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### Facts Concerning The Church Christ Built According to the New Testament Scriptures

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W. F. Church Leaders  
Westapher, Clarence A.

# FACTS

## CONCERNING THE CHURCH CHRIST BUILT

According to the  
New Testament  
Scriptures

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## SOME FACTS

### Concerning the Church of Christ

Is the church of Christ any different from the other churches? What excuse has it for its existence? When did it begin? What does it believe? To answer these questions briefly and clearly is the purpose of this booklet.

### Why Do We Exist?

The object of our existence is not to add another sect to the many denominations now existing. A divided church is contrary to the teaching of Christ and his apostles. (1 Cor. 1:10, 11; John 17:21). The world will never be converted to Christianity as long as party names are promulgated. The prayer of Jesus makes Christian unity essential to the evangelization of the world, (John 17:). The teachings of the apostles, the condition of Christendom and the desire of hosts of Christians demand the laying aside of doctrines and dogmas of men and a return to the church as it was in the days of Christ's apostles.

### The Plea

1. To exalt Christ above party and His word above all human creeds.
2. To build churches of Christ without denominational names, man-written creeds, or other barriers to Christian unity; whose terms of fellowship shall be identical with the conditions of salvation as recorded in the New Testament Scriptures.
3. The restoration of primitive Christianity and consequent union of

all the followers of Christ in one body. (John 17:21).

4. To lead the unconverted to Christ into the clear light of the New Testament teaching and example.

5. To honor Christ by wearing the name "Christian," which is Scriptural and is universally loved, respected and accepted.

6. The term, "church of Christ," is scriptural, as are several others used by the Holy Spirit to indicate the church is the body of Christ.

7. The New Testament as the divine and authoritative rule of faith and practice, and therefore the only standard of appeal.

#### The Only Practical Way

The only practical way to bring this plea to all people is to plant New Testament churches which teach and preach these things everywhere. (Give the people actual examples of non-sectarian preaching, show them non-sectarian churches, give all people a chance to be Scripturally baptized, wear a Scriptural name, and belong to a Scriptural church.)

"Where the Bible speaks we speak, and where the Bible is silent we are silent."

#### The New Testament; Our Creed

Would that all human creeds and confessions of faith were abolished. All human creeds have come out of controversy. The Bible alone is an all sufficient guide and rule of faith for the practice of Christians. The Christian's creed, the one thing all are asked to believe, is found in the Bible. If the

man-made creed is less than the Bible, it contains too little. If it is more than the Bible, it contains too much. If it is identical with the Bible, it is needless. (If it has been taken from the Sacred writings let it be put back where it belongs.) The divine creed (which needs no revision) is found in Matt. 16:16. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is indeed the creed of the church of Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 3:11). Those who would lay other foundations, threaten the ruin of the superstructure. Paul said: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2). Jesus is the Saviour of the world, and to Him all authority is given. (Matt. 28:18). He is our King, Advocate, Good Shepherd, the Light, the Truth, the Way. The only test of Christian fellowship is Christ. He is the creed of the New Testament church.

#### The Church Established

"You, replied Simon Peter, are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, said Jesus; for mere human nature has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are (Petros)." (A small rock, masculine gender which refers to Peter); "and that upon this (Petra)" (a bed-rock, large enough to support a superstructure, feminine gender and refers to Peter's confession) "I will build my church" (future tense) "and the might of Hades shall not triumph over it." When shall this church which Jesus said



will be built upon Peter's good confession, be established? After Peter's confession and only a few days before the crucifixion, Jesus said: "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." (Luke 22:18). In Mark 9:1, Jesus said, "there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." When did this power come? After His resurrection Christ said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit came with power on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2:1-4).

### **The Beginning of the Church**

Any religious organization which began either before or after the day of Pentecost, did not begin when Jesus said it should begin. Moreover, if any system of religion did not begin in Jerusalem, it did not begin where Jesus said the salvation which is from the Jews should begin. You remember that He said unto them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:46, 47.

