

The Doctrine of

THE CHURCH

A Compilation

by

John L. Patten, B.A., D.D.

Introduction: The teaching of the Scriptures concerning the Church is just as plain and positive as that which pertains to any other doctrine, yet the conception of men, even professing Christians, in regard to it is very indefinite and vague. According to human usage, the term "church" has numerous and varied meanings.

1. It is used denominationally:

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| a. Methodist | c. Baptist |
| b. Presbyterian | d. Roman Catholic (holds that the church is a system) |

While we often speak of the various denominations as churches, yet such a use of the term doesn't occur in the Scriptures.

2. It is used in relationship to literature, but they who do so use it unscripturally.
3. It is used in relationship to buildings, but they who do so also use it unscripturally.

The above usage tends to obscure the real meaning of the word. (2-237)

Only by studying the Scriptural meaning can we truly understand the church. Many think of the church as a club or a business organization to which individuals may join themselves: Or they think it is just a band of people who agree in religious beliefs, forming an organization and putting on a campaign for members. The church itself is responsible for such opinions. (1-59)

I. Meaning of the word "church."

A. The general, non-technical usage.

The Greek word translated "church" (ekklesia) is composed of ek, from, or out of, and kaleo, to call; thus, the word means "called out from." It denotes a company, or assembly of persons, called out, selected, chosen and separated from a larger company, a more general concourse of people. According to the usages of Greek civil life, the ekklesia was "an assembly of citizens called together for deliberative purposes." In this general, non-technical sense, ekklesia is used several times in the New Testament. In Acts 19:32,39,41 it has reference to a town meeting at Ephesus. In Acts 7:38 and Hebrews 2:12, it is used to designate the commonwealth of Israel as called out and separated from other peoples. Matthew 18:17 probably also uses the term in a non-technical sense with reference to a deliberative body of people.

B. The technical, New Testament usage.

The other 109 times that the term ekklesia is used by New Testament writers it is used in a technical sense with reference to a body or bodies of believers Divinely called out from the world between Pentecost and the rapture.

1. Used in a local sense to designate local bodies of believers. (Acts 15:4; Romans 16:4; I Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 16:1,19; II Cor. 1:1; 8:1; Galatians 1:2; 1:22; Phil. 4:15; Col. 4:15,16; I Thess. 1:1; 2:14; II Thess. 1:1.

A local church is an organized body of baptized believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, who usually live in one locality, who assemble themselves together (especially on the first day of the week) in His name, for the breaking of bread, worship, prayer, testimony, discipline, and the furtherance of the gospel. This is the most common usage of the term in the New Testament; it is used in this way over 90 times.

2. Used in sort of an institutional sense to designate the visible church or body of professed believers without reference to locality or number. Acts 12:1; I Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6.
3. Used in a universal sense to designate the whole body of redeemed of this dispensation. This body (often referred to as the "universal" or "invisible" church) includes all regenerated believers called out of the world between Pentecost and the rapture and baptized by the Holy Spirit into the "body of Christ." The following Scriptures clearly teach the present existence of such a body of redeemed individuals designated as "The Church":
Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22,23; 3:10,21; 5:23-32; Col. 1:18; Hebrews 12:23.

A contrary view that the local church is "the body of Christ" not only violates the Scriptures given above but ignores one of the main themes of the book of Ephesians and contains the following errors:

- a. If the local church is the body of Christ, why does the N.T. refer to "churches" but never to "bodies"? (6-19)
- b. If the local church is the body of Christ, then membership in a local church is necessary for union with Christ. (6-19)
- c. If the local church is the body of Christ, then a Diotrophes can cut off true believers from their Saviour. III John 9-10 (6-19)
- d. If the local church is the body of Christ, then any unsaved persons who may be members of the local church must be "members of Christ." I Cor. 6:15; Otherwise it is admitted that there is a difference between the local church and the Body. (6-19)
- e. If the local church is the body of Christ, then each local church must live forever according to Eph. 3:21 and Matt. 16:18. We know of numbers of local churches which have not lived as much as 100 years.
- f. If the local church is the body of Christ, then you can join it. But according to I Cor. 12:12-13 and Eph. 4:16, believers are joined to the body of Christ by the operation of God.
- g. If the local church is the body of Christ, then it must contain both Jews and Gentiles according to I Cor. 12:12-13 and Eph. 2:11-17. But many of our local churches have never had a Jewish member. (JLP)
- h. If the local church is the body of Christ, how corrupt can it become in doctrine, alliances, and membership, and still qualify as His body? Was the church of Laodicea, for example, which was to be completely rejected (Rev. 3:16), and which shut Christ on the outside (v. 20) His body? (6-19)

II. The Nature of the Universal Church.

A. Negatively considered. (1-61)

1. The church is not identical with the kingdom of God. (4-474)

The kingdom of God is universal including all moral intelligences-- Angels or human, celestial or earthly, of all centuries and all climes who willingly place themselves under the circle of divine will and who of their own free choice acknowledge God as sovereign. (Scofield Bible note on Matt. 6:33) I Chron. 29:11; Psa. 145:13. Therefore, the church must be thought of only as one part or phase of the kingdom of God, much like Iowa is part of the United States. Since the church is so definitely limited in both its sphere and span of time, it can never truly be called the kingdom of God.

