

# ECCLESIOLOGY

Notes of Dr. E.C. Bragg

## INTRODUCTION

The Doctrine of Ecclesiology is the Doctrine of the Church. It is the study of its origin, its nature, its constitution, its ordinances and its activities. We shall confine our consideration to four topics. The origin of the church, the organism of the church, the organization of the church and the ordinances of the church. There is always in the popular mind the hazy conception of the church as a club, a mutual society of kindred minds and a continual confusing of the church with the kingdom of Heaven. How often is the aim of the church stated as, "Advancing the kingdom" and "bringing in the kingdom," "establishing the kingdom." Many times making the church a political thing. Men lose sight of the primary nature of the church as a "called out" body of people "for His name", a heavenly people, one body separate from all other men of the world as a unique heavenly bride of Christ. Ignorance of its true nature is also displayed in classifying all the saved of all the ages as "members of the church." And some would even out all the sinners who, like the "mixed multitude" which followed Israel, fasten themselves for one reason or another like parasites to the church, as bonified members of the church. We must always see the distinctive nature of the church both as to dispensations and as to its membership as containing only the born-again. Not an earthly organization but a heavenly organism

## PART ONE--The Origin of the Church. (Where and when and how)

It is of the utmost importance to see the absolutely new character of the church; that it is not an out-growth of the Old Testament, Jewish economy, nor its ordinances revamped or converted Jewish rites. Heb. 8:1-9:28 shows us the fact that there had to be a new covenant and it could not be enforced until the death of the testator (9:16), and the removal of the Old Covenant. (Thus Paul shows in many ways that the saint is not under law but under Grace, married to another. Rom. 7:1:4, Paul so graphically shows the contrast to our position now as to that under Law in the Old Testament until one can hardly see how a saint can be ignorant of the fact that there was no church (in the New Testament meaning of the Word, considered later) In the Old Testament, or in the Gospels Christ was "made under the law," Gal. 4:4. And as a "minister to the circumcision," to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," Rom. 15:8. And that He never established the church while upon earth is very evident by the future tense of His utterance, "I will build my church," Matt. 16:18. Many try to misquote the words of Jesus here, "I will continue to build my church." Erroneous. Greek, not the present indicative, but the future indicative action--action to take place in the future. Same as the "I will give unto you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Not delivered unto Peter until after Pentecost., Greek - oikodomeo, is "A house builder"- and Paul says he was the Master architect, I Cor. 3:10. Greek--arkitekton - master builder - skillful architect. The text is without any misunderstanding, CHRIST IS YET TO BUILD HIS CHURCH WHEN HE SPOKE THESE WORDS IN MATT. 16. But in Acts after chapter 2, we have the church mentioned repeatedly (24 times) as an established entity. WHERE AND WHEN AND HOW DID IT COME INTO EXISTENCE? In the great High-priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17, there was a looking forward on the part of Jesus for a new kind of keeping for His own, a future new kind of relationship between Himself and the Believer. So all through the Upper-room discourse. A new revelation of a coming Comforter to not only be with them but in them. You cannot read the wonderful promises Jesus made in this discourse without seeing a new relationship, a new revelation, and a new economy or administration. Let us briefly sum up this line of inference pinpointing the birth of the church.

There are two lines of argument to show that the church had its birthday on the day of Pentecost, and no prior existence. (1) The line of argument we are pursuing right i.e., showing the future nature of the church by Christ's prediction of "I will build my Church", etc. and (2) the very nature

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of the church as requiring the agency of the Holy Spirit to baptize the believer into the Body of Christ.

First Argument Pinpointing the beginning of the Church "Upon this rock I will build my Church" . Continuing our first line of argument for Pentecost as the birthday of the church--note--The very absence of any mention of the Church in the Gospels except for two times and those in a future sense marks that important body as future. Not until the head of the church, her risen Lord, had ascended to the Father, glorified, could He send the great Administrator of the Church, the Holy Spirit. In Acts one, the disciples are still waiting in expectation for the Holy Spirit. But immediately after Pentecost, the Church as a corporate body is recognized. Acts 2:47 -- "The Lord added to the Church daily such as were being saved." (Vs. 41 just added about 3000 souls. "to them" is not in the original - 5:14 and 11:24 shows to what added--"to the Lord" i.e., to His body which is the Church. "To the Church" in 2:47 is omitted in most ancient manuscripts.) But on Pentecost the prepared disciples were welded of the Holy Spirit into a Temple of the Triune God. cf. Eph. 2:21,22. This they could not be without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as Christ prophesied, He is with you and shall be in you". John 14:17 cf. Thus making them the new temple of God and in their fullness constituting the "building or habitation of God." Here is the meaning of the only time the tongues of fire are seen in the New Testament or in Christian experience -- it was emblematic of the presence of God, it was the New Testament SHEKINAH GLORY; God entering His house as He did the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and the Temple of Solomon. It signified a New House of God, a New Temple of the Triune God.

There was no living building before Pentecost. Peter is careful to show that Christ is the chief corner stone of this living spiritual house, but did not so become until disallowed of man. So after His death and resurrection (cf. I Pet. 2:4-10). Here again is the idea of the death to validate the New Covenant. THIS DAY OF PENTECOST sees the birth of the Church as a corporate body placed under the jurisdiction and administration of the Holy Spirit who indwells it. The very idea, then of the church, as the "habitation of God" a "Spiritual house" for God's indwelling had to await the advent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. So the order in John 7:38,39--"If I go I will send Him unto you," John 16:17. The coming of the Holy Spirit had to await the home going of Christ to send Him. Hence, Pentecost, This pinpoints the birth of the Church.

The second argument follows the nature of the Church, as made up of Spirit baptized believers incorporating them into the Body of Christ living union with their Risen Head, We ask the question, "What constitutes the Church as the 'Body of Christ'?" Paul gives the answer, "It is by virtue of its having all members who have been all baptized into one body by One Spirit, and all made to drink into One Spirit." I Cor. 12:13. There is one Spirit or life in each member, the same spirit of life--the Holy Spirit, so that "though we be many members yet are we one body," because we have the same life. That is what makes our bodies one, hands, feet, etc. --one-life courses through the body. So with the true church, a living body of Christ, before the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. Second, when, where, and how did that baptism take place? The answer must be, "Pentecost:" He wasn't poured forth before that, and in fact couldn't be until Christ was glorified. Compare-- John 7:39 with Acts 2:33. THERE COULD BE NO CHURCH BEFORE PENTECOST. PENTECOST WAS THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH. IN THE GOSPELS MAN IS STILL UNDER LAW, UNTIL CHRIST DIES FOR THEM WHO ARE UNDER THE LAW.

