

THE LORD’S SUPPER
A
CHURCH ORDINANCE,
AND
SO OBSERVED BY THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES
(1881)

**“Now I praise you brethren that ye keep the ordinances
as I delivered them unto you [the church].” - Paul**

Editor, “The Baptist” – Memphis, Tennessee

“There is sufficient proof to convince any close student of church history of the first three centuries, that in the very earliest ages the Lord’s Supper was regarded as strictly a Church Ordinance, as we have defined the phrase.” – Professor Curtis, “*Communion*,” page 88.

“When a man eats of that ‘one bread,’ and drinks of that ‘one cup,’ he, in this act, professes himself a member of that one body, in hearty, holy sympathy with its doctrines and life, and freely and fully subjecting himself to its watchcare and government, (I Cor. x: 17); hence, in I Cor. v: II, the Church is forbidden to eat (in the Lord’s Supper, as the context clearly shows) with immoral persons, thus distinctly making the Ordinance a symbol of church fellowship.”
Professor Harvey, Hamilton Theological Seminary – “*The Church*” page 224.

If the Supper was instituted by Christ to be observed as a Church Ordinance, and among other things to symbolize church relations, then the members of the particular church celebrating the Supper, can participate in it; since it sets forth the fact that all eating of the one loaf, are members of that one particular church. If the Lord’s Supper is a Church Ordinance, then is intercommunion unscriptural.

CHAPTER I

Definition of church ordinance.

The Supper demonstrated to be a church ordinance:

- 1.) *Each church absolutely independent under Christ;*
- 2.) *Each church is made the guardian of the ordinances, and enjoined to prevent the disqualified from partaking of them;*

3.) *The symbolism of the Supper determine it beyond question to be a church ordinance, since it symbolizes church relations with the body celebrating the rite. Christ appointed it as a church ordinance - could not have allowed His churches the right to contravene it.*

The churches of the first ages observed it as a church ordinance.

It is admitted that the Supper can only be enjoyed by one:

- 1.) Who has been scripturally baptized; and thus,
- 2.) Has become a member of a scriptural church; and
- 3.) Is in hearty fellowship with its doctrines; and
- 4.) Is walking in gospel order.

I wish in this tract to show: That the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, and, as such, can only be observed by a church, as such, and by a person in the church of which he is a member.

This statement indicates an observance of the Supper generally disregarded by our churches, as are other important matters connected with the sacred feast, as the character of bread and the kind of wine used, and it will, therefore, demand an investigation in spirit so unfettered by the prejudices of long usage and uninfluenced by the opinions of their powerful advocates, that comparatively few will be able to command; but, these few belong to the class of witnesses who have, through all ages, been the conservators of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and to whom the world is indebted for a pure gospel and scriptural ordinances. The truth of the proposition, as a whole, depends upon the truth of its first clause, *i.e.*, that the Supper is a church ordinance. It becomes me to define a church, from a denominational and social ordinance. There is no denominational ordinance of divine appointment - because such a thing as a denomination, in the sense of an organized body, embracing all the churches of a province or nation, was unknown in the first ages. I have denominated the Lord's Supper a denominational ordinance whenever it is opened to the members of any and all Baptist churches present. We do not allow a brother not a member, in however good standing, the right to vote in our Conventions, Associations, Presbyteries, Councils, or church conference, but we do confer upon him the rights of a member, without the knowledge of his character, when we observe the Lord's Supper, the most sacred of all ordinances!

A social ordinance or act is one that may be enjoyed anywhere by any number of Christians, as individuals, baptized or unbaptized - as singing, prayer, exhortation and religious conversation.

But, the essential qualities of a church ordinance are, -

- 1.) That it is a rite, the duty of perpetuating which is committed to the visible churches, as such.
- 2.) The qualifications of its recipients must be decided by the members of the churches as such.
- 3.) Any rite which symbolizes church relations can only be participated in by the members of the church celebrating, and is pre-eminently a church ordinance.

A church act or privilege is one that can be transacted or enjoyed by the constituent members of one particular church. Voting upon all questions relating to the choice of officers, the fellowship and government of the church, is a church privilege, or act, which, from the very nature and constitution of a gospel church, belongs to the members of that particular church alone, and cannot be extended beyond its limits without peril to its very existence.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are universally admitted to be church ordinances, and yet few seem to apprehend why they are, or why they cannot be administered by an officer of a local church without the action or presence of the church.