2. The universal church is not the kingdom of Heaven. (4-474)

The kingdom of Heaven means the Messianic earth rule of Jesus Christ as set forth in the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam. 7:12-16. This kingdom was announced by John in Matthew 3:2, but was rejected by God's people, and now shall be realized at the fulfillment of Revelation 11:15.

The church as the Bride of Christ will hold much the same relation to the kingdom of Heaven as Joseph's wife did to Egypt while he reigned over that land.

- a. We will never inherit the church, but men will inherit the kingdom. Matt. 25:34.
- b. Men receive the kingdom but are born into the church. Mark 10:15
- c. We never hear of the elders of the kingdom, but we do hear of the elders of the church. Titus 1:5
- d. The kingdom is never called a body as is the church. Eph. 1:23; 2:21; Heb. 2:8
- e. The church is now in the world waiting to be taken out of the world; while the kingdom shall be set up in this world. Dan. 2:44
- f. The kingdom is to be set up but the church is to be built up. Eph. 4:12; Dan. 2:44; Matt. 25:34

The church is not the kingdom of Heaven in its present "mystery" form as set forth in the parables of Matthew 13, where the kingdom of Heaven is synonymous with professed Christendom. The tares are not sown in the church but in the field which is the world, and Matt. 13:28-30 cannot be quoted as a refutation of the doctrine of Separation or of exercising discipline in the church for the sake of her purity.

3. The universal church is not the saints of the Old Testament. (4-475)

Since Pentecost the believer is described as being "in Christ". 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28. This was not true of O.T. saints. Abraham was called "the friend of God," which according to John 3:29, classes the O.T. saints as friends of the Bridegroom; while we who are in the church constitute the bride.

4. The universal church is not Israel. (1-61)

There are three classes of people in Scripture - Jew, Gentile, and the church of God. 1 Cor. 10:32. Some say that the church of today is just another phase of Israel. Evidently this is the belief of the Roman Catholics.

a. Different in calling.

- (1) Israel's calling was earthly; to an earthly inheritance. Gen. 12:1,2; 24:35; Deut. 28:8; 28:11,13

You cannot find in Scripture a promise given to Israel but that it is an earthly one.

- (2) The church's calling is heavenly; to heavenly blessings.

Eph. 1:3; Phil 3:20 The only earthly promise to the church is persecution I Cor. 4:11-13.

b. Different in conduct. Deut. 7:1,2; I Cor. 4:12,13.

c. Different in worship. Lev. 17:8,9

Israel worshipped in one place, we worship a Person anywhere.

d. Different in future.

(1) The future of Israel is to be restored to the land, Rom. 11:1-5, 24,25; Isa. 11:11,12; 14:1,2; Jer. 23;7,8.

(2) The future of the church is to be raptured with Him, I Thess. 4:13-1

B. Positively considered. (1-63)

1. The universal church is a mystery.

In the N.T. a mystery is something once hidden but now revealed. Rom. 16:25-26a ASV. See Scofield notes on Eph. 3:6 and Matt. 13:11. Illustration: Australia. It does not convey the idea of something we cannot take in nor understand even when it is declared unto us. This is not like the heathen mysteries, imparted only to the initial few. The truth is that the believers are the initiated, but unbelievers are the uninitiated.

(a) The church concealed. I Pet. 1:9-12; Eph. 3:4,5,9,10.

From the beginning of the world the church was "hid in God." Here was something that even the Scriptures had not hinted at. Something kept entirely secret between the Father and the Son; and this sublime plan, so entirely beyond the comprehension of our natural faculties, which we could never by searching find out, appears to have been equally beyond the grasp of angelic intelligence.

(b) The church revealed. Eph. 3:5b-9; Col. 1:24-29.

What has been concealed from the angels and the prophets was revealed to Paul. He calls it the "dispensation of God which is given to me." That the Gentiles were to be saved was no mystery because the O.T. made plain that Christ was to come for the salvation of both Jew and Gentile. Isa. 42:6; 49:6; Rom. 9:24-33.

The mystery "hid in God" was the divine purpose to make of Jew and Gentile a wholly new thing--"the church which is His body" in which the earthly distinction of Jew and Gentile disappears. Col. 3:10,11.