### **The Church of Christ**

Was perfectly established at the right time and place by Jewish leadership under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8. Christ said: "Upon this rock, (the great truth of the divinity of

Christ), I will build my church (singular number), and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16:18. This Christ did on the first Pentecost after His resurrection and ascension in 33 A. D. Isa. 2:1-3. Mic. 4:1-2. Acts 2. On that day Peter said to the people, "Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins," and when they obeyed Christ's commands, they became such as should be saved and God added them to the church. Acts 2:47. They were not added by man's will or vote. The Ethiopian nobleman got into the church the same way that the three thousand entered on the birthday of the church. He heard the truth about salvation, believed it, was baptized into Christ and went on his way rejoicing. Acts 8:35-39.

### **The Organization of the Church**

The church of Christ, at the first, was a unit and very simple in its organization. Christendom today is separated into about two hundred and sixteen bodies, sects or sections, with many forms of organization that are often very complex and confusing. The New Testament description of the organization of the primitive church is clear and unmistakable. There were apostles, prophets, elders, deacons and evangelists.

The Apostles and Prophets were divinely qualified for their work, being miraculously endowed. Their work under the Holy Spirit was to organize and set the church in order for its great mission throughout the gospel dispensation. Their ministry is continuous

They have had no successors. From the New Testament they still speak to us as plainly as language can express it, and with as much authority as they had in their day. The plan of church organization submitted by the head of the church, in coordination with the Father and the Holy Spirit and at the hands of the apostles, has not been changed by divine authority. The apostles and prophets of the New Testament age were supernaturally endowed, and the founder of the church ordained them for a perpetual ministry. Their work was to proclaim the living oracles, which they did at the first, orally, and which they are now doing in the printed pages of the Bible.

**The Evangelists.** The work of the evangelists proclaims the apostles' teaching. (Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 2:2, 4:15).

**The Elders.** The apostles provided that each congregation should have a plurality of elders (Acts 11:30), not a plurality of congregations for one elder. No elder has any right to exercise authority over other congregations nor over the elders of other places; moreover, no elder is to be exalted over his fellow elders. The life of an elder should adorn Biblical teaching.

**The Deacons.** The first deacons were chosen in the church in Jerusalem. (Acts 6:1-6). The work of elders and deacons is of high spiritual quality. (1 Tim. 3:8-13). No other kind of church organization is revealed in our Bible. This plan originated with God, and has never been changed by His approval. The early congregations were independent of each other and yet they were

under strong spiritual ties. There were no ecclesiasticisms, and no grouping of congregations under one man or set of men. In the Scriptural organization we see the glory and dignity of the church.

The church of Christ is a divine institution, built by the glorified head of the church, a spiritual body consisting of all Christians; those who have been born again and who have been purchased by the blood of Christ. Acts 20:28. The word church comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning "the called-out-ones," or "the assembly." As the assembly of Christ, it has been called out and separated from the world. Hence, a called-out assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. The church of Christ today is patterned after the New Testament which is the only guide book authorizing its existence. In the Scriptures the word church sometimes has reference to all the saved, and at other times it refers to the worshippers meeting in one place. The glorified Lord uses the church to accomplish among men His gracious ministry. The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:15). It is the servant through which the manifold wisdom of God is made known to a dying world. (Eph. 3:10). The church of the New Testament is the greatest institution known to man. The church is called the "house" of God. (Heb. 10:21); "the temple of God," (1 Cor. 3:16); "a spiritual house," (1 Pet. 2:5); "the flock of God," (1 Pet. 5:2); "the body of Christ," (Col. 1:24); "the church of God," (Eph. 3:10). The churches at different places make up "the churches of Christ," (Rom. 16:16). All these names show divine wisdom



and origin and they show that Christ is the head.

His Name. The church is His body, and should wear his name. (Col. 1:24; Eph. 4:12). The church is His bride and the bride should wear the groom's name. (Rev. 21:9 and 22:17). By divine appointment the above terms were applied to the church in the beginning. No true church would apply any other. Man is forbidden to add to them, to take away, or substitute something else. Party names are mentioned in the Word, only to be condemned. (1 Cor. 1:10-13 and 1 Cor. 3:4). The church of Christ has Scriptural names and it is the only church that existed nineteen hundred years ago.