Of the Lord's Supper, especially, few seem to understand why it ceases to be a church ordinance when administered to those without and beyond its jurisdiction, or when those without and beyond the jurisdiction of a local church are associated in its celebration. It is my conviction that misapprehension of the true nature and limitations of a church ordinance has given rise to all the discussions, misunderstandings, all the misrepresentations, and bitter prejudices excited against us by other denominations, as well as to all the present disagreement among Baptists. If all parties could understand clearly why the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, and why it must, from its very nature and in every instance, be observed by the constituent membership of each local church alone, it must be that all this unpleasant and harmful misunderstanding, and antagonism would be settled and pacified: and certainly this would be a consummation devoutly to be wished by every true child of God in every denomination.

In the not vain hope, I trust, of contributing something toward this so desirable a result, I submit this and the following chapters.

My first argument to show why the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, and cannot be scripturally observed only by the members of one particular church, is, -

1.) That each church under Christ is absolutely independent.

The first church organized by Christ was a complete and perfect church, and yet it existed for years before other churches were formed. There were no new ecclesiastical relations originated, nor the slightest modification of the character of this church made, by the multiplication of churches. During the apostolic age, nor for ages after, was there the shadow of any confederation or con-association or constitutional *inter-dependence* recognized, any more than between the families of children of a common parentage. Love for the brotherhood and active charity for all in distress, and the doing of good, especially to the household of faith, was only enjoined. The idea of a constitutional interdependence, which is now imperceptibly taking root in the minds of the cultured leaders of our people, in the fourth century begot confederations and con-associations of churches, and these soon brought forth the centralized ecclesiastical hierarchism under the auspices of Constantine - which is known as the "Great Apostasy."

[A. D. 100 - 593]. "All congregations were independent of each other," etc. (Gieseler, chapter 3 page 53.)

"All the churches in those primitive times were independent bodies, and none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. It is as clear as noonday that all Christian churches had equal rights, and were in all respects on a footing of equality." [Mosheim, A. D. 100].

[A. D. 200.] "During a great part of this century all the churches continued to be, as at first, independent of each other, or were connected by no con-associations or confederations; each church was a kind of little independent republic, governed by its own laws."

[A. D. 300 - 400.] "Although the ancient mode of church government seemed, in general, to remain unaltered, yet there was a gradual deflection from its rules, and an approximation toward the form of monarchy. This change in the form of government was followed by a corrupt state of the clergy."

This was the vile offspring begotten by the idea of the inter-dependency of churches, which is finding strong advocates in our day. They sink the idea of churches into that of a Denomination.

The learned Doctor Owen, of England, asserts:

“That, in no approved writer, for two hundred years after Christ, is mention made of any organized visible professing church, except a local organization.” - *Crowell's Church Manual*, page 36.

Each church being absolutely independent, it must, from the very nature of the case, absolutely control its own acts; and can be responsible to no authority save Christ. It cannot constitutionally allow the members of other communities to share its prerogatives, since such license would endanger its own independency and responsibility.

Should a church so far forget its trust as to fall into the general practice of inviting, as an act of courtesy (which implies a discourtesy in refusing to do it), the members of all sister churches present to vote in the reception and exclusion of members, discipline, and even choice of pastors, as one prominent Baptist author advises, how soon the independency of the churches would be subverted! Usage would soon crystallize into precedent, and custom into law.

The independency of the churches is of Christ's special appointment, and it is our sacred duty to do nothing tending to imperil or contravene it. No one will presume to claim that Christ invested his churches with the power to contravene, at their pleasure, any one of his appointments. Their powers are all delegated, and delegated powers cannot be relegated. A local church cannot confer upon members of other communities any privilege or franchise that belongs exclusively to her own members.

But it is further demonstrable that the Supper, as well as baptism, is a local church ordinance, because –

2.) To each local church is committed the sole administration and guardianship of the ordinances.

This will not be questioned, save by the few who hold that baptism, at least, was committed to the ministry as such; that they alone are responsible for its proper administration; and they can, therefore, administer it without the presence and voice of the church whenever and wherever they please. This must be settled, not by the will or opinions of men, but by the Scriptures.

Let us see what one apostle thought concerning this issue between a part of our ministry and the churches:

TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

“I have received of the Lord Jesus that which I also delivered unto you.” - (1 Corinthians 11:23)

All the instructions and directions, both as respects the doctrine and the ordinances, Paul delivered, not to the ministry, but to the churches.

