

# CHURCHES

(A study with blessed teen-agers, at a summer retreat, on Baptist doctrines.)

## 1. THIS DOCTRINE IS NOT A PART OF THE GOSPEL.

The gospel is only a part of the truth revealed. I believe lots of truths besides the gospel - marriage, for example. That has nothing to do with salvation - "old maids" can be saved. Nor does Caesar and his rights, nor the ten commandments nor a lot of the parables of Jesus or the figures of speech of Hebrews and John's Revelation. Mark wrote a gospel and never mentioned the word "church". So did Luke. So did John. So did Matthew, except for three short sentences: "I will build by church"; "tell it to the church"; and, "if he neglect to hear the church." (Matt. 16:18; 18:17). Paul definitely taught that baptism was not a part of preaching the gospel, I Cor. 1:17. It is the duty of the saved, Acts 2:41,47. Jesus finished his preaching ministry before he instituted the Lord's Supper. So all he saved for three years were saved without the Supper. And John 6 can have no reference to a Supper that did not exist and that no one had ever mentioned.

## 2. LOOK AT THIS DOCTRINE AS FULLY DEVELOPED, NOT MERELY AT THE GERM OR SEED, CONTAINED IN THESE 17 WORDS IN MATTHEW.

A peach seed is very different from a ripe peach, so is a watermelon seed different from a watermelon. The full New Testament doctrine of **churches** is like the crop of ripe peaches that grew on the tree that sprang from a peach seed. Don't chew on the peach seed: eat the ripe peaches. Study on about churches until the end of Revelation. There you are commanded seven times: "He that hath an ear" — even a one-eared man should listen — "let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The word church is in Revelation 20 times and 13 times in the plural, 35 times in the New Testament from Acts to Revelation. And on the last page of your Bible, you have this statement from the glorified Christ, as Moffatt and the Brazilian Bible translate the Greek: "I Jesus have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches", Rev. 22:16: Jesus was "FOR CHURCHES". You be too. The

servant is not greater than his Lord. And educate your Christian mouth to say CHURCHES! Don't bring on you a curse of God by taking away the plural of one of Christ's words of revelation, Rev. 22:19.

## 3. A GREAT SAMPLE CHURCH, OR MODEL CHURCH, WAS DEVELOPED BY THE APOSTLES, THE FAMILY OF JESUS, AND 104 OTHER GALILEEANS (ACTS 1:15; 2:7,41,47.)

That model church quickly grew to have 5,000 **males** (men, in that sense, says the Greek, Acts 4:4), then "multitudes" more, constantly added, including a multitude of the priests of the temple, Acts 5:14; 6:2,7. Dr. B. H. Carroll thought the Jerusalem Church grew to have 100,000 members. They had a special place to meet, Acts 3:11; 5:12. That porch, nearly a quarter of a mile long, had beautiful columns. The apostles preached where Jesus had preached, John 10:23; Acts 3:11; 5:12. They stood at the head of the vast audience, which deposited its gifts at their feet. These gifts were so large, that the apostles had to become bankers and neglect their duties, so the deacons were appointed, laymen with the business tasks of the organization, that the apostles might keep on being men of "prayer and the ministry of the Word". Deacons are not "ministers of the Word", but laymen. In an apostate Christianity, they are budding priests. Christianity has no officials named priests. See point 7.

This model church was a vast achievement in world missions. A million or more pilgrims came to the feasts in Jerusalem, from all the Jewish lands of the Dispersion and Palestine. They went back evangelized, in ever enlarging numbers. So things continued till the model church had done its world work. Then Saul scattered its thousands of members to hundreds of towns. They took root. Saul persecuted one church: he came back to Jerusalem, a called missionary, and found many churches in Judea, Gal. 1:13,22. When the Jewish War began, in the year 66, the Jerusalem Church ceased to exist, fled to Pella, as Jesus had commanded them long ago, Luke 17:31; Matt. 24 and Mark 13. The great model church lived three dozen years, completed its mission and died, or the

remnant moved, to become one of the hundreds of CHURCHES, multiplying all over the world.