Name of Members. The New Testament teaches that those who became the followers of Jesus were called disciples. (Acts 9:10); in their relation to one another, they were known as brethren. (Gal. 6:1); in their relation to the unsaved, they were saints. (Rom. 8:27); in their relation to the Father, they were His adopted children. (Rom. 9:8). In the Scriptures, "disciples" is not a name of the members of the church, not more than is "believers" or "brethren," "saints," "friends," "children," "branches" or "sheep." The "new name" (not names), which the mouth of the Lord named. (Isa. 62:2). The only Scriptural name is "Christians." Acts 11:26. No other name honors Christ as our Saviour. "No other name under heaven \* \* \* wherein we must be saved." (Acts 4:12). To be a member of His glorious church and identified with the body of Christ is the greatest privilege

which can come to any man. Let us appreciate it and live such lives as shall adorn the doctrine and make beautiful the glorious and dignified church which belongs to Christ.

The New Testament teaches that the children of God should be known simply as Christians. Luke says: "The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." (Acts 11:26). Peter says: "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf." (1 Pet. 4:16): Paul says in 1 Cor. 1:12, 13 and 3:4, 5, that party names are wrong.

### Church Government

The government in the church of Christ is simple and perfect and will endure for all time, because it is like the description given in the word of God. A divinely organized church does not need a man-made law to govern its members. The dignity of the church demands that a divine institution must have a divine creed that will endure. (Matt. 16:16). No other is necessary. Man-made creeds are ignoble and cause man-made divisions. Christ built His church. (Matt. 16:18). Man has no right to legislate therein. All authority has been given to Christ and He governs the church which is His body. No elder, deacon, evangelist or committee has any authority over the church of the living God.

### How to Enter the Church

The expression, "joining the church," is not found in the New Testament. In the early church, men asked what to do

to be saved. They were told by the apostles what to do, and when they did what the apostles requested, the Lord added them to His church. (Acts 2:47). In plain English the thing to do in this age, is to do what the Lord says to do to be saved and God will add the penitent baptized believer to the right church, and the right church is His church. Then it is our duty and privilege to stay added to the church, and not leave it for anything else. We should belong to the church, because, if we fail to do that which brings us into the church, we have failed to do what we must do to be saved.

Another expression, "opening the doors of the church," is not found in the sacred writings. Christ the good shepherd of the flock (which is the church), (John 10:1-2; Acts 20:28), is the door. "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." To enter the church by Christ the door, the meaning is, we must enter by His authority, for all authority is given unto Him. (Matt. 28:18). The first proclamation of the full gospel occurred on the day of Pentecost. It was on this occasion in the city of Jerusalem that the terms of the great commission were first put into effect, viz: By faith, repentance, confession and baptism, on our part, and the blood of Christ on God's part, we enter God's family, the body of Christ, "the church of the Lord," God doing the adding. Thus we see the glory, the simplicity and the dignity of entering the "church of the Lord." Christ has the right to make the terms of admission into His

church. He has all authority and He is the door. His conditions of membership are all embodied in the great commission. Surely no man has a right to add to, or take from these conditions which Christ decreed through His apostles. In the plainest terms Christ prescribed the conditions on which men are saved, and these requirements are easily understood and it is not difficult to do just what He requires. The laws of admission into the New Testament church are identical with the steps in conversion.

1. Faith—"So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17). "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." John 20:30, 31). In this fine passage are three important facts: (A) Faith comes by hearing the gospel. (B) We are asked to believe not in dogmas or theories of men, but in Christ (C) The purpose of this faith is to give us life. (John 3:15).

2. Repentance—"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Lu. 24:47). "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out," etc. (Acts 3:19). "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30). "Except ye re-



pent ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3).

3. Confession—"And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:16). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus the Lord Jesus and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead thou shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9, 10, and 1 Tim. 6:12, 13).