“Now I praise you, brethren [not you, ministers of the churches), that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered *them* unto you.” - (1 Corinthians 11:2)

Now note his command to this church, not to its ministers:

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.”— (1 Corinthians 11:1)

“I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause I have sent unto you Timothy, my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which be in Christ, as I teach every-where in every church.” (1 Corinthians 4:16-17.)

TO THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI

“Brethren, be ye followers of me, and mark them who walk so, as ye have us for an example.” – (Philippians 3:17)

He enjoins it upon the church to follow the directions he had given it, as well as to “**mark**” those who did not.

TO THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE.

“Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and obeying your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” – (Colossians 2:5-8)

TO THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA

“Therefore, my brethren, stand fast and hold the tradition [which embraces all the instructions and ordinances] which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.” – (2 Thessalonians 2:15)

“And we have confidence in the Lord touching you [the Church], that ye both do and will do the things we command you.” – (2 Thessalonians 3:4)

It would be useless to reason with those who could deny, with these Scriptures before their eyes, that the ordinances were not delivered in sacred trust to the churches, as such, and not to their officers; and that they are held responsible for their right observance.

It is further established, with respect to the Supper, by the duties especially enjoined upon each local church, as such. It is commanded to allow only members possessing certain qualifications to come to the Supper.

**“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves [as a Church] from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions [instructions] which he received of us”⁽¹⁾
“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.” – (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14)**

⁽¹⁾And what ingenuous mind will deny that this command equally excludes all such from the pulpit as well?

This withdrawing and having no company with the disobedient and disorderly, certainly involved exclusion from the Lord’s table.

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.” – (1 Corinthians 5:11)

The apostolic churches were peremptorily commanded to prohibit the table to all these, and such like characters - to allow no leaven to be mingled in the feast. For this purpose, each church is made the sole guardian of the Supper. It cannot alienate the responsibility. It cannot, under any plea, contravene the law. To execute it with fidelity, it must keep the feast within its jurisdiction; its permission to partake cannot

be extended beyond the limits of the Supper, since all who can be entitled to the Supper must be subject to its discipline.

It is conceded by all that members of other communities have no scriptural or any other right to eat the Supper in any church save their own. No one claims that it is the duty of any local church to offer the supper to any but its own members.

What, then, do I conclude? –

1.) That Christ has not given me the right to commune in any church save the one which has the watch and care over me, and that my privileges are limited to my church.

2.) That Christ has not made it the duty of any church to open the doors to this ordinance to any not subject to its discipline; but, by making it a church ordinance He has manifestly forbidden the practice, since, by the act, the participant declares he is a member of the church with which he communes – “we are one loaf,” *i.e.*, one church.

3.) And it may be safely affirmed that those churches that stately offer and invite to their tables all the members of sister churches who may chance to be present in the congregation, openly violate the command of Paul - to allow no disqualified persons to participate in this ordinance - since it is morally certain that such are often, if not ever, present, and are the most certain to accept.

But the Lord’s Supper is unquestionably a church ordinance, because –

4.) It symbolizes church relations, *i.e.*, that all who jointly partake are members of the one and self - same church.

I only assert this fact here, and submit an eminent authority, that of Professor Curtis, who has treated this subject with unsurpassed ability, and reserve the discussion and proof of it when I treat of the symbolism of the elements in the next Tract. That the Supper is a church ordinance in the sense that it can be worthily celebrated by only one church and participated in by the members of only one church, Professor Curtis argues most conclusively from the symbolism of the Supper, as well as from the fact that it is under the sole guardianship of the churches.

He says, in “*Communion*,” page 85:

“We desire to show that this is the true view of the Lord’s Supper, [*i.e.*, that it is a church ordinance, and a symbol of church relationship]. ‘**When ye come together therefore into one place,**’ says the apostle, ‘*this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating every one taketh before *other*,* etc. . . Wherefore, my brethren, **when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.**’ (1 Corinthians 11:20-21, 33.) The apostle here clearly alludes to it as the universally current opinion that the Lord’s Supper was a church ordinance, so far as this, that it was completely celebrated in one place, by one church. . . . When he bids them ‘**tarry one for another**’ he clearly intimates that the regulation of the Supper, as far as time and place are concerned, is lodged in each particular church; that it expresses the relations of the members of the church to each other, as such.”