To have Christ reign over them and in their midst had been known by the O.T. prophets but never had there been such a marvelous announcement as "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:27

2. The universal church is the Body of Christ, of which Christ is the Head. Eph. 1:22,23.

God does not mean a legislative body nor any organized body of men, but a living organism made up of believers as the members of that body, with Christ as the Head. "As the head functions through the body and its members so Christ functions through the Church and its members. As there is a mutual dependence between the head and its body, so there is between Christ and the church. Christ is dependent upon the church as the medium for expressing Himself and accomplishing His purposes. The church is dependent upon Christ for wisdom, direction, and power in doing this. As the members of the body are mutually essential to that body and its head, so are the members of the church mutually essential to each other and to Christ." (2-23) Every believer is as truly a member of this body as our hands and feet are members of our physical bodies. We are told if one member suffers, that all suffer. I Cor. 12:12-27; Rom. 12:4,5.

The believer's place in this body is not self-chosen. The most feeble members are necessary. Christ became its Head at the resurrection. The church as a body brings to us the thought of unity. In I Cor. 12:12 both

the body and the head are referred to as Christ. For example, I would not call my head "John" and my body "Patten". The whole thing is John Patten. Therefore the church cannot die. Did you ever hear of a dead body fastened to a living head? Let's realize that Christ is our life and the body is for the outward manifestation of this life and personality.

Definition: The Universal Church as an organism includes all regenerate believers gathered out of the world between Pentecost and the Rapture.

3. The Universal Church is a building for the habitation of God. Eph. 2:19-22; I Pet. 2:5,6 ASV.

- a. Once God's dwelling place on earth was (1) in the Tabernacle, (2) in the Temple, and (3) in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mk. 14:58
 b. Now He abides in the building made up of individual believers, which constitute a spiritual house and a holy temple in the Lord.

This building has a double purpose--it is a holy temple and a place of worship. What is true of the whole body should be true of every individual member. Therefore, the individual believer's heart is a place of worship and a habitation of God by the Spirit.

4. The Universal Church is the espoused Bride of Christ. (2-239) II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:29-32.

Illustrated by:

Adam and Eve. Gen. 2:18,21-24.

Isaac and Rebekah. Gen. 24:61-67.

Joseph and Asenath. Gen. 41:45.

The relationship between Christ and the Church is not that of king and subjects, but one of husband and wife, which is the relationship of perfect intimacy and spiritual union. The true purpose of the Bride is entire devotion and unflinching fidelity. Since the Church is to be the means of making known Christ's glory, its membership must be completed before the Son of man can come in His glory. Eph. 2:4-7. As sharers of His glory the Church must be united with Him before He returns to earth in His magnificance. John 17:24. This relationship will be consummated at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Rev. 19:6-9.

III. The origin of the Universal Church.

- A. In the counsel of God back in eternity before the foundation of the world the concept of the Church was born in the mind of God including everyone who is and shall be a member of the Church. The great purpose of God, which will be ultimately perfected through the Church, is the manifestation of the glory of His grace. Eph. 1:3-6. Thus we see that God's supreme purpose in saving men in this age is to enhance His own glory and not only that men should be saved. (4-470)

- B. Promised by our Lord Jesus Christ. Matt. 16:16-18

At the time of this utterance it was a thing still in the future. But Jesus said, "I will build my Church." Notice--It was a fact of prophecy, not of history, at the time of Christ's death. Notice in this Scripture that the Church was to be founded upon Jesus Christ Himself and not on Peter. There is no supremacy given to Peter, as a comparison with John 20:19-23 and Matt. 18:18 clearly shows. The matter of binding and loosing was given to the whole Church and all the apostles. (3-184)

- C. Historically founded at Pentecost by the Holy Spirit's baptizing members into the body. (4-470) I Cor. 12:12-13; Acts 11:16; Acts 2:2-4 and 32,47. The promises and prophecies of Matt. 16:16-18 are here fulfilled. Here we have the account of the first Christian church in its beginning and as it actually existed

Acts 15

Acts 10

in Jerusalem. When a man became regenerated by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, he was thereby constituted a member of the Church. There was no question as to whether he ought to join himself to the church or not. That automatically occurred as Acts 2:47 shows. Thus for a period of time in church history when the local church and the universal church were one and the same thing.

While some men teach that the Church, the Body of Christ, was begun by Christ during His earthly ministry, and others have said that John the Baptist started the Baptist Church, such suppositions are clearly refuted by the following facts. A church before Christ's death would have been an unredeemed church. A church before His resurrection would have been a church without the Holy Spirit. A church before His ascension would have been a headless body.