PART TWO--THE -- ORGANISM OF THE CHURCH. (The WHAT)

I. NEGATIVE (What the Church is not)

1. One of the most prominent definitions given of the Church is erroneous, "The church is a voluntary association of believers, united together for the purpose of worship and edification." We could as accurately say that the body is a voluntary organization or association of members united together for the purposes of work and locomotion. There is nothing voluntary about it; but as the voluntary action on the believer's part is to accept Christ, and at that second the Holy Spirit

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joins or unites him to the living Christ. As we shall see in our next division.

2. Another erroneous conception--That the church is an edifice for worship or a building of wood and stone. As, "The Church on the corner." No such usage of the word church in the Bible. Rather, "The Church, which is in thy house." Phil. 2; Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15 "their house, his house." Never is any building considered a church and we shall see is incongruous in the light of the etymology of the word for church.

3, Another erroneous conception is of the church as some particular denomination, Methodist church, Baptist church, Presbyterian Church, many times with the exclusive meaning attached, "THE," as though it were the Catholic church--Universal church and only church. Hence so many bodies consider themselves the bride of Christ, the only "pillar and ground of truth,"

4. Following the same idea as number one above--the most common error is the consideration of the church as an organization rather than a so-called founder, or a local building named after the founder. From this arises the common idea that one can "join" the church of Christ. We believe in a local membership in a local assembly. There is need for this to give a community of effort and stability. We shall see that there is somewhat of allowance for the idea in the N.T. sense of the local assembly; but it has been carried to all kinds of extremes of closed communion to all but local members, need of a "letter" to qualify for any local functioning and exclusions of all kinds, Paul couldn't preach in many modern churches unless re-baptized and joined up, not to even mention Peter (a married man) who couldn't be a Pope in modern Roman Church? This idea of organization instead of organism has led the church into political alliances, and a social gospel of human betterment. and made a mustard tree out of it, sheltering all kinds of fowls of the air.

5. To them should be added error of making the Church the Kingdom primal in the Old Testament to Israel and Christ on David's Throne, It is no wonder that the church of Christ has been counterfeited by the great arch-counterfeiter of all time, Satan, He has counterfeited every thing God does. To name a building or organization a "church" doesn't make it one. God calls them in Revelation, a "synagogue of Satan." Lit--"Assembly of Satan" and doesn't see fit to honor them with the New Testament name for church. (Rev. 2:9; 3:9) As Jesus said to the religious leaders of His day, who claimed to be God's people--"Ye are of your father the Devil." Rev. 3 and 4 gives Christ's last messages to His church and in them He warns of the fact that a local assembly can cease to be a church when it loses its testimony, its light goes out, it ceases to be witness unto Him, "it can have a name that it lives but IS DEAD," (Rev. 3:1). It can have its "Candlestick" removed out of its place, (Rev. 2:5). And even be vomited out of His mouth" (Rev. 3:16). "Light that becomes darkness, and salt that has lost its savor is good only to be cast out and trodden in contempt under foot of men." (Matt. 6:23; Matt. 5:13). An organization calling itself a church without Christ, with an unbeliever for a preacher is an "assembly or gathering together of Satan."

### II. POSITIVE (That the church is)

#### 1. First the etymology of the word Church.

This is the only method by which we can arrive at the true nature of the Church. We cannot do as many theologians do, use the Scotch, German, or post, Biblical Greek usage. They would make our English word "Church" as it comes of Kurriakon for "God's House." This is never the usage of the New Testament "Church".

There are FOUR primary words in the Greek New Testament translated church, or assembly, or congregation. They each have the general meaning of a gathering together; but the one properly translated consistently "church" carries an added etymological meaning defining it as the nature of the church itself.

a. Synagogue -- literally--a gathering together, or congregation. Only once applied to the true church, by James 32:2, "there came a man into your assembly." (James writing to the Jews uses

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a word familiar to them. This word Christ uses in Rev. 2:9 of the "gathering together of Satan" "synagogue of Satan."

b. Episyngoge--Twice used--II Thess. 2:1; Heb. 10:25. In Heb. 10:25, has to do with faithfully assembling of yourselves together. But in II Thess. it has to do with our assembling together with Him in the air. See how the word is used by Christ in Matt. 23:37.

c. Paneeguris--General assembly and church of the first born. Only once in the New Testament--Heb. 12:23--Correctly interpreted "general assembly, or entire congregation or gathering." Not a Hendiadys--but no definite article at all--in the Greek. So of the saved of all times and the ekklesia of the firstborn, Williams Translation--"Festal gathering and assembly of God's firstborn sons enrolled in heaven." The word signifies a gathering of assembly for festive occasion, so all toils, cares, tears, etc., over-- That gathering will be as Jesus said, "To drink of the fruit of the vine anew in the Kingdom."

d. ekklesia--The most common word translated "church" in the New Testament. Greek ek--out, and kaleo--to call--Hence a company or assembly of called out ones. Hence it is a company of the kleetoi--the called out ones. It may be remarked that the Septuagint used it many times in the translation of the Hebrew gahal--for congregation or gathering. All too many have alighted upon the one time in the New Testament where it is used of Israel in the wilderness to try to prove that Israel was a part of the church; showing an abysmal ignorance of both the dispensational truth and the nature of the church. In Acts 7:38--the R.V. correctly translated ekklesia here--"congregation in the wilderness--" in the context showing the great gathering of called out Israelites gathered at Mt. Sinai. In Acts 19, it is used several times for the tumultuous assembly of the worshippers of Diana, God of the Ephesians. But there is no sense of "The church" there. There is one other extracurricular usage of ekklesia in the New Testament, Hebrews 2:12--where Paul is quoting from the Septuagint of Ps. 22:22--"In the midst of the congregation will I sing praises unto thee." In all the other, almost a hundred times the word is used, it means the true church purchased with Christ's blood. First in Matt. 16:18, "My Church."