“That the Lord’s Supper is a symbol of church relationship, subsisting between those who unite together in the participation of it, can be shown in various ways.”

“Admission to the Lord’s table, therefore, implies admission to it by a particular church, and this in fact settles the question that the Lord’s Supper is a church ordinance.”

The Lord’s Supper, then, being a church ordinance, indicates church relations as subsisting between the parties who unite together in its celebration.

“It must be conceded that the Lord’s Supper is ever the symbol of particular, visible church relations.” - Page 138.

“It expresses the relations of the members of that church to each other, as such.”

“A fellowship in church relations, professed with those Christians with whom we visibly celebrate.”

If the Lord’s Supper is a Church ordinance, as must be admitted, and a symbol, among other things, of our visible church relations in the same particular church with which we celebrate it, then it is a violation of the truth symbolized to invite members of other Baptist churches to participate in it.

When Baptists, in reasoning with affusionists, urge the symbolism of Baptism, *i.e.*, that it represents a burial - as conclusive that the act must be an immersion - they think candid Pedobaptists should see and admit so evident an argument. Will not all candid Baptists admit this?

4.) It was instituted by Christ to be observed as a church ordinance.

I claim it as an AXIOM -

That a church ordinance must be instituted by Christ.

AND

That the symbolism of the ordinances was instituted by Christ.

Should we observe ordinances originated by man, our worship would be unacceptable to Christ, and as vain as it would be sinful. Christ has said –

“In vain do they worship me who teach *for* doctrines the commandments of men.”

Should we change the symbol of an ordinance by the slightest modification, we would vitiate it; and to vitiate the symbolism of an ordinance in the least, is to vitiate the ordinance.

“Ye do make the commandment of God of none effect through your traditions.”
- Christ.

That Christ did institute the Supper to be rigidly observed as a church ordinance, Professor Curtis declares:

“So when our blessed Savior instituted the Supper, as He did, upon one of those Paschal occasions, it was, we say, as a church ordinance that He ordained it.”

And he justly says, to claim the right to change it in the least, is to claim the right to legislate. If it is ever a symbol of particular church relations professed with those Christians with whom we visibly celebrate, as he declares, then to celebrate it with those not members of the same church, is to vitiate the symbol and change what Christ hath appointed.

5.) The Lord’s Supper was observed by the apostolic churches (A. D. 100) as a Church ordinance; *i.e.*, as a symbol of church relations.

Paul, we have seen, could not have delivered this ordinance unto the churches as he had received it from Christ, unless he had delivered it unto them as a church

ordinance; for it is admitted that Christ ordained it as a church ordinance. (Curtis and others).

The apostolic churches could not have observed this ordinance as Paul delivered it unto them unless they had observed it as a church ordinance, *i.e.*, by one church only, and with the members of one church only.

But the churches did observe this, as well as the other ordinances, as Paul delivered them, because he praised them for so doing.

To the church at Corinth he wrote, -

“I praise you, brethren, because you keep the ordinances as I delivered *them* unto you.” (1 Corinthians 11:2)

To the Church at Colosse he could say, -

“I rejoice, beholding your order and the stability of your faith.”

The churches at Thessalonica he only exhorts:

“So, then, brethren, stand firm and hold fast the ordinances you were taught, whether by our word or letter.”

Which clearly implies they had been, and still were, faithful in their observance.

The church at Corinth for a season perverted the design of the Supper, and Paul promptly rebuked it [not its pastor or elders], and again set it in order, and we must believe that he corrected every departure from his instructions.

But suppose I grant that he did not deliver it to the churches as symbolizing the relations of all the participants to one and the same church, still I claim that the positive instructions Paul gave to the churches forbade them from inviting to their tables the members of all existing churches, without personal knowledge of their faith or character, as is the practice of this age. He placed the Supper under the sole custody of each church, and commanded it to purge away from its table all leaven of malice or wickedness. He taught them that false doctrine of all description, and all ungodly conduct (**1 Corinthians 5**), and all works of the flesh (**Galatians 5**), was leaven that must not be allowed to defile the feast.

“Now we charge you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly, and not according to the instruction which you have received from us.” (2 Thessalonians 3:6)

If it is said “that this was spoken to the church with reference to her own members,” I will grant it, and demand if it does not equally teach that it should equally withdraw from those not members walking disorderly? That there might be no doubt, read the fourteenth verse: **“But if any one obey not our word, signify that man by an epistle [the most approved rendering], and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”** All will admit that this command forbade them to invite all false teachers, as well as unsound and disorderly brethren, to the Lord’s Supper.

