



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

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CHURCH GOVERNMENT

By Ben Bogard

There are three forms of church government or polity: the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Congregational. Episcopacy is government by Bishops; Presbyterianism is government by presbyters or preachers; Congregationalism is government by the people—a pure Democracy.

Baptists are Congregationalists. They do not claim the right to make or repeal laws, but recognize and obey the unchanging law of their King, Jesus Christ. But in the execution of these laws of the Lord there is a pure Democracy.

Baptists regard the Scriptures as the only and all sufficient rule of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The church has no right to change one word of the Scriptures. It is the duty of the church to obey the Scriptures. The Scriptures teach that each congregation is entirely independent of every other congregation, and that to each congregation the Commission was given. Each congregation is a complete church in itself. It is therefore not correct to speak of "The Baptist Church." There is no such thing. There are thousands of Baptist churches, as each congregation of baptized believers is a church, but these congregations are not combined in any way so as to make the one great Baptist Church. There are many trees in the forest, but there is no such thing as THE TREE. In speaking of the duties and doctrines of "the church" we mean any Scriptural church, just as we speak of the duties of "the husband" and "the wife." When we say "the husband" or "the wife" we do not mean that there is a great HUSBAND composed of all the husbands, and when we say "the wife" we do not mean a large WIFE composed of all the wives. Even so, when we speak of the Commission being given to "the church," we do not mean a great Universal Church, but we mean each individual congregation. The following passage indicates the New Testament idea (Eph. 5:23): "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." We may as well talk about a great Universal Husband or a great Universal Wife as to talk of a great Universal Church.

In the New Testament we learn the following facts:

1. The congregation received members. Rom. 14:1, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye." The membership is here commanded to "receive" into their fellowship the weak in the faith. It is certain that the membership is told to do the receiving because the epistle is addressed, not to the "bishops," not to "the session," but "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." The whole church must therefore receive the new converts. The specification of one thing in law is the prohibition of everything else. Since therefore the whole church is commanded to "receive" it follows that the pastors, "the session," or anything else violates the law of God when they presume to receive members. This duty must continue to rest on the church as a whole.

2. The congregations excluded members from their fellowship. 1 Cor. 5:1-5: "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you,... In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power (authority) of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh," etc.

The church must be "gathered together," to exclude the fornicator. There was no "board of deacons" or "board of stewards," or "session" or bunch of "elders" to get off in a corner and do this work.

The power to exclude carries with it the power to restore. In 2 Cor. 2:6-8, we read that this fornicator should be restored after he had repented: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him," etc.

We note the fact that Paul says this punishment was inflicted of "many"; literally, "by the majority." "Pleionon" is the Greek word used.

In case of personal offenses, the party offended must first labor for reconciliation between him and the offender alone. This failing, he must take witnesses with him, and in the presence of these witnesses, make another effort for reconciliation. If this second effort fails, he must "tell it unto the church," and if this fails, excommunication follows. "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publi-

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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

By Edward Hiscox

Few questions can be so vitally important to any church, whether relating to its own peace and prosperity, or to the success of the work it is appointed to do, as that of the kind of minister who shall serve and lead it. The position commands high regard, for the minister is looked upon not only as a teacher, but as an example. He is therefore accepted as the one who, by his private and public life, is to illustrate the doctrines and ethics which he preaches from the pulpit.

The old prophet's declaration, "like people, like priest," is as true now as when Hosea uttered it. Where the people have freedom of choice, and select their own pastors, they will choose them on the level of their own religious thinking and acting. Moreover, there is a constant tendency on the part of the preacher to keep somewhere near the standard of the people. It requires a heroic effort for the pulpit to rise far above the level of the pew, as to Christian teaching and consecration, and he who long sustains himself in that position may expect, sooner or later, to hear the mutterings of discontent. But then, contradictory as it may seem to be, the converse of the prophet's epigram is equally true: "like priest, like people." For, to a large extent, by faithful, judicious, and persistent endeavor, a godly pastor can mold and win the church to a higher standard.

The old prophets, notably Jeremiah, represented the people of Israel under the analogy of a flock, led and fed and guarded by shepherds, called pastors. Jesus used the same figure when he declared himself to be the Good Shepherd that gave his life for the sheep. The relationship between pastor and people is thus intimate, vital, and sacred.

It is one of the first and most important fruits of religious liberty and free-church polity that congregations of Christian worshipers can elect their own religious teachers. They may make mistakes, but they insist on the right, and they will not willingly submit to the dictation or control of others in this regard, from either civil or ecclesiastical authority. This is a point Baptists have always emphasized, maintaining this as well as other expressions of religious freedom for the individual church. Every Christian is under obligation to preach the gospel according to his ability and opportunity; but special leaders and teachers are needed for the pastorates of churches. The Spirit of God prepares certain men for the work, while the providence of God develops and calls forth their ministry. It is all under the direction of the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, who sends among his people the under-shepherds.