In his book titled, The Doctrine and Administration of the Church, Dr. Jackson makes the statement that the Universal Church "makes no decisions, exercises no discipline, administers no ordinances and preaches no gospel." This statement is only partially true. Who can deny that there are several hundreds of believers in our land who have not seen the necessity of taking up their responsibility in a local church or have kept themselves aloof from the churches as they have known them, because of the existing apostasy in them. These believers are members of the body of Christ and function through participation in or support of such activities as Child Evangelism, The Rural Bible Crusade, the American Sunday School Union, independent missionary agencies, local Bible classes, and the many radio preachers. Therefore this section of the body of Christ does preach the Gospel and in some instances practices the ordinances. We of the GARB convictions would like to get the truth to them that the local church is God's ordained institution to nurture His children and get the message of salvation to the world, and this is part of our task.(JLP)

IV. Gifts to the Body. Eph. 4:8-13

A. Source of the gifts. (5-190)

Our glorified Lord in Heaven is plainly the source. The gifts of I Cor. 12:28-31 were largely temporary and peculiar to the apostolic age. It is clear from a comparison of present-day Christian experience with that of the apostolic age that certain evident contrasts existed. While the gospel does remain unchanged and many of God's methods of dealing with His own continue the same throughout this age, certain factors have disappeared with the passage of the apostles and their generation. Different explanations have been offered to account for this. One is that the whole Church has drifted from its moorings and is now unworthy of the same display of spiritual power.

Illus. by Dr. Ironside from his book on Acts, p. 234-235. Yet in every generation there has been a faithful remnant of saints, true to God, and even those who have remained close to the apostolic doctrine and devotion have failed to demonstrate the same outward phenomena of the apostolic age, that is, these special gifts of I Cor. 12. The proper explanation of the passing of these gifts is found in the evident purpose of God in the apostolic age. During the life-time of the apostles, it pleased God to perform many notable miracles, in some cases quite apart from the question of whether the benefit was deserved. Further, we find in the Scriptures that a period of miracles is always at a time when special testimony is needed to authenticate God's prophets. Three such periods of miracles stand out in Bible history.

1. The period of Moses
2. The period of Elijah and Elisha
3. The period of Christ and the apostles.

With the completion of the N.T. and its almost universal acceptance by the people of God, the need for further unusual display of miraculous works ceased. The preacher of today does not need the outward evidence of ability to heal or

speak with tongues to substantiate the validity of the Gospel. Rather, the written Word itself is sufficient evidence for faith and is attended by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul wrote--Eph. 2:19-20. How many times must a foundation be laid? The truths of N.T. Christianity have already been authenticated once by miracles, and it is not an indication of high spirituality to try to demand of the Lord that He continue to repeat them. (JLP)

B. The Character of these Gifts. (1-68)

1. Apostles - introduced to nourish the Church in its infancy, and were also used to provide the foundations for the future of the Church.
2. Prophets - there is no more possibility of anyone possessing the prophetic gift in the present age than it is for anyone to write books to be added to the sacred canon of Scriptures. The Church in the beginning had no N.T. Scriptures. Therefore the prophets were necessary. Paul was such a prophet who proclaimed God's truth and wrote inspired Scriptures.
3. Evangelists - this term means the same as the Gospel--"good news." The evangelist was the carrier of the good news. They were men who loved and knew how to point lost souls to Christ. This is a special gift to an individual. When God calls a man to this work, He will give him a burden for souls and men will be saved under his ministry.
4. Pastors - means literally "shepherds." His work is of a private nature, whose business is to care for the flock by warning them, comforting them, seeking them when they go astray. They were, as is again and again stated in the N.T., the appointed teachers and spiritual guides in the early church. When God calls a man to this office, He give him a pastor's heart. Illus.--Dr. Moyer, hearing H. B. O. Philpott's weeping and praying after retiring.
5. Teachers - Those who have come to know Christianity through the evangelist have need of teachers to establish them and to prevent them from becoming weakened and backslidden. Beginners in the Christian life must "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Many who have been saved for as many as 15 or 20 years may be found still living in spiritual poverty. The teacher's business is to meet this need. The office of the pastor is not complete without a God-given ability to be also a teacher.

V. The Organization of a Local Church.

A. The Constitution of a Local Church

In order that the Church might be efficient in its life and service, God has given certain laws and regulations for its policies and practices in the N.T. and particularly in the Epistles of Paul. The church constitution as formulated by each local church is an honest attempt to catagorize these scriptural directives with those operational practices found to be most functional.

B. The Officers of a Local Church

The normal local organization included elders and deacons. Phil. 1:1 Notice that in the Scriptures we always read of elders and deacons in the plural.

1. Elders or Bishops.

"Two Greek words appear for the ministry: presbuteros, meaning elder, and episkopas, meaning overseer. The word "elder" or "presbyter" referred to the rank and dignity of the minister; the word "bishop" to his function or duty." It is clear that elders and bishops referred to the same persons. Acts 20:17,28; 1 Tim. 3:2-4.

- (a) Their ordination was simply the setting apart of those who are divinely called to the work of the ministry. Acts 13:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:16; 1 Tim. 1:12.

