Rome* to the *church of Corinth*; sedition then having arisen in the latter church. We are aware that this epistle has been publicly read in *very many churches*—both in old times, also in our day."

Irenaeus, A.D. 175-200: "For the churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down any thing different; nor do those [*i. e.*, churches] in Spain; nor those in Gaul; nor those in the East; nor those in Egypt; nor those in Lybia; nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world."

Tertullian, A.D. 150: Expressed the idea of a Christian

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# THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

By Roy Mason, ThD

*Editor's Note: We are planning to put this book, The Church That Jesus Built, in its entirety in The Baptist Pillar. We will put at least one chapter per publication until it is completed.*

## Chapter 1

### Did Jesus Found the Church? If So, When?

The Baptist belief in the perpetuity of their churches involves several questions. The correct answer to these questions will go far toward paving the way for a proper examination of their claims. Among the more important of these questions are the following:

1. Did Jesus found the church?
2. If so, when?
3. What kind of a church was it?
4. Did He promise its perpetuity?

So well established is the fact that Jesus founded the church that it seems almost superfluous for us to spend time considering the first question propounded above. However, it will perhaps not be amiss for us to spend a few moments on this question, as there are to be found here and there those who either openly or by implication deny that Jesus founded a church. It is a common thing for destructive critics of our day to try to array Jesus and Paul against each other, and to try to show that Jesus never had in mind the founding of a church at all. Such critics would have us believe that the disciples, and particularly Paul, foisted the church upon the world without divine warrant. In substance it is the claim that they substituted a church of their own devising for the Kingdom of Jesus' thinking and purpose.

There are some denominations that embrace a theory that practically denies to Jesus the founding of a church. They advance the claim that the church existed back in Old Testament times, and that the church of the New Testament times and of the present is merely a continuation of the church that has existed all the way from the days of Israel's beginning. Those who hold such a theory do not see any essential difference between the economy of the Old Testament and the New, but hold that baptism is meant to occupy the same place in the church of the present that circumcision held in the "church" of Israel. This theory plainly denies by implication that Jesus founded a church. For it is evident that He could not have founded the church if it already existed at the time of His coming.

For the one who believes the New Testament to be the inspired Word of God, the question, "Did Jesus found a church?" is once for all answered in the affirmative by Mt. 16:18, in which Jesus Himself makes the statement, "I will build my church." That the gospels record Him as mentioning the church but twice, is a matter of no moment in view of the fact that after His ascension and glorification, as recorded in the Revelation, we find Him speaking of the church a number of times. And indeed, if the Lord had only mentioned the church one time, that ought to be enough so far as the validity of His promise is concerned. A statement made only once may be just as true as one reiterated a thousand times. The point is, Jesus said He would build His church. A little later He tells the disciples of a matter that should be taken before the church for its discipline. In His words He clearly indicates that the church is then already in existence. So we have His promise of the church; the clear implication in His own words of the fulfillment of that promise; the New Testament account of the church from its beginning on for many years, and the testimony of history to the effect that the church of Christ is an institution that has existed only from the time of Christ.

If Christ's words in Mt. 16:18 mean anything at all, they must mean that the institution which He promised was one separate and distinct from any institution that had previously existed in the world, or existed at that time. It will presently be shown that the disciples were already thoroughly familiar with the word "ecclesia" or "church," and its meaning. But Jesus indicated very clearly that the institution which He proposed would be a new

one, distinct and to be distinguished from all other "ecclesias" by the fact that it was to be HIS church, built upon an entirely different foundation than any ecclesia in existence at that time.

Having determined from the New Testament that Jesus began a church, let us now turn to a brief consideration of the further question,

### WHEN DID JESUS BEGIN HIS CHURCH?

This becomes an important question in view of the heretical teachings so widespread in our day. Several very dangerous heresies spring out of the theory that the church began on the day of Pentecost. One of these is the "Invisible Church theory," which leans very heavily upon the Pentecostal assumption. Then there is the theory so widely promulgated by Dr. C. I. Scofield, Dr. James M. Gray of the Moody Bible Institute, and others, that the church was formed on the day of Pentecost by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that every believer becomes a member of the universal Church similarly, by being baptized into it by the Holy Spirit. This is really a most absurd theory. It rests principally upon a perversion of 1 Cor. 12:13, and an examination of the context of this Scripture is fatal to the theory. Dr. Scofield (*Synthesis of Bible Truth*, p. 42) plainly says of the church, "This body could not begin to exist before the exaltation of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit." He also goes so far as to say that a church before the death of Christ would have been an unredeemed church. This is as much as to say that none of the disciples were saved previous to Pentecost!