There are three usages:

1. Of the local assembly of called out ones--"The church in thy house", Phil. 2, The church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla; Rom.16:5--"The church in Ephesus", etc. Rev. 2:3.
2. Of the churches in a province. "Churches in Asia" I Cor.16:1; "Churches of the Gentiles," Rom.16:4."Churches of Macedonia," II Cor. 8:1; of Judea, Gal. 1:22.
3. Of the whole body of Christ--"Christ loved the church" Eph. 5:25; "Christ is Head of the Church," Eph. 5:23.

From the foregoing we can deduce the important truth of the nature of the church as to its body and from others its nature as related to its risen dead, Jesus Christ. The outward visible organization is not to be considered the true church of Christ. It may be far from it; it may be a synagogue of Satan. It may have a few who are true members of Christ's body. Further, It is not numbers that make a church "people" for His name. So a bride for His Son. Acts 15:14. Every born-again person in Christ is a part of the ekklesia - "the called out ones." From this we naturally go on to the climatical consideration of the nature of the church as not an organization but an organism. This, the New Testament affirms again and again. The two primary proofs are, "The Church, as the body of Christ", I Cor. 12:13 and Eph. 4:4; "One body"; 5:30 - "The bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh." Every man or woman in Christ is in this one body - a living organism. The other line of thought is contained in the idea of "living building," an habitation of God through the Spirit." Paul gives the idea of a living organism, - Eph. 2:20, 22 - A growing organism. (cf. Col. 2:19) So Peter calls each member "Living stones", I Pet. 2:5.

The only method of entering this Body, becoming a true member of the Church of God is by being

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born again of the Spirit of God. So Acts 5:14 says, "Joined or added to the Lord."

Now the true definition of the church from the Word of ~ God: why He called it "My Church"... "His body's sake, which is the Church - Col. 1:24. Note "HIS BODY, WHICH IS THE CHURCH". The church is His body, He is the head. How then can one be in the church without being in Christ? Don't be guilty of vague generalities about the church, losing sight of its living relation to her true Head, "Keeping in touch with the Head". It will save you from many God-dishonoring teachings, and getting sidetracked from your true job of getting men saved, genuinely born again of the Spirit of God and added to the Lord, then to edify-build up - the church.

### TOPIC THREE - THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

In this division we consider the organization of the church as to its government and functioning especially in the local sense of the word. It would seem that, rather than the idea of local organization being excluded from the very nature of the church, it is in fact enjoined. Paul would make it a duty in Heb, 10:25 for Believers to continue their assembling of themselves together. We shall see that the very idea of the local usage of the word "ecclesia" carries the idea of organization, for fellowship worship, united effort, and edification. They were not to be disjointed, isolated individual particles but meeting together in common faith and effort to carry out the great commission and to strengthen one another. (This does not mean that the Lord intended all of the modern forms of "Lording it over the flock" and centralized forms of church control, with "Orders" and commands emanating from "headquarters". Some protestant churches might as well have a pope in name as they have one in fact. There is no warrant in the New Testament for one man's control of all local assemblies or even of a group of men setting themselves up over the whole flock whether in their own denomination or of the church universal. The idea of a small group determining the morals, doctrine and government of all the assemblies is unscriptural. The assemblies of like persuasion should in convocation agree as to some mutual creed as a pattern of course; the Apostles' creed grew out of such a need. There must of necessity be some universal basis of agreement as to what is "commonly believed among us" is there is to be any harmony within the same denomination. (This should not exclude a brother who is not in complete agreement with us on minor points, which do not effect the basic truths of our faith).

Let us ask the question, "What constitutes a church in this local meaning of the Word?" We have seen the Lord's words, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst", Here is a church of two or three in assembly, in Christ's Name, with Christ in their midst in a unique way, different from His indwelling of the believer. But can a church be less than two or three? In cases, yes. When Paton was the only believer in all the New Hebrides, He alone constituted the "Church of Christ In the New Hebrides." So Moffat in Africa, Carey in India, Morrison in China. Moffat for forty years~ without a convert in Africa, alone constituted the "Church of Christ in that part of Africa". But as he won souls for Christ and met with them and helped them, and they united with or without formal effort of organization, they constituted the local church, Furthermore, there are humanly contrived Christian organizations of good character and influence which are not churches, but made up of folks who are Christians many times. Such as WCTU, YMCA (in times past) Christian Endeavor. etc. So they do not administer the Ordinances, or take on the functions of the church. They are of human origin not of Christ's. We shall see that the church has divine authority given her of Christ, to bind and to loose on earth and validated in heaven.

There is one other consideration before entering into the organization of the church; it is the relationship of Christ to the church. This relationship is two-fold--Christ is head of the church and the heart also.

A. Christ is HEAD of the Church. Paul affirms this in I Cor, 11:3 "The head of every man is Christ". Context shows in the church. Eph. 1:22, 5:23 "Christ is head of the church" as the Husband is head of the wife. Col. 1:18 "Head of His body the Church" This is His Lordship of the church as its founder, "I will build my church" and Christ never delegated this to man.

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B. Christ is the HEART of the church as to its life -- Col. 2:19 and John 15:5--Christ is the Vine, we are the branches. The church's life is derived from Christ, Severed from Him it is no Church.

### I. FORMS OF ORGANIZATION

Protestantism has devolved itself into four primary forms of government:

#### 1. Individualism.

This teaches that there are no formal bonds of union between members, abhors all idea of membership cards or rolls, with no outward bonds, and the only bonds that of a mutual union with Christ. Each is an isolated unit, and only the chance of the particular believers having met together at that particular time constitute them a church in that particular place. The Plymouth Brethren are the prime champions of this theory of church government, which is no government. The Friends also adhere to it. There is much truth in the affirmations made by thorn, in the minimizing of the governmental control and extolling of the spiritual nature of the church; but it fails to account for the government in the New Testament church. And while abhorring all church government these same groups exercise it--some become leaders and do govern the very exercising of the closed communion common to them or exclusion from fellowship until approved is certainly against the very theory of government. The Brethren will not ordain ministers, yet certain ones become recognized leaders. You cannot possibly get a group of men together without either they will formally or otherwise recognize one as a leader, and elections, etc., will follow. The very nature of free moral agency and the effort to arrive at unanimity, organization must be followed. We might ask "How can a brother be excommunicated from the local assembly in discipline without some form of organization or government?" It doesn't have to be formal or written, but it must be recognized.