**4. IN THE WORDS CITED ABOVE FROM JESUS, HE USED THE WORD CONGREGATION WHERE WE HAVE THE NOW MEANINGLESS WORD "CHURCH"**

Christianity, as revealed, was a fellowship of congregational churches, autonomous, independent, obedient to Christ, congregations of saved people ("saints", see the beginning of the Epistles to the churches), who were baptized (immersed, says the Greek always) after salvation, to work together in churches which, in turn, cooperated in world missions and their common life and activities. Where churches had to consult on common problems or tasks, they acted through "messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ", II Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25; Acts 15. This today is known as Baptist Christianity. Jesus had preached all day long to throngs, sometimes several days in succession, Matt. 14:15; 15:32, etc. He preached thousands of sermons. Nuclei of future churches were formed in that fellowship by converts who went home saved. Math. 18:15-20 was his command for those nascent churches all over the land. It was a command for then and forever. We call it corrective church discipline. To have church discipline you must first have churches. Another early description of Christ's people was **flocks, sheep**. The sheep is the most gregarious animal on earth. Sheep go in flocks, have shepherds (pastors), and this was the picture Jesus constantly gave of his Christianity, John X, etc. It was a Christianity of separate flocks and pastors. All the sheep, being his, are one flock (not ONE FOLD, a false translation that Romanism exploits to justify its false idea of JUST ONE CHURCH, "the word that has no plural," a priest said in Brazil). Jesus is "Shepherd and Bishop of your souls", I Peter 2:25. When Jesus "saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd," Matt. 9:36. Well, what is the remedy? It is that such sheep have pastors to lead and look after them. So Jesus immediately gave them the twelve apostles, whom he "set first in the church", I Cor. 12:28, and then and there taught to pray for more such laborers, v. 38. That prayer was soon answered as he gave "other seventy", Luke 10:1, and likewise taught them to pray for more such laborers, v. 2. Palestine was full of nascent churches during the ministry of Jesus, and he had a vast ministry, called and commissioned for them while he yet lived. Read John 21:25 and let the Holy Spirit operate on your mind, so it may take in the magnitude and majesty of the work of Jesus, "in the days of

his flesh."

**5. THE PLACE FOR SAVED PEOPLE TO LIVE THEIR CHRISTIAN LIVES IS IN SUCH CHURCHES.**

The very name of the apostolic churches is: "all churches of the saints", I Cor. 14:33. "Saints" are not defunct Catholics whom the Pope has canonized for people to pray to. "Saints", in a true Christianity, are living people, sanctified, which means **set apart**, for Christ and the salvation he gives every believer and the service he demands of them all. So the apostles begin their letters to churches, calling all members "saints". This is our name and our calling. The New Testament speaks of the churches, using the word in singular or plural, 115 times. A church is to obedient Christian life what a home is to faithful married life.

**6. ALL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH MEMBERS WERE BAPTIZED (IMMERSED, AFTER THEIR SALVATION).**

You see that in the way Christianity started. It did not begin on the Day of Pentecost after Christ's death. Jesus inaugurated his own Christianity. It is the work of the living Savior, not of a dead Christ. He had in this a Forerunner, John the Baptist (Baptizer - Immerser.) He preached repentance and faith in Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, Mark 1:1,2,14-15; Acts 19:4; John 1:7,29,36. John was "full of the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb", Luke 1:15, a statement never made of any other human being. Never call John a mere preacher of repentance. He came "that all might believe". Never call him a mere prophet of the Old Testament. Four centuries separate him from the Old Testament - not a day from Jesus. The Spirit is not a creature, created on the day of Pentecost. He gave of his fulness to John's preaching and ministry, and was on Jesus, in perpetual anointing, so making him the Christ, and thus directed all Christianity from "the beginning of the gospel of the Son of God", which is immediately defined by Mark as John's ministry. John baptized all the apostles, Acts 1:21,22; John 15:27. Don't be so silly as to suppose that when Jesus called Matthew, in Matt. 9:9, it was to salvation. "Follow me" is no gospel. He was calling Matthew to the ministry. That is why he "left all and followed" his Lord, Matt. 27:29. And, after some experience in that ministry, he was called to the apostleship. Salvation and baptism is the way our Christianity began, and so it kept up. Paul was certain all church members to whom he wrote had been baptized. When he wrote to the Romans he had never been in Rome, but he was sure they had all been "buried with



Christ by baptism" just as, in the same act, they had been "planted in the likeness of his resurrection", Rom. VI.