"The individual should have a definite conviction as to the call of God. The church's part in the ordination is simply to recognize the Lord's hand in calling the individual. The church must have definite assurance of the reality of the divine call before proceeding with the ordination." (4-481)

- (b) The qualifications. 1 Tim. 3:1-7 (4-482)

- (c) Their function (1-71)

(1) To rule and to administer discipline. 1 Tim. 3:4-5, 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2-3; Hebr. 13:7,17. The pastor needs to bring the truths of the Word to bear upon the daily lives of his members as well as to execute proper government. This is essential to the normal life of the church.

(2) To guard the body of revealed truth from perversion and error. Titus 1:9

(3) To oversee the church as a shepherd cares for his flock. Acts 20:20,21 and 28,31; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Peter 5:1-2.

2. Deacons (4-484)

In the N.T., men were appointed to this office for the purpose of special service in taking care of, and distributing the benevolences of the church.

- (a) Their qualifications. 1 Tim. 3:8-13

- (b) Their function. Acts 6:1-4

They are especially to look after the poor and needy and to become a vital link between the pastor and his people.

There is a difference between an office and a gift. (1-72)

(1) An office is always obtained by appointment.

(2) A gift is bestowed upon one by the Holy Spirit.

Example: Philip attained the office of deacon by appointment but by the gift of the Spirit he was also an evangelist.

C. Church Discipline

Church discipline may be thought of as formative and corrective. In the formative aspects it includes that training, cultivation, and guidance of the saints which enables them to grow and learn to conduct themselves according to Scripturally established patterns of Christian life. If this aspect of discipline is carried out effectively, the need for corrective discipline will be greatly reduced.

It is true that in many churches the practice of discipline is practically unknown. Lawlessness is in the air, has affected the state, the home, and the church. The present-day church is often found allowing adulterers, drunkards, extortioners, blasphemers, all types of profane persons to abide in their fellowship and in taking the communion feast unchallenged. This is one of the main reasons why the church is so ineffective in reaching the unsaved with the Gospel.

The New Testament teaches church discipline for;

1. Moral offenses. 1 Cor. 5:1-8
Since church discipline should always keep the restoration of the sinner in view, 2 Cor. 2:6-11 should also be practiced. Not only should the church keep her good name free from reproach but remember that the real object of discipline is the recovery of the one who has gone astray.
Illus: The case of two men at Jeffers, Minnesota.
2. Doctrinal offenses. Titus 3:10-11; 1 Tim. 6:3-5
If the church had been more faithful in the discipline of false teachers when present-day modernism made its first appearance in our pulpits, modernism would not have gained a stronghold upon so many of our present-day denominations.
3. Personal offenses. Matt. 18:15-17
Care must always be exercised that church discipline is Spirit directed. Only those who are spiritual should ever attempt to practice it. Gal. 6:1

Statistics have shown that at least 80% of excommunications were later won back to the Lord and the Church.

The individual may escape church discipline by practice of self-judgment. 1 Cor. 11:31; Rom. 11:11-13; 1 John 1:9 The man who really exercises self-judgment confesses his sin by bringing the unclean thing before the Lord, calling it by its own name and taking his stand against it. That is, he looks at sin from God's standpoint. Illus. Parked gum for the next day's chewing. If the church fails to discipline an individual, the Lord will do it. 1 Cor. 11:30-32; Hebrews 10:31

D. The Ordinances of the Local Church

The word "ordinance" comes from two Latin words meaning "that which is ordered or commanded." The term is employed to describe the two institutions which Christ left to be observed by the church; that is, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Contrary to the teaching of the Roman church, performance of these two ordinances does not bring blessing or confer spiritual grace. There is nothing mysterious or miraculous about them. They are not sacraments possessing or carrying saving value. By no means of fair interpretation or exegesis can it be found that the Scriptures teach that they are a means of grace. (2-241)

Because of the truths which are symbolized by the ordinances it is important that they be included in the Christian experience in the proper order. Baptism must necessarily follow regeneration. Acts 2:41; 16:33. Following the normal order as presented in Scripture, such a regenerated, baptized believer will affiliate himself with a local church where he can continue to be taught and where he can participate in the privileges and responsibilities as a child of God--this includes participation at the Lord's Supper. Acts 2:42 Thus, the normal, Scriptural order is regeneration, baptism, church membership, and participation at the Lord's Supper. Any reversal of this order tends to confuse the truths taught by the ordinances or to minimize the importance of membership in a local church.