4. Baptism—The penitent person in search of salvation, having believed on Christ, repented of sin, and confessed the Saviour before men, is now ready to obey the positive command of baptism unto the remission of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. All the references in the New Testament concerning conversion, when taken together, will convince the unbeliever that he must believe, repent, confess Jesus and be baptized.

There has been much controversy over baptism, and especially about three points, viz., the action, the design and the subjects; that is, what constitutes the act of baptism, what is its purpose, and who are the proper subjects?

None of these questions agitated the mind of the early church. There was no doubt nor disputation. Every disciple of Christ knew that the act of baptism is immersion, that its design is the remission of sins and that its subjects are penitent believers.

Substitutes for the Scriptural act, the

doctrine of non-importance of the sacred ordinance, and the practice of infant baptism, are inventions of man.

Baptism is a positive, divine command, and the Holy Spirit has given us neither substitute nor mode, but simply immersion. By looking at the diagram on pages 16 and 17 you will notice at the headings of the columns the words sprinkling and pouring, but they are written as unscriptural terms only. Baptism is nothing more nor less than baptism. Sprinkling is sprinkling and pouring is pouring. If the Holy Spirit had commanded sprinkling, the Greek word for sprinkling (*rantizo*) would have been used, or for pouring, the Greek word, *cheo*, would have been written, but these words are not found in the New Testament accounts of conversion.

Infant baptism is not only unscriptural but it is anti-scriptural. It is not only without authorization in God's Word, but it is in direct conflict with the New Testament.

In the church of Christ there are two ordinances only, viz., Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are not church ordinances, for they were instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ prior to Pentecost, A. D. 33, the birthday of the church of Christ. Therefore they are ordinances of Christ, not of the church militant. The apostles under divine inspiration brought them over into the church, and following their example and the Lord's command, the two ordinances are binding upon His people today.

Every New Testament account of conversion either commands or mentions baptism. Jesus considered it important enough that He walked about 60 miles

<b>Scriptural Baptism</b>	<b>Holy Spirit Baptism</b>	<b>Pouring and Sprinkling</b>	<b>Immersion</b>
<b>Requires</b> A Willing Subject.	<b>Requires</b>	<b>Require</b> A willing Subject	<b>Requires</b> A Willing Subject.
A Human Administrator.—Matt. 28:19.		A Human Administrator.	A Human Administrator.—Matt. 28:19.
Water.—Acts 8:36.		Water.	Water.—Acts 8:36.
Much Water.—John 3:23.			Much Water.—John 3:23.
Going Down Into the Water.—Acts 8:38.			Going Down Into the Water.—Acts 8:38.
The Likeness of a Birth.—John 3:5.			The Likeness of a Birth.—John 3:5.
The Likeness of a Burial.—Rom. 6:4.			The Likeness of a Burial.—Rom. 6:4.
The Likeness of a Resurrection.—Col. 2:12.			The Likeness of a Resurrection.—Col. 2:12.
A Washing of the Body in Pure Water.—Heb. 10:22.			A Washing of the Body in Pure Water.—Heb. 10:22.
A Coming Up Out of the Water.—Acts 8:39.			A Coming Up Out of the Water.—Acts 8:39.
A Good Conscience. 1 Pet. 3:21.		A Deceived Conscience.—2 Tim. 3:13.	A Good Conscience. —1 Pet. 3:21.
Rejoicing —Acts 8:39.			Rejoicing. —Acts 8:39.

It will be seen at a glance that pouring and sprinkling have little in common with the requirements of the Bible in Christian baptism. But immersion is identical with the requirements of the Great Commission and the New Testament.



to be baptized in the Jordan River.  
(Mark 1:9-11.)

### The Meaning of the Word Baptism

If with a common-school education we would read carefully the common English New Testament, we would understand the meaning of the word baptism, and without the knowledge of either Greek or Latin. As the word baptism is a Greek word anglicized (that is, the word spelled with English letters), let us imagine we never saw or heard the word before; and that we know nothing about its meaning. Now let us read the following passages of Scripture and see if we can learn what is God's will concerning Christian baptism.