Jesus began this work while among men. He "ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3:14). Likewise, "After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (Luke 10:1). And his final instructions, as he was leaving them, were: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19, 20).

The Purpose of the Ministry

The general purpose contemplated by the appointment and sustenance of an official ministry in the churches is clearly enough defined in the popular mind, and well enough understood by the prevailing customs of religious society: to shepherd the flock, to instruct congregations in religious truth, and to guide the churches as to internal order and the practical activities of Christian life. But, to be more specific, it may be said the ministerial purpose is twofold: the conversion of men, and then their instruction and upbuilding in the faith of the gospel. Thus did Jesus, in his farewell injunction, command his disciples to go forth, preach

the gospel, disciple men, baptize them, and then teach them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them.

Not infrequently extremists are heard to say that there is nothing comparable to the conversion of souls; that is the one great object of preaching. Both goals, however, should be constantly sought, and devotion to one does not exclude the other. God may be as much glorified and the world as much blessed by the development of character and the increase of good works on the part of believers, as by the addition of converts. Read the epistles to the churches, and see how much is said about edifying the body of Christ; about growth in grace; about perfecting the saints in holiness; about being filled with the Spirit.

In Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, after saying that Christ gave gifts, some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, he states for what purpose these gifts were bestowed, namely, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12, 13). Here is a grand concept of an advancing Christian growth, under the culture of pastors and teachers, even to the attainment of a "perfect man," that is, a perfected humanity in Christ!

When Christians are living in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel and exhibiting the life of Christ, sinners will be converted.

The Call to the Ministry

If the spiritual life of the churches is to be maintained, and the power of godliness to be preserved, a divine call to the work of the ministry must be insisted on by the churches.

It is not enough that a man, young or old, has piety and ability and education; that he possesses a facility in the use of language, and can address a congregation with ease and interest, both to himself and to them. Nor is it enough that he has an earnest desire to do good. It must not be the mere choice of a profession, nor the dictate of an ambition which looks to the pulpit as a desirable arena for achieving distinction, nor even as the best field for usefulness. Nor must it be a yielding to the opinions or persuasions of over partial, but, it may be, injudicious friends. A true call to the work of the ministry must rest on more solid ground than any or all of these evidences.

"No man taketh this honour unto himself; but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4). He that would enter upon this work must do it from a deep, abiding, and unalterable conviction, wrought into his soul by the Holy Spirit, that such is the will of God concerning him; and that nothing else is, or can be, the work of his life, whether it may bring joy or sorrow, prosperity or adversity. This inward movement and guidance of the Spirit is not always continuous, but recurs from time to time, calling him back from all other purposes and plans to this conviction of duty.

As this conviction is slowly working its way into the soul, various emotions are excited. Not infrequently his mind revolts against what seems the inevitable conclusion. He is troubled by thoughts of unfitness for the work, by the apparent impossibility of being able to secure the proper qualifications, by the fact that many cherished plans for life, which seem to promise more of pleasure and of profit, must be abandoned, and by many other worries. But through it all the Spirit holds his mind true to its destiny, until at length it submits, silences every objection, sacrifices every consideration, accepts every condition, and implicitly obeys the divine call.

The evidences of this divine call are various. The most convincing is that just named, where the Spirit works the ever-deepening conviction into the soul, that it must be so. Another sign is that the mind is being led into a fruitful contemplation of

THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUE CHURCH

Taken from *The Church that Jesus Built*,
Chapter 6
By Roy Mason

We have seen that Jesus founded or established the church, that He founded it during the days of His personal ministry on earth, that the church which He established was the local assembly, and that He promised to perpetuate it "till He come." Having ascertained these truths, we are driven to the conclusion that somewhere in the world today is to be found the true church of Christ—the church that has been perpetuated from the days of Christ and the apostles, and that holds fast the doctrines that prevailed in the New Testament church. As has been said, "We must either suppose that there has been a Christian people existing in every age from the apostolic to the present, characterized by the same doctrines and practices, or that there were periods in the intervening history when apostolic faith and practice had absolutely no representative on the face of the earth. Are we prepared to take the latter alternative?"

What then becomes of the Saviour's promise?"

Forced, therefore, to the conclusion that in accordance with Christ's promise, His church has been perpetuated, and that is to be found in the world today, let us ask the question, "How shall we go about finding it? How shall we, from among the multitudes of so-called churches and denominations, find the true, New Testament church?"