Now false teachers and heretical brethren, abounded in Paul’s day, all members of sister churches in good standing, and thousands of these belonged to the church at Jerusalem; and had it been the custom of the church at Corinth to invite “all members of sister churches” to its table, would it not have violated the instructions of Paul? But this feature will be more fully developed in a future Tract. But finally -

For centuries after the ascension of Christ, the Lord’s Supper was rigidly observed as a church ordinance.

I care little for the argument from post-apostolic history. It is enough for my purpose - and it must be quite enough for every conscientious Bible Christian - to learn that Christ appointed the Supper to be observed as a church ordinance, and that the apostles so delivered it to the churches, and the churches all observed it as such while they had the personal instructions of the apostles. Suppose, from the day the last apostle died, every church ceased to observe it as a church ordinance; how should that fact affect our present practice? Would it warrant a church to observe it, even once, in some other way, that would vitiate its symbolism? The fact granted would in no way vitiate the claim that there have been Baptist churches from the day of the defection. The church at Corinth had for years utterly perverted the Supper, and yet Paul addressed it as a church of Christ. It was disorderly in this respect, but a perversion of the Supper did not forfeit its existence.

My space does not allow me to treat this question historically. Let the statements of so cautious and eminent a scholar as Professor Curtis suffice in support of my proposition. He says:

“There is sufficient proof to convince any close student of church history of the first three centuries, that in the very earliest ages, the Supper was regarded as strictly a church ordinance, as we have defined the phrase.” - *Communion*, page 88.

“The records of church history plainly show that originally the Lord’s Supper was everywhere regarded as a church ordinance.” - *Communion*, page 137.

I will add the remarks of Doctor D. Spencer, in his treatise on “*Invitations to the Supper*,” after showing that no invitations were given by the first churches, nor yet in the days of Justin Martyr, in the second century:

“How, then, did invitations originate? The answer is plain. They originated with the perversion of the ordinance. When the ordinance came to take the place of Christ, the churches began to invite to it, as they had formerly invited to Christ. Hence in Romish churches today you hear plenty of invitations to ordinances, but none to Christ.”

I have not granted, in this discussion, that the unapostate churches, whom we account our ancestors, deflected at an early day into denominational Communion. It is my impression that this laxity is a late practice.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS ARGUMENT.

I think I have conclusively shown, -

- 1.) That Christ appointed His Supper to be a church ordinance.
- 2.) That any rational definition of church ordinance or privilege limits the enjoyment of it to the membership of, or to those approved for membership by a local church.
- 3.) That when an ordinance or act symbolizes or implies church relations, it is pre-eminently a church ordinance, and must be confined to the members of a particular church only.
- 4.) That the Lord’s Supper, among other things, specially symbolizes church relations, as all standard writers admit, and, therefore, it can be scripturally observed by the members of one church only.
- 5.) That for the members of various churches to participate in its joint observance, even though upon the invitation of a local church, as Associations and Conventions

are wont in some places to do, would be to vitiate the symbolism, and consequently to render the ordinance, null.

The only issue now before Baptists is fairly stated by Doctor A. P. Williams:

“If he [a member of one church] ever has a right anywhere else, it must be either by a transfer of membership or by courtesy,” etc. - *Lord's Supper*, page 94.

In his “*Tract on Communion*,” as though he would correct, in part, at least, the admission made in his book on Communion, he says:

“But this courtesy cannot be exercised in violation of church discipline or of divine authority.”

It is demonstrable that it is in palpable violation of both:

1.) It is always done at the expense of good discipline; for when a church invites to her table the members of all other Baptist churches present, she inevitably will invite those she would feel herself bound to exclude, if her own members; and she would often invite those whom she considers unbaptized, and would refuse their application for membership; and oftentimes she would invite back to her Communion persons she herself excluded, who are now members of other churches, in good standing. Can this be called good discipline?

2.) Such a courtesy can never be extended and accepted, except in violation of divine authority, since Christ appointed the Supper to symbolize the organic unity of the body partaking – *i.e.*, particular church relations of all the participants with that one church.