#### 2. Episcopalian .

From the Greek "episcopos" - Bishop. Hence from or of the bishop a government by bishops. The Anglican church of England broken off from the church of England, the Episcopalian Church of America, the Episcopal church of Scotland, the Methodist church are prime examples. Power is vested either in one or more bishops. Many Holiness groups follow this form calling him Overseer, but in truth vest him with governmental powers. The prime New Testament proofs advanced are "The presidency of James over the church at Jerusalem, the illustrations of Paul, John, etc. as having a number of churches under them." But these are Apostles with apostolic authority vested in them. There is no evidence that authority was to be given in any form of apostolic succession. In the Acts it is "the apostles and elders" (presbuteros) and Presbuteros and episcopos were used interchangeably. See Acts 20:29 the same men are called "episkopos" who were in Acts 20:17 called presbuteros. The idea of these being bishops over a lot of churches is foreign to the New Testament. Note--Titus 1:5 -- "Ordain elders in every city"; Acts 14:23--"Ordained them elders in every church." It may be further noted the word is always in the plural in a local church--Not elder or bishop, but elders-- as Jas. 5:14. Titus 1:5--"Elders in every city, etc." They really answer to our present board members, or elders.

#### 3. Presbyterian.

A form of church government investing THE ruling power in the synod or a Presbytery of all the ministers. This includes all Presbyterian churches, Cumberland Presbyterian, and most Reformed churches. This form of government is built upon the recognition of the parity of the ministry and the recognition of the authority. Dr. Thornwell, Presbyterian:

- (1) That the church is governed by representative assemblies.
- (2) Those assemblies constitute 2 houses, or two elements, the preaching and ruling elders.
- (3) The parity of the eldership. All ruling and preaching elders appear in our church courts with equal credentials and rights.

#### 4. There is one other primary form of church government.

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### Congregational.

A voluntary aggregation of churches with the authority vested in the local assembly. As the Congregational Methodist church, Congregational church, Baptists churches and many independent churches. Many times these unite in fellowship and formulate a denomination, or communion of churches; but the supreme authority rests with the local assembly not in a bishop, or synod. From the very nature of the church and the local assemblies in the early church, it seems as though this is the primary New Testament form of government. Allowing as it does for full local autonomy Spirit direction and initiative. No governing body either of representatives or of self-appointed loaders controlled the early church. The entreaties of Paul directed to each church was not of centralized authority, but of apostolic appeal and local jurisdiction. It is also of interest to note that this local autonomy of the Congregational form of government has been the salvation of a local group or assembly when the denomination of which it forms a part has gone modernistic or astray.

## II. THE FACT OF LOCAL ORGANIZATION

Men have confused the fact that organization may exist without formal acknowledgment in writing, without records, membership lists or formal elections and even without tacit admission that there is organization. But certainly in the New Testament there is abundant proof that some sort of organization was used, We may note, however, that the very lack of any clear, rigid complete outline of government is an indication that the church was not to be a stereotyped legalistic body; but rather a spiritual body ruled as the Head sees fit. In the Old Testament, God did not leave it to provide initiative to order religion. It was all prescribed by Law with penalties for infringement. The only Doctrine we can build of church government in the New Testament must be illustrative rather than legislative.

We may deduce how they organized but can also have room for much charity towards those who differ. Let us note briefly a few indications of organization:

- a. The power given by Christ to excommunicate a recalcitrant brother. Mt. 18:19; carrying, with it power to loose or bind.
- b. Stated times of meeting, Acts 20:7 First day of the week.
- c. Elections of officers. Acts 6:5,6.. (Deacons)
- d The fact of Holy Spirit selected ministers, etc, with authority over the church. Acts 20:17, 28. Acts 13:2
- e. The taking of collections. I Cor. 6:1,2.
- f. Discipline. I Cor, 5:4, 5,13.
- g. Letters of commendation. Acts 18:27; II Cor. 3:1.
- h. The lists of membership of vicious. I Tim. 5:9.
- i. Uniform customs. I Cor, 11:16.
- j. Ordination -- Greek "choirotorco" -- to elect or designate by the hand. Acts 14:23.

First by apostolic appointment, but later in I Tim. and Titus the Qualifications were passed down to guide the church in selection. To this is added the 'laying on of hands of the presbytery," I Tim. 4:14. Imparting the gifts of prophecy. This authority even extended to the laying on of hands and separation of Paul and Barnabas to missionary work. Acts 13:11

1. There was the right hand of fellowship. Gal. 2:9. Acknowledgment of proper grounds to be admitted into fellowship. Those are but a few of the inferences; but all show that the local church was more than a mere aggregation of believers, meeting together the very severance of a member in discipline, the right hand of fellowship, the definite place of meeting as, "the church in Ephesus", the reception of members into fellowship as Rom. 14:1. All of these are marks of organization and closely knit communion.

### III, The method of local government:

1. There was no subordination of the local church to the centralized synod or any church to other

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churches. Acts 15 is clear as to this, it is the very test used to try to prove subordination to a council or assembly. It was to settle this question along with the keeping of the law that this assembly called. It decided against any compulsion to conformity on the part of the Gentile churches to the common practice at Jerusalem. (This, according to Paul was proven contrary to the principle of grace, ie, that the law was still to be kept.) Each church was an independent body with all local governmental powers and authority. This did not preclude an interrelationship as the Apostles taught the oneness of the body of Christ. And the common salvation, the unity of the Spirit and the bonds of fellowship. At the first there were no hidebound exclusive denominations so that among the Gentile churches, at least, a Christian from Ephesus could not fellowship with one from Galatia without "joining" or getting "saved all over again." But there was a marked line of cleavage between the Church at Jerusalem with its legalism and the Gentile church. Gal. 2:7,8. This was racial more than ought else.