I propose to conduct our search for the true church along three corroborative lines, as follows:

1. THE LINE OF HISTORICAL ELIMINATION.
2. THE LINE OF COMPARISON OF DOCTRINES.
3. THE LINE OF HISTORICAL STATEMENTS BY RELIABLE HISTORIANS.

Let us then begin our search along the first line proposed—namely, that of historical elimination. Possibly an illustration will serve to make clear what I mean just here. Let us suppose that you come into possession of a valuable document. You lay the paper upon your library table and soon you are called away for something and, forgetting the paper, you go off and leave it lying there among the papers and books that litter the table. Presently you return and upon looking for your paper you find that your table has been put in order during your absence and the document removed. You call the housekeeper and make inquiry. She tells you that she placed the document between the pages of one of the books on the table. She is very sure about it, but she does not recall just which book she placed it in. You begin a search, looking through book after book without result. Finally you have examined every book save one, and you are certain that the books examined do not contain the document. What conclusion do you reach? There is only one conclusion possible, and that is, if you were told the truth, the paper you seek must be in the one book remaining.

So in our search we must eliminate every so-called church whose origin may be dated after the time of Christ. If in this process we eliminate every church save one, we shall be forced to the conclusion that that one is the true church.

Going back to the much-discussed Matthew 16:18, we find two historical tests defined by Jesus—tests that should help and guide us in our investigation.

The first is that the only true church was founded by JESUS HIMSELF — "will build my church."

The second is that the institution which Jesus called "My church" shall never cease to exist through the ages — "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

If in applying these two scriptural, historical tests we find that none of the organizations calling themselves churches, save one, can meet these tests, I reiterate we must conclude that that one is the true church of Christ. Let us then inquire into the origin of the various denominations that exist today. In this inquiry we shall

concern ourselves only with the origin of the main denominations: those that are well known and typical of all others. The denominations that we shall consider are those from which the many small sects have sprung in more recent years. Being the offspring of the older denominations and having their rise in very recent times, they of course fall so far short of meeting Christ's historical test that it would be entirely superfluous to deal with them.

In this investigation, of course the Church of Rome, which we today call the Roman Catholic Church, takes priority. Let us then begin by asking,

When Did The Church Originate?

We have this question from Dr. J. B. Moody (*My Church*, p. 95): "It did not originate in a day or year, but gradually subverted the apostles' teaching, and in centuries inaugurated full-grown popery. But there is not a trace of a Pope or Universal Father ... in the first three centuries of the Christian era."

The Catholic Church is the result of gradual perversion and corruption. From the days of Constantine, when soldiers without regeneration were baptized into the church by the thousands, and compromise was made with paganism, conditions waxed worse and worse, finally bringing about a state that made the Catholic Church possible. The actual establishment of the Roman Papacy was, according to Dr. S. E. Tull (*Denominationalism Put to Test*), accomplished by Gregory the Great in the year A. D. 590. Dr. Tull corroborates his statement by the following quotation from Ridpath (Vol. 4, p. 41):

"This epoch in history should not be passed over without reference to the rapid growth of the papal church, in the close of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh. Most of all by Gregory the Great; whose pontificate extended from 590 to 604, was the supremacy of the apostolic See attested and maintained. Under the triple title of Bishop of Rome, Prelate of Italy, and Apostle of the West, he gradually by gentle insinuations or bold assertions as best suited the circumstances, elevated the Episcopacy of Rome into a genuine papacy of the church. He succeeded in bringing the Arians of Italy and Spain into the Catholic fold, and thus secured the solidarity of the Western Ecclesia."

Schaff (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 1, p.15) tells us that Gregory the Great (A.D. 590-604) was the first of the "proper popes," and that with him begins "the development of the absolute papacy." Says Dr. J. T. Christian in commenting on this point: "The growth of the papacy was a process of history. Long before this the bishop of Rome made arrogant claims over other churches." Then he adds: "The line of absolute Mediaeval popes began with Gregory."

We have seen that the Catholic claim to apostolic origin breaks down at several points (See Introductory Chapter): First, in failing to establish the primacy of Peter. Second, in failing to establish that Peter was a pope, or indeed that any pope existed for several centuries after Christ. Third, in failing to prove that Peter was ever in Rome. Fourth, in the fact that Catholic faith and practice is utterly at variance with that of the apostolic church. In connection with the points mentioned above, it may be well, at the risk of multiplying quotations, to give the words of Dr. J. W. Porter (*World's Debt to Baptists*, pp. 165, 166):

"As is well known, the Roman Catholic predicates its claim to Scriptural origin on the supposition that Peter was the first Pope of Rome. Unless they can prove that Peter was at Rome, and that he was also a Pope, their claim to apostolic origin is utterly false. However, there is no controversy on this point, as all the claims of the Roman hierarchy are conditioned upon the primacy of Peter. The two are inseparable and must rise or fall together. Hence for the purpose of this discussion, it will only be necessary to

A MARK OF A DIVINE MODEL

By J.R. Graves

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.