1. Baptism
 - (a) It is commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ. Matt 28:19; Mark 16:16 (2-242)

- (b) It was the practice of the apostles and the early Christian church for believers only. Acts 2:41-42 The following Scriptures indicate clearly that some positive evidence of faith and repentance or confession to Christ always preceded baptism: Acts 8:12, 8:36-38, 9:18; 16:14,15 with verse 40, 16:32-33; 18:8. This being true, what Scriptural evidence does one have for believing that he has obeyed this command of Christ or followed the early Scriptural pattern of the early church if he has not been baptized as a believer? See also Acts 10:47,48 and 19:5

In Matt. 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-17 there is nothing said concerning baptism and not so much as one single reference to water. We merely find that He took the children in His arms or laid His hands on them and prayed.

Illus: It is not right for you to baptize me this way when I don't believe in it.

The Apostle Paul is not decrying baptism in 1 Cor. 1:12-17 but is merely expressing his satisfaction in not having baptized more of the Corinthians since they would probably have taken that as a further ground for a Pauline faction in the church.

- (c) Baptism defined.

Christian baptism is the immersion of a person in water on profession of his faith in Christ, in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe this is a correct definition for the following reasons:

- (1) The Holy Spirit through verbal inspiration of the Scriptures shows that both Christ and His apostles when speaking of baptism chose a specific word in the Greek language which most accurately conveys this meaning. "Baptizo is found 80 times in the N.T., and is a derivative of bapto. In nearly all it is used to designate this ordinance--and no other word is ever used for that purpose. Baptisma, a baptism, an immersion, is found 22 times, and baptismos, the act of baptizing, or immersing, 4 times, both formed from baptizo." (7-396)

It has been easily and abundantly proven that this word means to dip, plunge or immerse, and that it means nothing else. "Bapto is found 3 times in the N.T. and also means to dip, but is never used to describe baptism. Why not? Because it has other meanings, as well as that of dipping; and with this word the nature of the ordinance might be misunderstood." (7-396)

"Rantizo is found 4 times, and means to sprinkle. If baptism could have been performed by sprinkling, as is at present so widely believed, this would have been the word above all others to describe the ordinance. But this word is in no case so used; simply because sprinkling is not baptism." (7-397)

"Keo is found many times in its various combinations, and means to pour, but is never used to designate baptism. But if baptism may be performed by pouring water on a candidate, why was not this word sometimes used to indicate the act?" (7-397)

We again ask, why did the sacred writers, from all the words in the Greek language, select only and always that one which strictly

means to dip or immerse, to express the act by which the sacred ordinance which Christ had commanded and which His disciples administered, should be performed? The only consistent answer is, because baptism means immersion, and nothing else--and nothing but immersion is baptism. (7-398)

- (2) The Scriptures plainly indicate that much water was necessary for the act of baptism. Matt. 3:13; John 3:23. "Thoughtful persons will ask why should they have resorted to places expressly because these furnished large supplies of water, if baptism was performed by sprinkling? A very small quantity of water would have answered the purpose in that case." (7-400)
- (3) The Scriptural accounts of the practice of baptism use expressions indicative of immersion and do not allow for other methods. Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:9-10. "Does not the very fact of His going down into the water, so as to come up out of the water, show, if not positively, presumptively, that His baptism was an immersion, or burial in the water? For to say He went down into the river for the purpose of having a small quantity of water poured, or a few drops sprinkled on Him is quite too trifling to have weight with candid minds." (7-398)

Acts 8:38-39 "Why should Philip and the eunuch, or either of them, have gone down into the water, if a mere sprinkling or pouring of water, and not immersion in water, was to be used?" (7-402)

- (4) The ordinance of baptism is a symbol of the believer's identification with Christ in burial and resurrection. Romans 6:3,4; Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21. (8-424)

Baptism is an external and visible rite which symbolizes an invisible and internal experience. According to the command of Christ and the practice of the early church from its very beginning, baptism is expressive of the inner experience of the believer in relation to Christ.

There are, it is true, a few writers who interpret Paul's great passage on baptism (Romans 6:3,4) as referring to the baptism of the Spirit. Such are G. Campbell Morgan, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Kenneth Wuest, etc. "Speaking of Romans 6:3,4, Biederwolf says the following take it to mean water baptism: Bengel, Calvin, Tholuck, Ruchert, Lightfoot, Lange, Meyer, Barnes, Stuart, Shedd, Schaff, Conybeare and Howson, Webster and Wilkinson, Hodge, Ellicott, Alford, Stier, Dwight, Riddle, Godet, Moule in his recent volume, Marvin R. Vincent in his "Word Studies", and W. E. Biederwolf." (8-423)

- (5) The Christian church knew no other form of baptism for many centuries. "Whatever weight, however, may be in those reasons, as a defense for the present practice of sprinkling, it is evident that during the first ages of the Church, and for many centuries afterwards, the practice of immersion prevailed." --Anon.

"For two hundred and fifty years after Christ we have no evidence of any departure from the primitive practice of immersion--the first authenticated instance of such a departure being about the middle of the third century. This was in the case of Novatian. Eusebius, the historian gives this case. Novatian was dangerously ill, and believing himself about to die, he greatly desired to be baptized, not having as yet received that ordinance.