2. The method of organization was very simple. Acts 14:13--"They ordained them elders in every church". Titus 1:5 -- "To correct things wanting and ordaining elders in every city." There seemed to be no great ceremony on the part of the Apostles to organize a local assembly. But the rather a simple uniting of all the local converts by common faith, and the simple uniting of electing and ordination of elders to take the helm and conduct the affairs of the local assembly. This is much the present true method of organizing a church. A God-called man today can so organize a church with Christ's approval and seal.

3. That this local organization carried some kind of membership list or roll seems to be the general meaning of some Scripture references. As I Tim. 5:9 "widows on the lists" and the exclusion of recalcitrant and evil brethren from the local church. Mt. 18:15-19 and I Cor. 5:4. It shows that the local church had jurisdiction over its membership to admonish, correct, and even to withdraw fellowship from him. I Thess. 5:14; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15 Rom. 16:17. So a false teacher not to be received into one's house or bid Godspeed (seems to have the idea of help) II John 9-11. In the first formation of the church, lacking local government and organization, the Holy Spirit kept this pristine purity intact by miraculous intervention in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and probably many seemingly natural deaths (I Cor. 11:30) and other judicial separations; but it is manifest that Christ intended the church from hypocrisy, false doctrine and moral contamination.

The officers of the church local and of the church universal. Negatively first--there has arisen both in the Protestant and in the Catholic church an increase of unauthorized officers and separation of the clergy and laity. In any kind of hierarchical system of church government there is both danger and unscriptural traditionalism. For illustration: note the Holy orders of the Catholic church. Divided into sacred or Holy or greater orders--comprised of bishop, priest, deacon and sub-deacon (not to mention all their archbishops, cardinals, etc. and pope.) Then the minor orders--Acolyte, exorcists (pretty inactive in this demon possessed church) lector or reader, and doorkeeper. But many others like nuns, monks, secret orders, etc. No Biblical authority for any of it. But lack of Biblical authority has never been a deterrent to Rome,

Positively:

A. There were general officers serving the whole church, and not of any local appointment or election. They carried divine credentials, and were separated first by the Holy spirit to their office. These were "first" apostles, "secondarily" prophets, then evangelists, lastly to these, may be added the "teaching shepherds" who were given to the whole church, and not just locally since they often were called of Christ to change their field of labor. This list is given in Eph. 4:11. The "He" is very emphatic in the Greek--- "He, Himself, and no other" is the one who gives these officers to the church.

a. The Apostles

Personal delegates of Christ, Gal, 1:1. The Word Apostle means a personal delegate, or sent one.. There is absolutely no record of any succession of this office to others. The two prime credentials of the office seems to have been "signs of an Apostle" special miracles, II Cor, 12:12;

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and a having seen Christ in the flesh so a personal commission from Christ in the flesh". See both linked in Heb. 2:3,4. See I Cor.9:1 "Am I not an Apostle, have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?". Rev. 2:2 shows Ephesus had tried those who said they were Apostles and were not. Must have had ways. Paul states his authority again and again. Paul was just as much. Chosen personally of Christ as the twelve were. Lk. 6:13, Note their singular authority. Acts 2:42. Others called apostles definitely are Barnabas (Acts 14:14) and Titus, maybe other brethren like Luke, Mark, and other companions of Paul with the gift of inspiration. II Cor. 8:23 (messengers-apostles). Cf. Phil. 2:25 were messengers might refer to only being sent by the church at Philippi, or Apostle from there.

Along with the prophets they formed the "foundation of the church", Eph. 2:20, and ranked first by Paul in every catalogue. And from the many inferences carried the gift of inspiration and infallibility in utterance of God's message and writing the New Testament. And being the chief part of the foundation upon them evolved the "care of the churches" II Cor. 11:28, personal superintendence and the authority of Christ, I Cor, 5:4,5 and founding and organizing of the churches, Acts 14:23-formulating of the doctrine for the church, Acts 2:42-carrying the same inspiration as the rest of the Scriptures, II Pet. 3:16.

b. Prophets. Like the Apostles, there is no reference anywhere of their having been elected of God and given to the church by Christ. Eph. 4:11. In the book of Acts it would seem that an ability to foretell the future marked many of the prophets, and every Apostle had this prophetic ability. Acts 11:27, 13:1 (There Barnabas was first a prophet, and then as sent Christ an Apostle, 14:14. Agabus 23:10. Silas and Judas were prophets, 15:32. As a gift of the Holy Spirit. I Cor, 12:28, Rom. 12:6. It seems more of a gift than an office, and covered more exhortation, edification and comfort than foretelling of the future. I Cor. 14:3. Since it was a gift it was not to pass away in the church but with the rest of the gifts a part of the ministration of the Spirit.

c. Evangelists. Among the most prominent in the N.T. is Timothy, II Tim. 4:5. They were distinctly given to the church by Christ, Eph. 4:11, Philip was an Evangelist, Acts 21:8. With four daughters we did prophecy. In reading of Timothy one and two we arrive at the prime conception of an Evangelist, then as a delegate of the Apostle carrying His authority as they carried His MESSAGE AND MINISTRY where He could not be. And their ministry seems to have been one of traveling from church to church. To Timothy- "Preach the Word", reprove, rebuke, exhort. II Tim, 14:1, It seems evangelist than as now if following the Spirit's leading are more of exhorting type.

B. Local officers in each church.

These are three since we put the pastor in this group since his ministry is restricted so long as he stays in the one church.

a. Teaching shepherd of pastor. Eph. 4:11

The Greek here is a hendiadys pastor (Lit. Shepherd) and teachers--equals "Teaching Shepherds." The words of Christ to Peter, "Feed my sheep", Jno. 21:16, linked with the admonition of Peter himself in his first Epistle, 2:2--"Desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye might grow thereby"; and Paul's charge to Timothy, II Tim. 4:2--- "Preach the Word", all give us the idea that there is but one food for the New Man - that is the Word of God. Therefore it is necessary for the shepherd of a flock to see to it the sheep get the right diet from the Word of God,

It is very evident that in the early church this leading pastor came from among the elders or presbytery and it would seem that there were chosen a number in each church. But in any number of associated people, there must be a head to take charge and keep order., In Rev. 2 and 3 this one is called "Angel of the church and in Chapter one of Rev, he is designated "a star" and held in Christ's hand.