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; 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., Eph. 1:22; 3:10; 21:5, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32; Col. 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. (Matt. 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" (Philemon 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. 115-200: "For the churches which have been planted in Germany 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 church in his day in these words: "Three are sufficient to form a church, although they be laymen."

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can." (Matt. 18:16-18.)

5. The congregations elected their own officers. Acts 6:1-6: "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men," etc. "The multitude" had been called together and the apostles instructed the whole multitude to "look out among you seven men." The selection or election of the "multitude" was accepted by the apostles. Then the apostles "had prayed, they laid their hands on them"—ordained them, as Baptists do today.

Acts 14:23: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord." The Greek, of which this passage is a translation, literally means: "And when they had elected elders in every church by a show of the hands." The Greek word used is "cheirotonein," meaning to "stretch forth the hand." Phillip Schaff, the modern Lutheran historian, in his great book, "Apostolic Church" page 501, says:

"As to Presbyters—bishops (pastors), Luke informs us (Acts 14:23) that Paul and Barnabas appointed them to office in the newly founded congregations by taking the vote of the people, thus merely presiding over the choice. Such, at least, is the original and usual sense of 'cheirotonein.'"

4. The congregations elected their own missionaries. Acts 11:22-24: "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch... he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

This fact is set forth plainly by J. M. Pendleton in his "Church Manual," page 110:

"The churches in Apostolic times sent forth ministers on missionary tours. When Antioch received the Word of God, the church at Jerusalem sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch." (Acts 11:22). His labors were successful, much people was added to the Lord, and at a subsequent period the church in Antioch sent out Saul and Barnabas, who made a long journey, performed much labor, returned and reported to the church all that God had done with them; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 14:26-27. With what deferential respect did these ministers of the gospel treat the church that sent them forth!"

When Dr. Pendleton wrote his Manual (1867) all Baptists agreed that churches should send out missionaries, but some are disputing this Apostolic practice now.

The conclusion is clear. It was to "the church" that the Commission was given. It is therefore the duty of the congregation to do all that the Commission enjoins. The congregation is the unit in all the work contemplated in the Commission. There is not the slightest hint in the New Testament of there being authority on earth above a congregation of baptized disciples. Where we read of "elders that rule well," the literal rendering is the "elders that lead well." The "elder" or bishop, which are the Scriptural terms for pastor, is a leader of his flock over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer. But he leads by teaching, by example, and not by authority. To exercise authority is expressly forbidden by our Master. Matt. 20:25-26: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you." In I Peter 5:3: "Neither as being lords (masters) over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

The Episcopal and Presbyterian bodies have men of authority—men in control. The Master said: "It shall not be so among you." The superintendent of missions, so common among Baptists, has authority to superintend the work of missionaries. The Master said: "It shall not be so among you." Baptists should recognize only one Master, even Jesus Christ and only one Superintendent of Missions, even the Holy Spirit.

A gospel church may exist with or without officers. The churches (Acts 14:23) in which elders were elected existed as gospel churches before they had elders, and if they could exist as gospel churches before they had elders, it follows that if the elders should die or move away, the churches could exist again as gos-

pel churches without them. Elders or pastors are not necessary to the existence of a church. A church is a gospel church with them or without them. So with the deacons. The church at Jerusalem was a gospel church (Acts 6) before the deacons were elected. If all the deacons should die or move away, it would continue to be a gospel church. As Pendleton put it in his Church Manual: "Officers are not necessary to 'the being of a church,' but they are necessary to its well being." □

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Gieseler: Of the churches of the first and second centuries, says: "All congregations were independent of one another." Vol. 1, ch. 3.

Mosheim: "During a great part of this [second] century 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 "Ch. 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. □

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the Scriptures, whose spirit and meaning, whose deep and rich treasures of truth are unfolded and made plain to an unusual degree. Still more, if one has been divinely called to this work, there will soon rise a conviction of the fact in the minds of others. And further: If one is divinely called to preach the gospel, Providence will open ways of preparation for the work. Precisely what that fitting preparation may be, it is impossible here to tell. It should be the best that can be secured.