And, too, Paul had never been in Colosse, so far as we know. But he was sure the Colossian saints had been "buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him", Col. 2:12. There just weren't any church members for the first Christian century who were not buried and risen in the solemn symbolism of their baptism. Now you don't bury people to kill them, but because they are already dead. So you don't baptize people to save them, but because they have already died to sin through saving grace. When they have died to sin, you bury these dead and they are symbolically raised to walk in the new life begun in salvation. This is the Baptist Christianity of the New Testament. The false Christianity of Romanism and most Protestantism practices infant baptism, in order to regeneration, the only regeneration the great State-Churches of Catholic and Protestant Europe know anything about. Their religion is sacramentalism. Romanism has seven "sacraments", Protestantism has two and Baptist have none, for we loathe the word, a term of pagan militarism, brought by the devil into an apostate Christianity, to deceive the dupes of a false religion in which they are so easily misled. Baptism buries, then raises, those who died to sin by God's supernatural grace. But it never saved a soul. It neither saves, helps save or keeps saved. It is obedience of those already saved by grace through faith, a good work we are thus prepared obediently to walk in.

## 7. ALL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES HAD TWO KINDS OF OFFICERS: PASTORS AND DEACONS.

Jerusalem, the Model Church, saw both offices develop. One officer is called by three names: presbyter (also translated elder) and bishop and pastor. In this ministry there were different gifts—apostles (the twelve apostles to the Jews, and Paul, apostle to the gentiles) and the term is also applied to men who were not of the apostolate, but were missionaries, as I have been since 1915. Then there appeared in apostolic Christianity a large number of EVANGELISTS, Eph. 4:11. THE SEVENTY are generally spoken of thus and Timothy, Titus, Luke, Mark, Tychicus and Philip. Don't say that Deacon Philip baptized the converts in Samaria, Acts 8:12. His deaconship was in Jerusalem, not in Samaria. In Samaria we see the evangelist. He became the great evangelist of that region of Palestine, locating with his prophetess daughters in the Roman capital of the Holy Land,

Caesarea, where he is spoken of as **Philip the Evangelist**, Acts 21:8. Many ex-deacons cease to be deacons and become pastors or evangelists. Evangelists are ordained ministers: I Tim. 4:14. They may act as pastors for a time, then go on in their general ministry. Southern Baptist evangelists are one of the most fruitful and upbuilding phases of our common ministry, and one of our greatest blessings in following the New Testament norm.

There were several **bishops** in the church at Philippi, just as there were several deacons, Phil. 1:1. In the church at Ephesus Paul applied the words presbyter, pastor and bishop to the same group of officers, Act 20:17, 28. They were all "elders", had charge of the flock (pastors) and were definitely called "bishops". In Titus 1:5-7 the rule in this Pastoral Epistle of Paul was that the same man was both "elder" and "bishop", two names of the same office. Elder was a name of honor, the old were COUNSELORS of their people. But in Christianity an elder would often be a young man, and elder was merely the name of the office, I Tim. 4:12. Peter and John both gloried in being simple ELDERS, I Peter 5:1 and II John 1:1 and III John 1:1. John Calvin attempted to invent a new Christianity, dividing the ministry into two kinds of elders (presbyters). But I Tim. 5:17, properly translated, demands double pay, not double honor, for the ministry that LABORS—lots of preachers are lazy, don't study—toils in preparation for teaching the Word of God to the people. They deserve, and receive, more pay. But all elders were paid. This is not treating of a class of officers who are laymen, engaged in business. The Bible demand on its official ministry is to LIVE OF THE GOSPEL, I Cor. 9:14. The laity lives of its business, position or career: the elder, every elder, lived of the gospel. Laymen can testify, preach, serve Christ, as every laymen ought, as he has the gifts. But he lacks the qualifications for the pastoral ministry unless he gives all his time to the sheep. A non-resident, part-time pastor, who just sees the sheep once a month, is no biblical pastor.