There were two names given these--presbyters, and bishops. The translation of presbyter- elder;

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of bishop or overseer came from episcopos, but they were of the same office. Acts 20:17, 28 shows this. Titus was left in Crete to ordain elders in every city and in the Epistle to Titus Paul said, "A bishop must be blameless" - Titus 1: 5,7. Peter says the duty of an elder is to feed the flock (take the oversight) I Pet. 5:1,2. And Paul mentions but two offices in the local church, -- Bishops and Deacons. Phil, 1:1; I Tim. 3:1..

b. Elders--From whom the pastor comes (as above.) It is evident that there were to be more than one elder in each church. Acts 14:13. It is in the plural most of the time. Their qualifications--I Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5. The duties of the elder were to "rule the church", I Tim, 5:17, and were supported by the offerings, vs. 18. (Cf. Heb. 13:7.) "Overseer" as Acts 20:28 (episcopos).

I Tim. 5:17--Signifies that there is a special elder who is given to the "labour of the Word and doctrine". Cf. I Tim. 3:2--"Apt to teach" (Fit to teach) Williams, "Skillful to teach" Greek - didaktikos of II Tim. 2:2

c. Deacons--"diakonia". Meaning minister, service, and most of the time when without specific designation - Servant. The first election of them is found in Acts 6, where the "fullness of the Spirit is seen as the prime qualification and the idea of their service is shown; namely--carrying on the ordinary business of the church. In Acts it was dispersing the community of goods impartially. Unlike the position of elder, they did not need to be "Apt to teach". Even though Stephen filled with the Spirit could teach the ones who later murdered him, and Phillip became an evangelist, first in Samaria, later itinerant. But in I Tim, 3:8-13 it seems to show their secular occupation within the church taking care, as in Acts 6, of the "waiting on tables" kind of ministry so that the elders can "give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word."

There were deaconesses also. Maybe the "widows under threescore" of I Tim. 5:9,10 were of these--Phebe is so called in Rom, 16:1. A.V, translates the word "servant" but should be deaconesses of the church which is at Cenchrea", These may be those also mentioned in Phil. 14:3.

d. Ordination. The work of the ministry is first a vocation, a call of God. Acts 20:28 - "The Holy Spirit made them overseers", Acts 13:2-- "Thereunto I have called them.", Second it is an ordination from the human standpoint. This consisted in the "laying on of hands." In Acts 13:3-- "They fasted and prayed and laid hands on Paul and Barnabas." Cor. I Tim. 5:22; 4:14; 5:22; II Tim. 1:6--From these it may be seen even gifts were imparted to the called one by the public ordination.

### TOPIC FOUR - THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH.

Here we run into a great controversy, which has first swayed one way then another. Libraries are full of lengthy treatises. You find every particular slant of viewpoint ably defended, each trying to prove his own denominational creed. But there has been within the framework of Protestantism this consistency as a whole, that there are but two binding ordinances for the church. But the mode and efficiency of each is disputed. Those two, baptism and the Lord's Supper, have been observed since the time of the apostles as abundantly testified to in history and the writing of the early church fathers.

I. As to the names for them.

The term SACRAMENT from Sacramentum, is derived from the idea of the rites being sacred or holy within themselves and is to be deplored. The word carries the idea of the ordinance as being a means of grace as taught by the Greek and Roman Catholics, the reformed churches, Lutheran, and many other Protestant groups. (Even though denying any change apart from faith). Also, we should not use the term sacrament for the Lord's Supper. It carries the idea "Of giving of thanks" or consecrating of the elements, making them holy. These are primarily Catholic terms with their own particular connotation. WHAT NAME CAN POSSIBLY BE MORE APPROPRIATE THAN "THE LORD'S SUPPER"? Or even the "COMMUNION", both giving the original idea

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embodied in the commemorating feast. The term ordinance for both comes from the idea of being instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. Both Baptism and "in remembrance of Me" and "Baptize (after teaching them) in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." (Mt. 28:19 and I Cor. 11:25.)

II. As to the Number of them .

We have seen the common number throughout the church's history has been two, but ether groups have varied the number.

The ROMAN CATHOLIC and the GREEK CATHOLIC agree on the number 7. The Catholic Church by its pretended infallibility set the figure at seven at the council of Trent and anathematized all who make them more or less than seven. These supposedly sanctifying all of life--

1. Baptism - Sanctifying entrance to life.
2. Confirmation - Sanctifying adult life.
3. Penance - Sanctifying the life of daily sin.
4. Eucharist - Sanctifying life itself.
5. Orders - Sanctifying legitimate authority.
6. Matrimony - Sanctifying the churches las of continuity and increase,
7. Extreme unction - Sanctifying the departure from this life.

There are many sects who make a third ordinance-- FEET-WASHING. There are others who do not have any ordinances - such as the Salvation Army, who believes that they are of no more binding nature than feet.- washing. Gen. Booth -- "We beach our soldiers that everywhere they break they are remembering the broken body of the Lord and every time they was the body, they are to remind themselves of the cleansing tower of the blood of Christ and of the indwelling Spirit." The Society of Friends also do not regard the ordinances, but consider that Christ's command was fulfilled by the inward baptism of the Spirit. Norman Fox, in his book, "Christ in the daily Meal" contends that every meal is the "Lord s Supper"

The extreme dispensationalist, or ultra dispensationalists, of two schools of thought. Many deny that there are any ordinances, denying both the Lord's Supper and Baptism. Then there are those like Cornelious Stam who denied water baptism but would retain the Lord's Supper. His argument is that Baptism is only once while Lord's Supper is continually. He fails to see the significance of each. Baptism is always in aorist tense as past and one with. So Paul speaks of our being buried with Christ. Dead with Him, as final and finished. Put the Lords Supper is perpetual since are daily partake of His life, But both are typical of our living union with Christ. .