The Source of Ministerial Authority

Whence does the minister derive his authority for the exercise of ministerial functions? Not from the church, for no church holds in itself any such authority to bestow. Not from a council, since councils possess no ecclesiastical authority. Not from the state, for the state has no right of interference in matters of faith and conscience, and possesses no control over ecclesiastical affairs. The minister, therefore, derives his credentials from no human source, but directly from Christ, the great head of the church, by the witness and endowment which he has received from the Holy Spirit.

All that a church or a council can properly do is to recognize and express approval of a man's entering the ministry. The force of ordination is simply a recognition and sanction, in a public and impressive manner, of what is believed to be the divine appointment of the candidate to the sacred office. The object of church and council action is not to impart either ability or authority to preach the gospel, for these they cannot give; but to ascertain whether such ability and authority have been divinely given, and if so, to approve their public exercise.

Qualifications for the Ministry

It is not to be expected that of all men the minister alone will be perfect. And yet in no other man is a near approach to perfection so imperative as in him. Of all men, he should prayerfully strive with God's help to have as few faults and as many excellencies as possible. For in no other man do they count for so much, either for or against truth and righteousness, as in him.

He should be a man of good physical health. This counts for vastly more, even in a spiritual point of view, than is usually supposed. If he is not physically fit, he should, by careful self-

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prove that Peter was never a pope at Rome or anywhere else... the overwhelming supposition is that Peter was never at any time in Rome... There is nothing in the New Testament to suggest that Peter ever thought that he was a pope, or that anyone else ever thought so... But even were it granted that Peter was at Rome and that he was a pope, the Roman Catholic hierarchy has by faith and practice forfeited its right to be called a Scriptural church."

If, as Dr. Tull asserts, with Ridpath, world-renowned historian, and others to corroborate him, the Roman papacy was actually accomplished by Gregory the Great, whose pontificate extended from A.D. 590 to 604, then Gregory the Great may be termed the founder of the Catholic Church. True, it is admitted that the Roman apostasy began long before this, but we may rightfully attribute the real formation of the papacy — the real crystallization into a fixed hierarchy — to Gregory the Great, under whose pontificate the "Supremacy of the Apostolic See was asserted and maintained."

To illustrate: It is a well-known fact that David during his reign over Israel, collected vast quantities of materials for the building of a temple. It was his work that in a sense made the temple possible. Yet we do not attribute the temple to David, but to Solomon, his successor, under whose reign the structure was actually erected. Similarly the heresies, traditions, heathenish practices, and indeed all of the elements necessary, had accrued one by one and were in existence at the time of Gregory the Great. It only remained for him to elevate, as Ridpath puts it, "The episcopacy of Rome into a genuine papacy."

Let us now apply the historical test laid down by Jesus in Matthew 16:18. It is very evident that the Catholic Church, built by Gregory the Great from the existing paganized, apostate Material, five hundred and ninety years after Christ, cannot meet the historical test of Christ as to origin and perpetuity, and therefore is not the true church — the church which HE founded and promised should never cease to exist.

Origin of the Lutheran Church

The history of the world does not refer to the existence of a Lutheran, or Lutheran Church before the days of Luther. That he was the founder of the Lutheran Church none can successfully deny. Luther, revolting against the degeneracy of the Catholic Church, organized a movement for reform. There is no historical evidence that he even thought of breaking with the Catholic Church and forming a new one. But his activities brought down upon him the anathema of excommunication, and Luther and his followers were almost forced into forming a new organization. The year 1520 is the very earliest date that can be assigned to the formation of the Lutheran Church. It was in this year, according to McGlothlin (*Guide to Study of Church History*), that Luther burned the bull of papal excommunication and openly defied the pope. It was not, however, until the year 1530 that the system of doctrine and morality which he and his followers had adopted was presented to the Diet of Augsburg.

It cannot be but evident that the Lutheran Church founded by Martin Luther, 1,523 years or thereabouts after Christ, fails to meet the historical test of Christ as to origin and perpetuity, hence cannot be the church, which He founded.

The Church of England, Or Episcopal Church

The origin of this church is very clearly and succinctly summed up by Dr. S. E. Tull, in his booklet before mentioned, in the following words: "In 1509 Henry the Eighth was crowned King of England. Henry was only twelve years of age at the time. He was married the same year to Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and widow of his brother, Arthur. Twenty years later than this, when Henry came to exercise his own prerogative in personal matters, he decided to divorce Catherine and to marry Ann Boleyn, an English girl who had been reared at the court of Charles the Fifth of France. This question of Henry's divorce

raised a great discussion, which was finally carried to the Pope of Rome for settlement. The Pope decided against Henry. Realizing the political impotence of the Pope to interfere in England's political matters, Henry thereupon took matters in his own hands, and proceeded to put away Catherine and to marry Ann, notwithstanding the Pope's pronounced interdiction. This defiance of the Pope caused Henry's excommunication from the Church by Pope Clement the Seventh, 1534. Accepting the situation as an opportunity to rid himself completely of all political alliances with the Pope, Henry immediately convened his Parliament, and on November 23rd of the same year, 1534, caused his Parliament to pass an act known as "The Act of Supremacy," which declared Henry the Eighth to be "The Protector and Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England." Thus it was that on the 23rd of November, 1534, the "Church of England" was set up, with the profligate, adulterous, murderous Henry as its founder and head. Brought into existence in a day by the power of a political fiat, the Episcopal Church started on its career as a "Christian" denomination.