There are various anti-sectarian sects that are enemies of any official ministry, want all men in the churches to be the same as any other man, equally in charge. The chief of these anti-sectarian sects, promoters of an unorganized Christianity, with no officers, are the Plymouth Brethren, a pernicious sect founded by J.N. Darby, who later split with George Muller, over the leadership. They were called **pirates** by Spurgeon, for they steal sheep, whole flocks some times. As they immerse, they say they are Baptists, in Brazil, till they get in a church and gain followers. Then they oppose having a pastor and split or steal the church. I wrote an article about them, in



Brazil, entitled: "QUIT LYING! IF YOU ARE NOT A BAPTIST, DON'T STEAL YOUR WAY INTO A BAPTIST CHURCH AND LIE TO THEM, SAYING YOU ARE A BAPTIST. QUIT LYING!" I spread that all over Brazil and they could seldom deceive our people any more. We baptize them before accepting them in our churches, for they have no church, no one to administer legitimate baptism, and are false on one of the greatest and most vital doctrines in Christianity. The New Testament gives a whole section to Pastoral Epistles, and much else of pastoral theology. To repudiate the Word of God on all that is just as bad as putting sprinkling in the place of baptism, or many other errors.

## 8. OUR CHRISTIANITY HAS TWO GREAT FORMAL AND SYMBOLIC CEREMONIES.

New Testament baptism is immersion, only immersion, and a very definite kind of immersion: the immersion of a believer, a person already saved, one having eternal life the moment he believes, and then comes on to baptism and church activity. He is immersed into the church, normally by its pastor or some authorized minister of the churches, and his baptism depicts the burial and resurrection of Christ, the burial of the old self and the rising to walk in newness of life that corresponds to the profession made, and prophesies our resurrection at the last day. The act, the design, the administrator, the qualifications of the candidate, the church fellowship entered, the symbolism are all vital phases of baptismal doctrine. The idea that "anything goes" is certainly unknown doctrine in the New Testament.

The other ceremony is a **supper**, the Lord's Supper. It is not a sacrament. There are no sacraments in Christianity. That is a relic of pagan militarism. If the Mass in anything at all in Christianity, it is the Lord's Supper. If it is not the Lord's Supper it is nothing Christian. In a Supper, nobody kneels. You kneel for idolatry of a THING. In a Supper all eat and drink: one boss does not do all the drinking for the whole table. Jesus, in the Supper, said: "Drink YE ALL of it", that is all should drink from the cup they used. The ALL is plural agreeing with YE, not singular, to agree with "cup" or the wine. Literally the command was: "All ye drink out of it". There are no priests mentioned among Christian officials. They are an impertinence in Christianity. And the Mass is just as pagan worship as Asia or Africa ever knew. In fact, I would far rather worship a beautiful painting or piece of sculpture than a mere piece of bread that some idolatrous priest falsely proclaims as being the very body, blood and deity of God the Son. All religion knows no more foul cheat and no worse denial of the

Christian faith than the Mass. "The corruption of the best is the worst." In contrast, how reverent, how tender, how sweet in every Christian sentiment and devotion, is the real celebration of the true Supper of our Lord by a New Testament church!

## 9. "IF A MAN LOVE ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORD . . . HE THAT LOVETH ME NOT KEEPETH NOT MY WORDS . . . THY WORD IS TRUTH." (John 14:23,24; 17:17).

Words are like labels. Here is a bottle: it has saccharine tablets in it. Suppose a man took this bottle, kept this label on it, but put in tablets of arsenic. The false label is a hellish crime, and the man a murderer. If we keep Christ's words (labels of revealed truth, defined by the meaning of the word on Christ's lips) and change the meaning to something Christ did not mean by the word, we commit a major spiritual crime against Christ and humanity. This is the royal road to apostasy from truth. This produced the "Dark Ages", medieval Romanism. Repentance means a Spirit-wrought change of mind, wrought by godly sorrow for sin, II Cor. 7:10. To change that to **doing penance** is to put arsenic in the place of what the label calls for. Saving faith is receiving Christ as Savior, trusting in him, John 1:12, not the belief of historic facts. Our beliefs are our opinions. To **believe on** Christ is to trust him, him alone, and him wholly, for salvation, which is eternal life. To make faith the mere approval of creeds, most of them vitally false in spots, is to feed doctrinal arsenic to the careless and kills their souls. True bishops are each the husband of one wife (I Tim. 3:2). There is not a single bishop in the whole Catholic Church, not one. They kept the label and sell their dupes arsenic for food. The whole Catholic and Protestant World is devoid of baptism, which is immersion. They kept the label and poured out the whole meaning of Christ's word. They didn't even keep the label of the Lord's Supper, but threw bottle and label both away, for their pagan Mass. Every church is called a bride of Christ, "a pure virgin", just as truly as the virgin Mary, II Cor. 11:12. Jesus is the bridegroom and the marriage takes place in heaven, Rev. 21:2. But the Catholic Church has a vast horde of "children of the church" running around over the earth. That is scandalous!!! A bride with babies, before the wedding. But the Catholics ask us contemptuously, in Brazil: "Who is your Mother?" They have two mothers, the virgin, on whose virginity they so much insist, and the Church. My reply is: "Our mother in salvation is exactly the same mother that Adam had. If ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST JESUS