Those who are unwilling to admit Baptist perpetuity struggle desperately to show that the church was not in existence before Pentecost. Nothing else fits their theory of an "invisible" Church.

What, then, are the facts? When was the church begun? I shall not take the space to go into details, but will put the answer in one sentence: Out of material prepared by John the Baptist, Jesus organized and founded His church during the days of His personal ministry here on the earth.

In this belief I am not alone. Dr. L. R. Scarborough, president of one of the largest theological seminaries in the world, in a recent article in the *Baptist Standard* is quoted as saying: "It is certainly true that Christ in His own personal ministry established His church."

A lengthy chapter could be written to prove my statement, but I must confine myself to a few reasons. First, let me ask, did not they have all of the essential things that go to make up a church before Pentecost? Let us see:

1. They had the Gospel (Mark 1:1).
2. They were baptized believers. The apostles had been disciples of John, having been baptized by him (Acts 1:22). Of John's baptism, we are told that it was from heaven (John 1:33).
3. They had an organization. They even had a treasurer, though he turned out to be a dishonest one.
4. They had the same Head that the church of today has, Christ.
5. They had the ordinance of baptism.
6. They had the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.
7. They had the Great Commission.
8. They met together as a church for prayer preceding Pentecost.

9. Moreover, they even had a business meeting and selected one to take Judas' place. In an attempt to discredit this action of the church, Dr. Scofield (Scofield Bible notes) makes the claim that the disciples erred in doing this. He claims that God ignored their choice by later calling Paul for this place, and affirms that we find no further mention of Matthias in the New Testament. In this he casts an unwarranted aspersion upon that New Testament church. Moreover, his statement about Matthias is not true to the Scriptures, for in a later chapter (Acts 6:2-6) the Holy Spirit recognizes Matthias as an apostle by mentioning him as one of the twelve. Dr. Scofield seeks to fit the incident of Matthias' selection with his theory that the church began on the day of Pentecost, and his effort merely betrays how far men will go in order to seek to sustain a theory.

Again, that the church existed before Pentecost is shown in that we are distinctly told that Christ sang praises in the midst of the

church. Heb. 2:12 says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church I will sing praises unto thee." This passage is quoted by the inspired writer of Hebrews from the twenty-second Psalm. To what incident in the life of Christ does it refer? Upon what occasion did He sing praises in the midst of the church? Turn to Mark 14:26, and you will find the occasion mentioned. It was following the institution of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper that Jesus in the midst of His little church joined with them in singing a hymn. That Christ sang praises in the midst of the church before Pentecost, carries without saying that the church existed before that time.

Exegetical and eisegetical ingenuity has been exerted to give the passage just quoted some other meaning, but the fact remains that the interpretation that I have indicated is the simplest and most natural one.

In the third place, that the church existed before Pentecost is clearly shown by Acts 2:41, where we read that on the day of Pentecost "... There were added unto them about three thousand souls." Since they were believers added by baptism, it is very evident that what they were added to was the church. If I should tell a friend that I had recently added a hundred dollars to my account, he would understand me to imply that I had in existence a bank account previous to the time of my depositing the hundred dollars. A church was necessarily already in existence on the day of Pentecost, else it could not have been "added to." It is unless to argue that the three thousand were merely added to the ranks of believers and not to the church, for the same language is used in the 47th verse, where we are told that the "Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Does the 47th verse indicate the existence of a church any more strongly than the 41st? Indeed it does not. Only those in desperate straits to maintain a theory would deny that the three thousand baptized on Pentecost were added to a church that already existed, for that is what the language irresistibly leads one to conclude.

Again, let us read the Master's words as recorded in Matthew 18:17, "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and publican." The context shows that these words were addressed to His disciples. His words would lead one to believe that they constituted His church in its incipient stage. Indeed, the belief that the apostles themselves were the first members of the church is in exact accord with 1 Cor. 12:28, where we read, "And God hath set some in the church, FIRST apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers," etc.