Of the church mentioned above, Macauley writes as follows (*History of England*, Vol. 1, p. 32): "Henry the Eighth attempted to constitute an Anglican Church differing from the Roman Catholic Church on the point of supremacy, and on that point alone. His success in this attempt was extraordinary."

Can anything be clearer than that the Church of England, or Episcopal Church, founded not by Christ, but by Henry the Eighth, 1,534 years after Christ, fails to meet the test as to origin and perpetuity, hence cannot be the true church?

Origin of the Presbyterian Church

"The success of Luther's Protestantism on the Continent gave liberty for other like movements. John Calvin, who was born in the year 1509, the same year that Henry the Eighth was crowned King of England, who was educated a Catholic monk, joined hands with Luther and aided the Reformation. In some respects Calvin's ideas of both doctrine and polity were different from those of Luther. For this reason, Calvin's reform fell into distinct channels and crystallized into an independent organization, and because of their form of government, Calvinists became known as Presbyterians."

We may date the beginning of the Presbyterian Church as a separate denomination in the year 1536, as it was in this year that "Calvin's Institutes" was given to the world.

It follows quite naturally that the Presbyterian Church, founded by John Calvin, 1,536 years after Christ, cannot meet the historical test of Christ and cannot be the true church — the one that Jesus founded and promised to perpetuate.

The Congregationalists

The Lutherans, Episcopalians and Presbyterians constitute the three great Catholic-Protestant denominations. There are in existence two great denominations, who protested from the Episcopalians, and consequently are the offspring of the Episcopal Church. Let us briefly consider the facts relating to their origin. I quote from Tull's excellent tract: "There lived in England in 1580 an Episcopal preacher by the name of Robert Brown. He started a movement in opposition to the State Church, in which he advocated a congregational form of church government and greatly opposed sacerdotalism. He got a following who called themselves "Independents." Robert Brown organized the first Independent church in 1580. Afterwards Brown repented, made confession of his mistake, went back to the Church of England and died in that faith. His followers, however, continued the movement, and became known as "Congregationalists."

Having been founded by Robert Brown 1,580 years after Christ, the Congregationalist Church fails to meet the historical test imposed by Christ and cannot successfully claim to be the true church of Christ.

Origin of the Methodism

LET US NEXT CONSIDER THE OTHER Protestant movement that arose in the Episcopal Church — the one that has in the course of time come to be known as the “The Methodist Episcopal Church.” This movement was led by John Wesley and his brother Charles. While in Oxford University they, by their regular habits of religious study and work, earned for themselves the designation of “methodists,” which later attached itself to the movement originated by them. Wesley never intended to organize a church, and indeed did not even dignify his organization by the name church, but called it a “Society.” Neither of the Wesleys ever-affirmed the right to start a church, and as a matter of fact both of them died members of the Episcopal Church.

With reference to the origin of Methodism, we find the following statement in the “Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church” (1912 edition): “In 1729 two young men in England, reading the Bible, saw that they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it and incited others to do so... God then thrust them out to raise a holy people. This was the RISE of Methodism, as given in the words of its FOUNDERS, John and Charles Wesley... Throughout England and in Scotland and Ireland, arose united SOCIETIES of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness. These subsequently became the Wesleyan churches of Great Britain.” Again, referring to Methodism in the early days of its history in the United States, we find these words on page 16 of the same Discipline: “The parish clergy had mostly returned to England and the Methodist SOCIETIES were without ordained pastors for hundreds of miles together.”

It may be seen from these quotations that Methodism at first did not assume to express itself in the form of a church, but was a society within the Episcopal Church. It did not start on a separate denominational existence until the year 1739, according to Dr. McGlothlin in his “Guide.” It was in this year that the first class meeting was held. However, the first conference was not held until five years later.

The question here arises, If the Methodist Society had a right to evolve into a Church, why may not any church society of the present day do the same? They assuredly have as much right. Again, this question comes: If Luther, Calvin, the Wesleys and others had the right to found a church, have not you and I an equal right to do the same? Again, this question: How old must a movement or society become before it can properly evolve into a “Church”?