HE IS A NEW CREATION. God is Father and Mother, for motherhood came from God as well as fatherhood, II Cor. 5:17. "CHURCH" is a Biblical label. It means a congregation. Nothing less than a congregation, nothing more than a congregation, is a New Testament church. Beware of saying "the Baptist Church". There is no such thing. Like the New Testament, right down to its last page, we believe in **churches**. Every national church is a national sin. And the Catholics pretend that they are THE CHURCH MILITANT, on earth, THE CHURCH SUFFERING, in Purgatory, and THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT, in glory. You could read the Bible a million years and you would never find that in it. There is no Purgatory. Jesus, talking of the Great Beyond, said: "If it were not so, I would have told you." He never told us of any purgatory. And priests who say Mass for souls in purgatory are robbing the public, taking its money to say Masses to take souls out of a place where they are not, FOR THE PLACE DOES NOT EXIST. There is no greater fraud than that, and it came from falsifying the label of Christ's truth - CHURCHES.

**10. VITAL TO ALL SPIRITUAL LIFE AND TRUTH IS TO KEEP SEPARATE THE THINGS THAT ARE DISTINCT, CAESAR AND GOD, CHURCH AND STATE.**

All the Catholic Sects — and there are a lot of them, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Old Catholic (rejecting papal infallibility), Eastern Catholics of many names (Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, etc.) and the split-off National Catholic Churches in many lands—are concubines of Caesar, wherever they can wangle it. And the Protestant State Churches in Central and Northern Europe are rival concubines of Caesar, united with various States. It is so with the Lutherans in Scandinavian countries, with the Presbyterians in Switzerland, Scotland and North Ireland, with the Reformed in Holland, France, etc. Why do we have The Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., the Presbyterian Church of the U.S., and so on? Because they follow, at heart, the European pattern of a National Church, in each case. It is assassination of Christ's word CHURCH, and only Baptist doctrine and witness have thwarted their ambition for union of Church and State here. The Congregationalists were united with the New England States and the Presbyterians sought at first such support in Virginia, then joined with the Baptists against

Episcopalian scandalous adultery with the State. Southern Baptists do mission work in nearly as many Catholic lands as in Pagan lands. Roman Catholicism is pagan, in its essence. And our papers in Brazil never tire of pointing that out and showing that the effect of Romanism on its victims is far worse than paganism in Japan, for example. The greatest illiteracy in the world is in Catholic lands and so with much other woe and crime. Just as firmly do our Home and State Boards evangelize Roman Catholics in the U.S.A. and our churches receive vastly more numerous Catholic converts than Catholics receive evangelicals converted to their faith. Over 50 Roman Catholic priests have been saved in Brazil and joined Baptist Churches. Several of them were saved by reading my books. They are my friends. All say they were not saved while priests and only one of them thinks he knew in his flock anyone who was saved. I have known a number of Catholics who had Bibles and read them, who were saved. I believe some were thus saved before missionaries came to Brazil. I baptized the daughter of a sacristan, about 1918. She said the priest owned a Bible and kept it locked up. But one night he left it on his table and the sacristan took it and read it all night long. He told this daughter: "I have read the Bible and learned the gospel and my soul has been saved. We do not have the true religion. But some day men will come who will bring this book, for the people. When they do, if you are living then, know that that is the true religion and seek the light in it and be saved." If we are going to call CHURCH, for cringing courtesy's sake, every apostasy that deceives the people and offers them life by dead works, then we shall lose the gospel for our own children or grandchildren, in time. If you mix milk and water, as equals, you don't have more milk. YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MILK. Next to salvation itself, keeping Christ's words is our best way to show him our love and preserve Christianity for the people. Love as brethren in the Lord all believers on the Savior whether Catholic, Protestant or investigators who have come to faith and don't know what to do, in the current confusion. But KEEP CHRIST'S WORDS. THEY ARE TRUTH REVEALED, IF WE GUARD THEIR MEANING UNCHANGED.

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