As the case seemed urgent, and he was thought too feeble to be immersed, it was decided to try a substitute as nearly resembling baptism as possible. Water was poured profusely over him as he lay on his bed, so as to resemble as much as possible a submersion. (7-437)

- (d) The descriptions of God's merciful provision as co-extensive with the ruin of the fall also leads us to believe that those who die in infancy receive salvation through Christ as certainly as they inherit sin from Adam. Rom. 5:12 and 19-21.

There is an application to infants of the eternal life of Christ, as there was an application to them of the death of Adam. As without personal act of theirs infants inherited corruption from Adam, so without personal act of theirs salvation is provided for them in Christ. (10-356)

*James only
the resurrection
is not our rest
celebrated through
remembrance of Him*

- 2. Communion, or the Lord's Supper. Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

"The communion or the Lord's Supper was intended to be a reminder of the Lord's suffering for us. The Saviour knew how short human memory is. It is a reminder of the Lord's sufferings that brings Calvary and its cross very vividly before us. But the supper looks forward as well as backward. It is a commemoration and it is a prophecy. It shows forth the Lord's death till He come." Goodchild (2-242)

Dr. Pettingill has likened the Lord's Supper to a suspension bridge spanning the present age to show forth the Lord's death till He come.

- (a) The Elements.

Since in the above Scriptures nothing is said about what specific type of bread and wine is to be used in the ordinances, we cannot be dogmatic about the choice of the elements. Nevertheless, because of the inference of 1 Cor. 5:7,8, unleavened bread is much to be preferred; and because the Scriptural accounts of the Last Supper state only "the fruit of the vine," "the cup," unfermented wine is much to be preferred.

- (b) False teachings concerning the Lord's Supper.

- (1) Transubstantiation.

This is the teaching that through an act of consecration and blessing by a priest the bread and wine are actually changed into the body and blood of Christ. This essentially means that the communion is a new offering of Christ's sacrifice and that by physical participation of it, the participant receives saving grace. This error is based on the false interpretation of Matt. 26:26-28 with literal emphasis on "this is my body" and "this is my blood." (4-490)

The following is a refutation of this error (4-13):

There is no term in the Hebrew language which expresses, signifies or denotes "this." Therefore we read--

Gen. 40:12--three branches are three days

Gen. 41:26--7 kine are 7 years

Dan. 7:21--10 horns are 10 kings

In the N.T. the Greek takes the form of the Hebrew idiom, so we read--

Matt. 13:38--the field is the world

1 Cor. 10:4--that rock was Christ

John 6:51--I am the living Bread
 John 9:5--I am the Light of the world
 John 10:9--I am the Door
 John 14:6--I am the Way, the Truth and the Life
 John 15:5--I am the Vine
 Rev. 1:20--the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches

Are we not to insist on the literal meaning of all these phrases?
 Illustration: I draw a picture and say, "This is my heart."

Some may ask, "What of 1 Cor. 10:16 and Luke 22:19-20?" Every honest student of the Scriptures must admit that these passages are figures of speech, setting forth deep spiritual significant truth.

A Catholic woman was asked if she would bake poison in her bread, then take it to the priest for blessing, and eat of it for communion service, but she refused.

Furthermore, when our Lord Jesus made the statements of Matt. 26:26-28, he had not been crucified; therefore, His body had not been broken and His blood was still in His veins.

(2) Consubstantiation.

Those holding this view claim that Christ's bodily presence is in and with the elements of communion. They teach that the communicant on partaking of these elements eats the very body and drinks the very blood of Christ with the bread and wine, the elements remaining unchanged. Following is the refutation:

If this is true, then the reception of Christ's saving grace is dependent upon contact with material elements, while the Scriptures teach that the righteousness of Christ is received by faith. Rom. 3:25; Eph. 2:8; Acts 16:31. (4-490)

(c) The spiritual significance of the Lord's Supper (4-491)

(1) It symbolized Christ's death for our sins. 1 Cor. 11:26

The faith of the believer looks through the symbols to the actual sacrifice Christ made on the cross as an atonement for his sins.

(2) It symbolizes the personal appropriation of the benefits of Christ's death. 1 Cor. 11:24,25

(3) It symbolizes the union of believers with Christ, the head of the Body. 1 Cor. 10:17

At the Lord's table the believer is brought to realize the unity of all believers in one Body with Christ as the Head.

(4) It predicts the joy of the kingdom of God. Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18; 1 Cor. 11:26

At the communion the instructed believer looks forward to the consummation of God's redemptive purposes at the second coming of Christ. Those believers who hesitate to accept the fact of the second coming, or who are uninstructed in the same, utterly miss this application of the Lord's Supper.