III. As to the Efficiency of them.

The very idea of calling them "sacraments" carries the idea of the rites as a means of grace. The saving efficiency of the sacraments is known as sacramentarianism. In its extreme it is taught in the Catholic Church and carries the idea of priesthood as in the Old Testament with sacerdotal powers. (A teaching contrary to the- New Testament,) Here is why the Catholic Church requires infants to be baptized immediately within eight days as a rule, It can be the only grounds of infant baptism at all. Here is why the reform churches, Presbyterianism, Lutherism, etc., teaches infant baptism and call it a sacrament. In the Catholic church as in all Cambellite churches and the Lutheran church, Baptismal regeneration is taught. John Calvin taught it in his Institutes of Religion, and most of his followers so teach but with mitigating additions. Foster, (Cumberland Presbyterian) in his Systematic Theology teaches that there are a number of meanings to regeneration, some meaning the same as "Joining the Church", and that secondary meaning is the signification of the Sacrament of Baptism. While Saving Regeneration is not in the Sacrament, non-confined only to the Sacrament as taught in Catholicism and church of Christ.

The Baptist church follows the Remonstrants and Zwingli, etc., in the true teaching of Baptism as but a signification, an outward rite, "a token of his previous entrance into a communion of Christ's death and resurrection, in token of his regeneration through union with Christ". Strong P.931,

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Vol. 111. An outward sign or symbol or rite of an inner work already accomplished.

As to the Lord's Supper, the Catholic church, always the extremist since it follows confessedly the dictates of man rather than God, through its teaching of Transubstantiation, or the consecrating of the Mass by the Priest into the Sacred Host; the wafer into the literal body of Christ and the wine the literal blood of Christ. They continually speak of the weekly sacrifice of Christ. No faith is needed, but a physical partaking of Christ through the mouth. This has led them to their idolatry of worshipping the elements as the real Christ--the sacred host, (Adoration of the Mass)

Lutheranism, is as bad with its consubstantiation - Christ doesn't literally become the Bread and wine but is with and in them like the at is in the iron but not a part of it. Martin Luther could not accept Transubstantiation, but substituted one as bad in Consubstantiation, Called Ubiquity. They, like Catholics, take literally the words, "This is my body, this is my blood." Mt. 26:26. Martin Luther taught, "the real body of Christ is distributed, eaten and masticated by the teeth." whether the one eats is a believer or unbeliever. (This is common with Catholicism,) (Almost all of Protestantism adheres to some kind of sacramental value in both ordinances. The shorter Westminster Catechism Quest. 92 - "Sacrauiicnts are to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of Christ s meditation". --Hodge says, "Exhibit here means to confer," P, 500, Vol. 3. So Shedd, the Presbyterian on infant baptism, "The infant of a believer is born into the Church as the infant of a citizen is born into the state. A baptized child in adult years may renounce his baptism, become an infidel, and join the synagogue of Satan, but--until he does this, he must he regarded as a. member of the church of Christ,????? These are called by the reformed church of America - "Covenant children."

The Arminian churches, the Baptist churches and many fundamental independent groups and teachers have strenuously adhered to the truthfulness of the ordinances as non-sacramental, but as only symbols or signification of inward spiritual truths and realities, this we shall see later.

IV. As to the Nature of them, and Observance of them.

### A. BAPTISM

The church in general has accepted for 2000 years the command of Christ as given in the "Great Commission" as binding upon the church and carries the same imperative as the Lord s Supper. If they have been wrong and it is left for a very few here at the end of the age to arise and say they were all mistaken, the burden of proof rests with the few who claim a new light. The great commission of Christ is post- resurrection instruction for His church--To say that it is Jewish only, as Stamm and the ultra-dispensationalists do, is foolishness, His "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, teaching all nations to observe all that He had commanded them and to Baptize them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost". Matt, 28:19,20; Mk. 16:16. And His "Ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and unto the uttermost parts of the world". Acts 1:8. These go too far beyond the bounds of the Jewish nation to be Jewish only. But the fact of Baptism as an ordinance of the church is further attested by Paul's reference to and explanation of it in Rom, 6:3-Se

Furthermore, the very fact that Paul baptized, I Cor. 1:12-17, and explained its significance shows it to be the ordinary ordinance and custom of the church. The widespread usage of the disciples of the Apostles as attested abundantly in their writings shows it to be firmly established in the church in the first and second century after Christ. The nature of it has been contested vehemently but not its validity. (But no more than the very sacrifice of Christ and every other important doctrine.)

a. The mode of Baptism.

The ones who contend for sprinkling would make baptism only a revamped Old Testament washing for purification, They fail to see the utter newness of every church thing. The mode must be immersion, not aspersion. Thayer says baptism - to dip, to immerse, to sink, and submerge. No lexicon I have ever seen gives sprinkling as meaning of the Greek word.

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(Or to pour), So the circumstances where baptism is administered--"Coming up out of the water", Matt 1 10, "And John also was baptizing in Aeon near to Salim, because there was much water there." Jno. 3:23. "And they both went down into the water both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. Acts 8:28,29. The very argument of washing by the sprinklers is turned against them by Trench on the synonyms-- "Louv-aiways means the bathing of the whole body, not a part." And we shall see by the very nature of Baptism, i.e., Paul's explanation of it.

### b. The symbolism, or meaning of Baptism.

This we gather primarily from Paul's writings as to be expected, since he is the great revelator to the church. This we find in Romans 6:3-10. Spiritually the believer, the very second he believes in Christ is reborn of the Spirit of God, and is baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, identified with Him in death and resurrection so that he is dead and risen from the dead, In public baptism, the believer gives public testimony outwardly to this inner truth. Not to be saved but that he is saved, If he comprehends this then by faith, he can hold this public funeral service over the old man, and by faith rise in newness of life,

Baptism is the Christ-appointed sign or symbol given as public confession to a truth already accomplished within the believer. To be only once administered since it is only once true historically. Now note in Rom. 6 the signification - The Believer is "buried with Him by baptism." Shows that it both has to be water baptism, buried end the mode immersion. Vs. 5 further shows water baptism "Likeness of His death." So, Peter--3:21. Further- Coming up out of the water is likened by Paul to resurrection from death. As Christ didn't stay dead neither do we "walk in newness of life." Compare Col. 2:12-- this "baried" cannot be only the baptism with the Spirit which would not carry any such idea as burial. Baptism symbolizes the believers union with Christ in death and resurrection. I am forever dead crucified with Christ, hut nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me.