In Matt. 28:19, we learn that baptism is for "all the nations." It is to be a universal practice, and it is to be done "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." And as it reads, "Go ye and baptize," then Scriptural baptism according to Matt. 28:19 requires a human administrator. We now turn to the diagram, pages 16 and 17, and under the head of Scriptural baptism, the baptism of which we write, requires a human administrator. Let us compare the other three columns. First: Holy Spirit baptism. In Mark 1:8 we read, "I baptize you with water; but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit." But this privilege of baptizing with the Holy Spirit belonged to the Lord himself and His authority was not delegated to any human. Hence we will have to leave the space under Holy Spirit baptism blank, as it does not require a

human administrator, but a divine. This can not be the baptism to which Christ referred in his commission to His disciples. Passing to the other two columns we all know that sprinkling, pouring and immersion require a human administrator, so we fill them in correspondingly.

The Great Commission: Mark 16:15-16 reads: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Here we find two new thoughts. First, baptism is to be preceded by belief, and second, salvation is promised.

The Great Commission: Luke 24:46, 47 reads: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Here are two more new thoughts connected with the act of Christian baptism, viz., repentance and remission of sins. (See Acts 2:38.)

In Acts 8:36 we read. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Well, there is another thing we learn about it: that water is the element used in this ordinance, as commanded by Christ and practiced by the apostles. We will now write the word water under the requirement of Scriptural baptism. As water is not



necessary in Holy Spirit baptism, we will leave that space blank, while the other two, sprinkling, pouring and immersion all require water, we will fill them in correspondingly.

For further information turn to John 8:23. "John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there": and this shows that he wanted "much water" with which to baptize. This, however, is a very vague expression. A pitcherful is much compared to a cupful; a barrellful is much compared to a pitcherful; and a riverful is much compared to a barrellful. However, under the head of Scriptural requirements we will write, "much water;" and as Holy Spirit baptism does not require water, we leave that space blank. Sprinkling and pouring do not require much water, so that space remains blank; but immersion does require much water, so we fill in that column. We admit that it was John's baptism that required much water in John 3:23, but the same Greek word for baptize in this verse is the same word used in Matt. 28:19.

In Acts 8:38 we read: "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Thus we learn that Scriptural baptism requires "going down into the water," hence we write it in the first column. The next two columns do not require "going down" and we leave them blank. Under the head of immersion we write, "going down into the water," because immersion requires it.

John 3:5. "Jesus answered, verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The preposition used recalls the phrase, baptize—plunge—in water, in Spirit, Matt. 3:11. So that the image suggested is that of rising, re-born out of the water and out of the spiritual element, so to speak, to which the water outwardly corresponds. We may say, the water symbolizes purification, and the Spirit, quickening. We can readily see that it is possible for a person to be born of water and the Spirit at the same time. This is the divinely appointed way for mankind to enter the Kingdom of God, the church. Now we can understand why it was necessary to go down into the water.—Acts 8:38. A person must be in a thing before he can be born of it. This also explains John 3:23, why much water was needed. A person can not be born of anything smaller than himself.

There are three things that greatly interest a community—a death, a birth and a marriage. Baptism represents the three combined. The death of our old self of sin and its burial, the birth of an individual into the new kingdom, and the wedding of a soul to Christ. And there is the pledge thus symbolized of our resurrection from the dead.

Rom. 6:3, 4. "Are ye ignorant that all ye who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death." We learn-

ed before that the baptizer and the candidate for baptism both went down into the water, and while there the baptizing was done in water. Now we learn that they were buried, and as water was the element used, we must conclude that the penitent believer was buried in the water. That explains, at last, the action of New Testament baptism. But if we bury a man in water and leave him there, he will drown. But he is not to be left there, for "Jesus came up straightway out of the water." Philip and the eunuch "came up out of the water." Let us read a little further. "That like as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."

Col. 2:12. "Having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Here we see that baptism is a temporary burial in water and not a permanent one. Jesus was buried in the tomb, and on the third morning came up.