(d) Regeneration is the qualification for participation. John 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:14; 1 Cor. 11:29

If there is to be any benefit from participating in this ordinance, there must be discernment of the Lord's body. The unregenerate are totally incapable of such. (4-492)

(e) Disqualifications for participation.

- (1) Immoral conduct. 1 Cor. 5:1,2,8,9
One practicing immorality and still unrepentant of the same is disqualified for partaking of the Lord's Supper.
- (2) Schisms, forwardness and excesses in attending the observance of the Lord's Supper. 1 Cor. 11:17-22; 28-34

In this Scripture, Paul is showing that the shameful conduct described was profaning the sacred feast and insulting the body and blood of the Lord, which were symbolized by the feast. He is not here warning unworthy persons from attending the observance of communion. It is a mistake to introduce such a thought here. Such mistaken interpretation of these words of Paul has kept many innocent persons from the table of the Lord and has caused others needless anxiety and distress. Paul is not describing the character of the worshippers, but their conduct in worship. The unworthiness of the participant is one thing; the unworthy manner of partaking is quite another. In the above passage Paul deals with the latter.

All believers should understand that however great his faults, they are welcome to the Lord's table if they come with true repentance and with a desire for new holiness. In the above Scriptures, Paul was rebuking gross misbehavior at the Lord's table and insisting it was no place for schisms, forwardness, gluttony or drunkenness. Let a man be sure that he is discerning the deep significance of the ordinance "and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the cup."

VI. The Mission of the Local Churches

The local churches are the visible manifestations of the Universal Church, which is His Body. They are of divine appointment and are the functional units by which God has purposed to carry out His will in the world. Only these churches, as the working agencies of the Body of Christ, have the assuring promise of God that the "gates of hades" shall not prevail against them. It is, therefore, not only God's will that every believer should identify himself with a local church and serve through its agencies, but he can know thereby that his labors have God's first blessing and will accomplish lasting results.

- A. To worship God. John 4:23,24 with Phil. 3:3; Heb. 10:25
"The assembling together of believers has as its primary purpose the paying homage to God. It expresses the heart attitude of the believer toward the living God." (4-495)
- B. To be a constant witness to Christ's saving grace and to the truth. Acts 1:8; 8:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:20; 1 Tim. 3:15
- C. To perfect the saints unto the work of ministering. Eph. 4:11-16 ASV, 1 Thess. 5:11
 1. That there should be unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God.
 2. That there should be developed the full-grown man attaining to the measure of the stature of Christ.
 3. That there should be strengthening of believers against the craftiness of men. Failure to attend and function in the church leads to certain apostasy.
- D. To evangelize the world with the Gospel. Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 1:8; 5:42; Eph. 3:8 (2-244)

Paul understood clearly that his mission was to preach the Gospel to the heathen. The purpose for which the church exists is Missions. If you take the missionary idea out of the church, you have a life without an objective; a barren tree that cumber the ground. Limit the Gospel in its scope for power and you have cut out its heart. Everyone who accepts the invitation "come" must immediately hear the imperative command "go". The supreme business of the church is to make Christ known to all.

VII. The Destiny of the Universal Church (4-511)

This unique and marvelous institution has an exalted destiny.

A. Conformed to Christ

Since the believer has been made a partaker of the divine nature and enters into fellowship with the Father and the Son, he is eventually to attain to the measure of the stature of Christ. This is the marvel of divine grace--that it can take men, dead in trespasses and sins, and so infuse into them the divine life that the likeness and image of God, which was defaced by sin, is restored. When that fulness of life in Christ is realized, the church, made up of such members, will be the demonstration of the grace of God to the intelligent beings in the coming ages. Eph. 2:4-7; Eph. 3:10

B. Rewarded by Christ 2 Cor. 5:10

It is not a question of judgment, but the granting of rewards for the deeds done in the body. These meritorious deeds become the very jewels which adorn Christ's bride.

C. Presented as a bride of Christ. Rev. 19:7,8; Eph. 5:27

This presentation comes after the redemptive purpose has come to perfection, the spots removed and the wrinkles ironed out. This should be a powerful incentive to believers to live a holy life and to exert the fullest endeavor in the accomplishment of the Lord's purpose.

D. Present at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Rev. 19:9

The consummation of the union between the church and Christ will be celebrated by this great supper, which will be attended by a host of holy ones.

E. Joint heirship with Christ. Rom. 8:17

This means that all the wealth of Christ's inheritance will be shared by the church which is His body. It will share in the glory of His kingdom and take part in the administration of the affairs of the universe.

F. Exalted to a place of royalty with Christ. Rev. 19:6

It is in this relationship that the Church joins in the administration of His Kingdom. It not only shares His glory, but joins in the execution of judgment upon Christ's enemies. This doubtless is what Paul means when he says, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?...Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. 6:2,3. In the crowning work of God's redemptive purpose, the Church will have joint relationship to her Lord.

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