But to return to the origin of Methodism, it ought not be difficult to see that the Methodist Church, or “Society” as it was formerly called, founded by John Wesley about 1,740 years after Christ, in no wise meets Christ’s test as to origin and perpetuity, and cannot be the true church of Christ.

Origin of the Campbellite Denomination

It scarcely seems necessary to take the space to detail the origin of this sect, since it is of such recent origin that it would be absurd for anyone to claim for them apostolic origin. Indeed, I am personally acquainted with individuals who knew Alexander Campbell, and remember many incidents connected with the early days of his church, which is more commonly known today by the name “The Christian Church.” The date of the beginning of the Campbellites or “Christians” as a separate denomination cannot well be fixed earlier than 1827, although, ignoring the facts of history, they date their origin a few years earlier than the date I have just given. However, a few years makes no difference so far as we are concerned in this discussion. I remember quite well that just a few years ago this denomination with great enthusiasm, all over the land, celebrated their one hundredth anniversary! To accept their own date, they are only slightly over a hundred years old. Yet, I remember to have seen carved on the cornerstone of one of their large church buildings, a statement to the effect that they trace their origin to the time of Jesus and the apostles. Strange statement indeed in the light of their own ad-

mission!

Since they had a human founder and are of modern origin, it is quite evident that they do not meet Christ’s test and are not the true church.

I could go on and make mention of the Mormons, Christian Scientists, Seventh Day Adventists, Russellites, Nazarenes, “Holy Rollers” and others, and detail their origin, but it would be entirely superfluous. It is sufficient to say that each of these just mentioned, together with all the numerous other smaller sects, have had human founders and were never heard of for more than a thousand years after Christ.

What About The Baptists?

We have shown that every sect, denomination, and so-called church, Baptist alone excepted, can be traced to a human founder, and originated long after Christ started His church. Plainly all of these being of post-apostolic origin, are eliminated. Just as when in the illustration you looked in every book save one and failing to find the document, knew that it must be in the one remaining, so when every church save one fails to qualify historically as the true church of Christ, it is but right and logical to conclude that the remaining church is the institution that Christ founded. Baptist churches are unique and clearly distinguished from all others in that no one can truly point to anyone as the human founder. Neither can the date be fixed for their beginning this side of Christ. Some have tried it, and their disagreements and contradictions constitute prima facie evidence of their historical inaccuracy. Those who would deny that Baptists date back to Christ, and who would assign them a modern origin, ought to hold council together and agree on some certain date! Otherwise their contradictory statements are liable to prejudice people in favor of the very thing they deny!

In succeeding chapters, I shall offer historical proof to substantiate my statement that Baptists alone have had existence from the time of Christ. As Dr. Tull puts it: “The first Baptist church was organized by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, during His personal ministry on the earth. The Baptist church has Jesus for its Founder, the Holy Spirit for the Administrator of its activities, the New Testament for its articles of faith and laws of being. Throughout the Christian ages, pure Baptist teaching has survived. The ‘gates of Hell’ have not and shall not prevail against it.” □

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training in regard to diet, exercise, and otherwise, strive for improvement. It must not, however, be understood as saying that a man manifestly called of God to the work, should not undertake it because he does not enjoy robust health. Some of the most godly and useful ministers who have ever blessed the world and the churches, have not been vigorous.

Moreover, the minister should be a Christian gentleman in the best sense of that term, courteous, considerate, gentle, generous, and kind to all. There is no excuse for a minister’s being rude, boorish, and indifferent to the feelings or comfort of others.

But those special qualifications named by the Apostle, and detailed in the epistles to Timothy and Titus (1 Tim., chap. 3; Titus, chap. 1), should be insisted on by both churches and ordaining councils. According to these inspired specifications, the bishop or pastor should be “blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own house.” (1 Tim. 3:2-4) .□

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THE MASTER'S PROMISE

TAKE*n* FROM *THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT*,

Chapter 4

By Roy Mason

In the preceding articles I have shown that Jesus, during the period of His personal ministry, organized and began His church. I have further shown that the church which He began was not an ethereal, invisible, universal, unorganized something without either function or mission, but that it was the local assembly, entrusted with the greatest task that was ever given to any institution on this earth.

So, having in existence the church, and having in mind a clear idea as to what kind it is, we are ready for the further question proposed at the beginning, namely, Did Jesus Promise Its Perpetuity?

Unquestionably He did.