One may speculate and theorize upon Mt. 18:17 all they please, but still it remains unreasonable to believe that Jesus referred to something that the disciples did not understand, or that He indicated a rule of discipline relating to a church that did not exist. To the one that accepts this passage at its face value it appears conclusive that the church was in existence at the time that Jesus spoke these words.

In the fifth place, let us note that if the church did not exist before Pentecost, then the Great Commission was given only to the disciples as individuals, consequently is not binding upon the church. Unwilling to concede a church before Pentecost, Dr. C. I. Scofield takes this very position. In his "Synthesis of Bible Truth" (p. 431), he says: "The visible church as such is charged with no mission . . . The commission to evangelize the world is personal and not corporate." If this theory be true, then the Great Commission was binding only upon the apostles, and when they died the obligation no longer rested upon anyone. This view is as absurd as it is unscriptural.

No, Jesus gave the Commission to His disciples in corporate capacity. He delivered it to them as a church. His church He charged with the task of evangelization. His church He charged with the duty of baptizing and teaching. And knowing all things, He knew that His church would have that continuity essential for the carrying out of His orders.

Similarly, let us note that, unless the church existed previous to Pentecost, the Lord's Supper is not a church ordinance. If He gave it only to individuals as such, when they died the ordinance died with them. We cannot believe this in the light of Paul's account of the institution of the Supper as given in 1 Cor. 11. Here, accord-

ing to the account given, Jesus clearly implied that this memorial ordinance will be observed "till He come again." The individuals who were present at the Supper have been dead for centuries, and still He has not come. Evidently it was not to individuals as such that He gave the ordinance, but to individuals as constituting the church. Only this church, the church to which continuous existence has been promised, could observe the Memorial Meal continuously from the time of its institution until He comes again.

And obviously, if Jesus gave the Memorial Supper to His church that church must have been in existence at the time He gave it. That time preceded Pentecost!

I close the chapter by quoting Dr. Scarborough from the article before mentioned. He admirably sums up the facts concerning Christ's founding of the church in these words: "When He ascended He left the church some of its officers, the apostles, not to be permanent, to be sure; its foundation of faith; its laws of life; its ordinances; its commission; its great world task; the terms and conditions of admittance; the new birth based on repentance and faith in Christ; He left it its great central dynamic theme and power, Jesus crucified, buried, risen, coming again; He gave it the promise of the Holy Spirit. After He ascended, this unit and growing corporate organization called out and appointed officers to take Judas' place, Acts 1:15-26. This was the act of the church. Then in the first chapter of Acts we find this church well organized, already established under the personal ministry of Christ and by Him set to the task of evangelism; and through the Holy Spirit it held its first great meeting. Then in Acts the sixth chapter we find the organization completed by the addition of deacons; and so it had two sets of officers, pastors and deacons; two ordinances, baptism and the Supper; a democratic form of organization, as was shown in the election of Matthias to take Judas' place and the election of the deacons. The church itself was the authority in these appointments. Thus we can see that through the process of years Jesus Himself organized His church and under the direction of the Divine Spirit deacons were added to the organization after Pentecost. It can in all the highest senses claim Christ as its organizer and central authority and power." □



### Editor's Note

*In The Baptist Pillar we use articles taken from many different publications and written by many different authors. Please realize that this does not necessarily mean we agree with the doctrinal position of the publication or the author of the article, but that the particular article presents a scriptural truth we do agree with.*

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*(Visible continued from page 6)*

church in his clay in these words: "Three are sufficient to form a church, although they be laymen."

Giesler, Of the churches of the first and second centuries, says: "All congregations were independent of one another" (Vol. 1, chap. 3).

Mosheim. "During a great part of this [second] century all the churches continued to be, as at first, independent of each other; . . . each church was a kind of little independent republic" (Vol. 1, p. 142).

Bro. Owen. "In no approved writer for two hundred years after Christ is mention made of any organized, visibly professing church except a local congregation" (By Crowell, in Chap. Man., p. 36).

No fact is better established than this, and therefore the various Catholic and Protestant organizations can lay no just claim to be patterned after the apostolic model; and, according to Bishop Doggett's axioms, should not be considered or called Christian churches. □