### c. The subjects of baptism.

Negatively--Not sinners (This the baptismal regeneration folks do)

--Not infants. Ditto,

Positively -Those who believe. Those who consciously voluntarily believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Mk. 16:16--"He that believeth and is baptized--" Belief first then baptism. So Matt. 29:19,20 - "Disciple all nations, then Baptize." Acts 2:37 "Repent and be baptized." Acts 8:12--"And when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized." Cf. Acts 19:9--So the house of Cornelius. Acts 10:47--"Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received fee Holy Spirit as well as we." Gal. 3:26,27--"For ye are all Sons of God, through faith in Christ. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

## B. The LORD'S SUPPER

Some New Testaments names--"Communion", I Cor. 10:16; "The cup of blessing", I Cor. 10:16; "The Lord s table", I Cor. 10:21; "The Lord's Supper I Cor. 11:20; (I like this best--"This do in remembrance of me") "Breaking of bread" from the book of Acts 2:42, Acts 20:7, I Cor. 10:16.

It is instituted by Christ-Luke 22-19; I Cor. 11:23-25. (Paul receives directly from Christ the order of it.)

It is the only Christian worship that has the form all laid out for us showing the importance Christ Himself placed upon it. He knew the very shortness of our memories, the need of a reminder, of what His grace has done for us, of our communion with Him now, of His own Self as with us, and of His coming again. - do in remembrance of me, and Ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come." We have already seen how theologians have corrupted it by all kinds of charges and misinterpretations, and like the Corinthians, partaken of it unworthily. To wrap it up in too much ritualism and sacerdotalism, to be too taken up with forms and manners is to set at naught the Lord's Table, and miss the whole of its real meaning.

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In the three times Paul deals with the Lord's Supper we find wrapped up all the real significance; of the supper. All three in I Cor, He seems to be the only apostle to refer to it outside of the History in Acts by Luke. The love feast or Feast of Charity as in Jude is not the same feast.

### 1. I Cor. 5:18.

Here it is in relation to cleansing. The Blood is emphasized. The purging out of the leaven, because Christ our Passover is sacrifice for us. So, "This is my Blood shed for the remission for your sins." In the context--there was the guilty party in Corinth, and the church unashamedly condoning his awful sin - Purge it out. Then verse 8--Malice, wickedness. Have sincerity (no duplicity). Have truth--Doctrinally pure.

This agrees with the closing warning in chapter 11--examine or judge selves. No leaven and Lamb at the same table. No sin and supper at the same time. So we shall see in Chapter 10--Not table of the Lord and demons. There is great blessing for the saint partaking of the Lord's supper who judges himself, and discerns the Lord's body.

### 2. In I Cor. 10:16-22

Here Bread is emphasized (As Blood in Chapter 5) because here the sharing of His life--The communion of the body of Christ Lit. - "The Joint participation of His Body."

Here we have the fellowship of the saints and with Christ. The one Loaf as in Chapter 11.. "Ye do show forth the Lord's death"- Public manifestation or displaying. At the Lord's Table all difference of rank, opinions, and party lines should disappear - the oneness of His body, the one Loaf should both be felt and manifested. Here the highest point of communion or oneness with Him is at the Lord's Table. So "Cup of blessing". Eulogies the blessing of Him, elevated thanksgiving. Here our hearts would go out in blessing His Name and being for all His Grace, etc. Here we should forget our wants, asking, wishes, and commune with Him.

### 3. This brings us to the third time - I Cor 11:17-34..

Here Paul's primary teaching is of commemoration or remembrance of Christ. This is seen in both the bread and the cup, "This do in remembrance of me". Vs. 24, 25. As the cleansing or purging is linked with the blood in Chapter 5, and communion is linked with the Bread or Loaf in Chapter 10-- Remembrance is linked with both in chapter 11. So it is "The Lord's Table," The "Lord's Supper", He is to be the center of our thoughts, communion, attention, "This do in remembrance of me."

As in Luke 22:19, the Soul should be occupied with Him alone at His Table--discerning His Body broken for us; His Blood shed for us; His wonderful love for us in glory now--His preciousness unto us who believe, lest the soul should be too occupied with the blessing He gives and forgets the Blessor, Himself. Reiterated three times--"Remember me", especially at "My Table", It is the only observance totally taken up with Him alone, a memorial service. Not preaching, not singing, praying. asking, Just remembering Him. If you fail to do that, you disappoint Him.

#### The Time -

"As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup I Cor, 11:26. But the word signifies often, not once a year; but no stipulation as to how often.

#### The Symbolism -

"This is my body which is broken for you", I Cor. 11:24. As the bread is partaken and assimilated, His life must be by faith partaken of--"Eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood", Jno. 6:53; I Cor. 10:17 "We all partake of the one bread," "This is the cup of the New Testament in my blood.- I Cor. 11:25; Mk. 12:24; Luke 22:20--"Poured out for you;" I Cor. 5:7--"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," So vs. 26 of I Cor. 11 -- "Ye do openly show forth the Lord's death" His cleansing blood to wash away our sins.

Thus far is the real spiritual symbolism of the Lord's Supper - or sharing - or "Joint participation of

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His body and blood" I Cor. 10:16, The partaking of His very life.

But further it is a memorial of Christ. I Cor, 11:24-25, and is a prophecy of the great festival gathering in the skies when He returns for us. "Till He Come" I Cor, 11:26, So Lk. 22:18; Mk. 14:25; Matt, 26:29--"No more drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."

### The Warning

Unworthy partaking of the Lord's Supper.. "For this cause many are sick among you and some sleep". I Cor, 11:30 "Drink damnation if not discerning the Lord's body", etc, "Examine himself then let him eat." v. 28.

### The Subjects

Who but a Christian could fulfill the memorial and the symbolism? It is an outward; "Showing forth openly the Lord's death" and "Joint-participation of His body and blood" and. carries condemnation for unworthy partaking. But every believer should be welcome at the Lord's Table as it is not a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Christian Missionary Alliance Table. To restrict it to local membership is to ruin its very message of the "One Loaf" of all the Believers.ECCLESIOLOGY