In the same passage where we have our Lord's first mention of the church we find the promise that "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

None will deny that these words constitute a promise of the church's perpetuity. Dr. J. W. Porter says (*World's Debt to Baptists*): "If these words teach anything, they teach that the churches instituted by Christ and the apostles would never die, but would reproduce and multiply and perpetuate themselves to the end of all time." Of the passage, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Dr. Nowlin says (*Fundamentals of the Faith*), "Referring no doubt to its indestructibility."

But lest we should be led to depend too much upon the passage just referred to, let us ask, Is there anything else in the Scriptures that would warrant us in believing that Christ meant to perpetuate His church? The answer is, we find abundant evidence of this. Let us look at some of the proof:

"First, the Kingdom of God, as all will agree, is to be perpetuated "until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ." (Rev. 11:15). In Luke we have this statement: "Of His kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:33). How, let us ask, is the kingdom of God to be extended and advanced in the world? The answer is, by the church which Jesus founded. Men get into the kingdom of God by being born into it. This spiritual birth comes about through personal faith in the Son of God as Saviour. It is the church that preaches the Good News of the Son of God. Through the church's message men hear, believe, and are born into God's kingdom. Thus the church stands in the position of a recruiting agency for the kingdom of God, since no one gets into the kingdom except as they hear and believe the gospel, which has been preserved and is proclaimed by the church.

So, in summing up we state it this way: the Bible teaches that the kingdom of God is to be perpetuated. It shows that the church is Christ's divinely purposed instrumentality for the advancement and perpetuation of the kingdom. This being true, the Bible's teaching as to the perpetuity of the kingdom involves as a matter of course the perpetuity of the agency through which the kingdom is to be perpetuated — namely — the church.

Again, when Christ gave the Great Commission to His disciples, as has been shown, He addressed them not simply as individuals, but as individuals constituting His church. To the Commission He added the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Manifestly, if the church at any time ceased to exist, Christ's promise would become of none effect. To be with the church always, or more properly, "all the days," necessarily means that there must always, every day, until the end of the age, be in existence the church to which the promise was given!

Then again, all of the great denominations, so far as I can ascertain, agree that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance. Now, when Jesus instituted and gave this ordinance to His church to be observed, He said: "This do in remembrance of me... as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the

THE BIBLE, OUR ONLY RULE OF FAITH

By Ben Bogard

The Bible is the all sufficient rule of faith and practice, and it is as much a rule of practice as it is of faith.

The commission given by our Master in Matt. 28:19-20, commands the church to "teach ... all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The specification of one thing in law is the prohibition of everything else. Since what the church is to teach is specified, "all things whatsoever I have commanded," it follows that all things not commanded are forbidden. It follows that the church is shut up to the things commanded. There is therefore no place for the exercise of private opinion except it be in our effort to understand the things commanded. Any doctrine or institution that is outside of the purview of the Scriptures is wrong.

In 2 Tim. 3:16-17 we read: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

If this is true, and to dispute it is to contradict the words of inspiration, it follows that we are "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Then we do not need to invent plans for work, since the Scriptures "thoroughly furnished us unto all good works." If the work we propose to do is good we can learn all about it in the Scriptures for "the man of God is thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

From these passages we are compelled to conclude that there must be a "thus saith the Lord" for all we do. We dare not organize a church, a prayer meeting, a convention, an association, a school, a board, a committee, an evangelistic movement, or anything else without a "thus saith the Lord," because the Scriptures "thoroughly furnished us unto all good works," and we are to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," no more no less.

By the Scriptures, the all sufficient rule of faith and practice, must every doctrine and every truth be tried. If it be allowed that reason or sanctified common sense shall determine in matters of faith and practice, it shall still be an open question as to whose reason and whose sanctified common sense shall make the decision. If reason or common sense shall be the rule of any part of faith and practice then it is certain that we shall see division, contention, strife. Let the Bible be the rule of faith and practice and our only difficulty shall be understanding our rule.

The primary difference between Baptists and Roman Catholics is that Baptists contend that the Scriptures are the all sufficient rule of faith and practice, while the Catholics deny this and claim that reason, or sanctified common sense, of the church should be the rule of faith and practice,

If Baptists forsake this cardinal and fundamental principle, it shall not be long until they shall cease to be Baptists. They shall be at sea without chart or compass.

Concerning what the Scriptures teach concerning the Way of Salvation, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Church Polity, Missions, and Providence. While we hear the Word of God on these subjects, let us remember that this Word is the only and all sufficient rule of faith and practice. □

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 Lord's death TILL HE COME." Most certainly if the doing of a thing is to be perpetuated, the doers of that thing must be perpetuated also. If the observance of the Lord's Supper is to be perpetuated until Christ comes again, then obviously the church to which He gave the ordinance must, in the very nature of the case, be perpetuated too. There is no escape from this conclusion! □