"Having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye were raised with Him," makes our burial in water a representation of His burial in the tomb, and our rising from the water, of His rising from the dead. Could the Word of God make any clearer every move in that sacred act called baptism? This burial explains some of the Scriptures we have read previously. It explains why a river like the Jordan was used instead of some smaller water.

It explains why much water was needed at Aenon—enough to bury men. It explains why, previous to the baptism, they went down into the water. They could not bury a man without doing so. It also explains why, at the termination of it, they also came up out of the water.

In our repentance we died with Christ, and, in our baptism, we were buried with Him, and since death has no more dominion over Christ, and He dieth no more, just so, death has no dominion over us, for we have died to sin and we have risen to walk with Christ in newness of life. This is why Jesus commands us to be baptized. In the first column we write the likeness of a burial and of a resurrection as requirements of Scriptural baptism. We must leave the next two spaces blank, but under immersion we write the likeness of a burial and a resurrection.

Another requirement is, "Washing of the body in pure water." (Heb. 10:22). "Let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and having our body washed with pure water." And I Cor. 6:11. We write this in the first column, and in the fourth under immersion, but the other two columns blank.

Now write under Scriptural baptism, "A good conscience." (1 Peter 3:21). "Corresponding to that figure, baptism now saves you—not the washing off of material defilement, but the craving of a good conscience after God."

Dear reader, have you received valid



baptism? Did the minister go with you down into the water? If you have been immersed, did you afterward regret it; and go to another minister to be sprinkled so as to have a clear conscience? Never! The scholarship of the world agrees that immersion is baptism, and baptism immersion.

In Acts 8:39 we learn that there was joy, for "The eunuch went on his way rejoicing." So under Scriptural baptism and also under immersion we write, "rejoicing," for in both, and in no other, is there universally a clear conscience and, consequently, joy.

#### Purpose of Baptism

For the washing away of sins. (Acts 22:16).

For the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38).

For the putting on of Christ. (Gal. 3:27).

The purpose of salvation. (1 Peter 3:19; Mark 16:16).

For the entering into the Kingdom. (John 3:3-5).

#### Who Should Be Baptized

Those who can be taught. (Matt. 28:19).

Those who hear and believe. (Acts 18:8).

Those who believe. (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 5:14).

Believers, both men and women. (Acts 8:12).

Those who repent. (Acts 2:38).

Those whose hearts are open unto the Lord. (Acts 16:13-15).

#### The Only Way Into His Kingdom

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."—Acts 2:47. The "saved," the "added," were the baptized penitent believers. Only those that were baptized got into the New Testament church.

Let us search the Scriptures so we may know the truth, rightly dividing the Word so that we may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in us.

On one occasion Jesus said: "If ye abide in my Word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Baptism is a positive and a divine command. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:19). We see that the New Testament is perfectly clear as to what constitutes the action of baptism. When we call Bible things by Bible names, we know we are safe, and when we are immersed we know that we have been scripturally baptized. By this method penitent believers entered the church on the day of Pentecost, and this method has never been changed by divine authority. Moreover, only the baptized entered the church. Baptism is the burial of a penitent believer in water and his being raised therefrom. (Rom. 6:4). Here, under the symbolism of a death, burial and resurrection, the whole plan of salvation is pictured in baptism. Baptism symbolizes our death to sin and the old life. Coming up out of water symbolizes our



resurrection to walk in the new life with Christ. From faith to baptism inclusive is conversion, and then all past sins are pardoned and the one converted is in the body of Christ, the church, the royal family of the universe. The above commands are Scriptural and wherever you find a body of people practicing these things, there you find a church following the New Testament order. Beware of imitations. Christ does not trifle with us. He did not issue commands to be obeyed or ignored at the whim of some man or set of men. He never established an ordinance which may be changed by the church at its discretion. There are no non-essentials in His wise and dignified plan of redemption. There is no Bible promise that God will save anyone who has neglected faith, repentance and baptism. Neither is there any promise that any person will be saved in any church which is not mentioned in the New Testament.

### The Mission of the Church

The church is the called-out assembly of God's people, the body of baptized believers, saved by grace, who are separated from the sin of the world, obedient and set apart to be the visible ministers of His grace and purpose to prepare mankind to be joint-heirs of His kingdom and glory. The passages of Scripture written by the Apostle Paul and others are evidences that the church of the New Testament was the perfect product of the mind of God and that it was completely equipped for the evangelization of the world. It was the divine purpose that it should be con-

tinued without change until the end of this gospel dispensation.

### How to Live in the Church

After one has been admitted into Christ's body, the church, he should "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Tit. 2:12.) Those in the church should grow in the Christian graces, by adding to faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. (2 Pet. 1:5-7). The New Testament is the Christian's all sufficient rule of faith and practice. The perfect law of the church. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching." The divine product: a redeemed people, equipped for service, reverent in worship, qualified for the life of the ages.

### Christian Unity

To obtain Christian unity let all who love truth more than party, unite on the ground on which the first Christians were united during the golden age of the church's purity and simplicity. The name Christian is of unifying power. Under no sectarian name can the followers of Christ become one as Christ and the Father are one. The sin of division existing in denominationalism has replaced the New Testament order of unity which existed in the church during the days of the inspired apostles.

### How Do We Get Salvation?

We all become children of God by that faith that leads us to be baptized into Christ. "Ye are all the children of

God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3:26, 27. No one ever got into the New Testament church until after having obeyed the above divine, positive commands of our Lord. Christ and His church are so closely related to each other that no human soul can come into Christ without that day and hour becoming a member of His church. When one comes up out of the water of Christian baptism, that one is in the church of Christ, and cannot get into any denomination without joining one in addition to Christ's commands and doing contrary to the precepts and examples given to us in the New Testament. The church of Christ in this twentieth century is the church of Christ on the first century divine pattern. Let us who are His disciples ever "Continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." (Acts 2:42.) And by adhering to this Scripture we will avoid sectarianism.

### Some Facts

The Gospel is the message proclaimed by the Lord's apostles and it consists of facts to be believed and accepted: the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Commands to be obeyed: faith, repentance and baptism. Promises to the obedient: remission of sins, gift of the Holy Spirit and eternal life.

In Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Neither in this scripture nor in any other part of the Bible did Jesus say:

He that believes is saved and may be baptized if the elders vote to take him into the church. Denominations come into being by adding to God's word. If all religious bodies would discard everything in their teaching and practice for which a "thus saith the Lord" cannot be produced, Christian unity would result and the Lord's prayer be answered. (John 17:21).

The ambition of men who love to hear themselves addressed as, "Reverend," "My Lord Bishop," "Archbishop," "Godfather," "Cardinal," etc., is contrary to the teaching of Jesus. The distinction between clergy and laity, is anti-scriptural. "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." (Mat. 23:8; Luke 22:25, 26).

The church which Christ built, is not just another denomination, neither is it a combination of any or all of the sects. Not one passage in the New Testament will justify any attempt to unite sects or denominations, for they are of men and have no divine authority. The real cause of denominationalism is lack of loyalty to Christ and respect for the authority of His word.

The church of Christ existed before there were any denominations and it exists today independently of them. People can be saved without membership in any denomination; but if a person is saved, he is a member of the church of Christ.

Every denominational institution, whether Catholic or Protestant, regardless of name or "creed," is a volunteer plant "which my heavenly Father hath



not planted, shall be rooted up. (Matt. 15:13).

Christ built a glorious church, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing—holy and unblemished." (Eph. 5:25-27).

Let us honor Christ and His church by continuing steadfastly in His Word.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching," (Read 2 Tim. 2:22) "and fellowship," (Read 1 John 1:3, 7) "in the breaking of bread," (Read Acts 20:7) "and the prayers," (Read 1 Thess. 5:17, 18.)

To be a member of the church of Christ is the greatest privilege ever granted to man.

Why not enter the kingdom of God and be a Christian only?

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