It is claimed that the churches have the right to extend such invitations through courtesy. I answer that such a claim is not even supposable; for –

1.) It cannot be supposed that Christ would allow His churches to adopt any practice that would contravene any one of His own appointments - even if we can suppose He sometimes allows it to exercise legislative powers - by adding to, or modifying, the form of one of His ordinances.

2.) But invitations to all Baptists present to partake of the Supper with the local church celebrating it, does manifestly contravene Christ's appointment of the Supper as a church ordinance.

3.) Therefore it cannot be supposed that Christ has allowed His churches to extend invitations to all Baptists present to partake of the Supper with them.

From the considerations submitted in this Tract, the reader will see that I have done what I have been called upon to do - proved that all those brethren who admit that the Supper is a church ordinance, do yield the question at issue between us, and, to be consistent, they must admit that Intercommunion of Baptists of different churches is unscriptural and inconsistent.

CHAPTER II

THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES.

They observed the ordinances as they were delivered to them.

The Supper was delivered to be observed as a church ordinance.

They had no authority to change any rite in the least respect.

They were commanded to judge all whom they allowed to eat with them, and they cannot judge the members of sister churches.

Intercommunion was unknown among the apostolic churches in the earliest ages of Christianity.

The invariable practice of the apostolic churches, and the specific instructions delivered them by the apostles, will have a conclusive bearing upon the right settlement of the question before us. If we find that these are in accord with the nature and symbolism of the ordinance as developed in the previous chapter, it will certainly be the part of Christian candor to admit that the practice of Intercommunion was unknown among the apostolic churches, and is, therefore, unscriptural. Baplists indorse this as logical reasoning when opposing infant baptism and feet washing; the practices were unknown to the apostolic churches, and, therefore, must be unscriptural. To place the subject fully before the reader, I will submit this:

AXIOM - Any practice or theory which vitiates or contravenes what Christ has appointed must be unscriptural, and fraught with evil.

Now there are two principles fundamental to the New Testament and Baptist church polity, viz.:

1.) That each church of Christ is an absolutely independent organization, complete in itself, and clothed with executive functions only.

2.) That to the churches, as such, Christ delivered the ordinances, and constituted each one responsible for the purity of its administrations.

I mean by fundamental, that a scriptural church cannot be constituted without them. An organization may possess every other feature; but not possessing these two, it is not a Christian or evangelical church, and should not be so called. I refer the reader back to Bishop Doggett's position (page 21). Any theory or practice, therefore, that antagonizes or contravenes either of these principles, must be unscriptural, and of evil tendency.

1. The theory of some that the rights, ordinances, and privileges of one church belong in common to the members of all churches, is both unscriptural and pernicious. For,

(1.) It is destructive of the polity Christ appointed for His churches, abrogating as it does the principle of Church independency.

Once established this theory, and no church could discipline its own members, administer its own government: for the members of surrounding churches could command majorities, and control the business meetings of a local church; dismiss its pastor and elect another; determine his salary; arraign, try, and exclude members; receive and administer her ordinances. The reader who cannot see how utterly this theory annihilates the last vestige of church independency is simply unreasonable. The theory must, therefore, be unscriptural and pernicious.

(2.) It is equally manifest that the above theory as utterly ignores and abrogates the second fundamental principle, viz.; the guardianship of the ordinances by the local churches. If the members of one church have equal privileges in all churches, it follows, of course, that no church has the right to refuse them the exercise of any church privileges - as of voting and coming to its table - and consequently can have no control of the Supper any more than of baptism or of its discipline. The most obnoxious characters, retained as they are in the fellowship of so many sister churches, - drunkards, fornicators, adulterers, revelers, and even those unbaptized, and those excluded from her own fellowship, - can come to the table of any church without let or hinderance on its part. This is the monstrous theory set forth by some who propose to teach Baptists the right observance of the ordinances. It utterly annihilates both the independency of the churches and their control of, and

responsibility for the right observance of the ordinances, and is therefore unscriptural and pernicious, and fraught with evil only.

We are therefore compelled to conclude that no member has a scriptural right to any church act, privilege, or the Supper, in a church of which he is not a member. All standard Baptist authors are agreed in this.

Dr. A. P. Williams, D. D., says:

“He [a regular Baptist] has a right to the Communion in the church of which he has been added; but nowhere else. As he had no general right when running at large, so he has no general right now.” - *Lord's Supper* page 93.

Dr. Arnold, of Madison University, N. Y., says:

“Such a principle is in our judgment incompatible, alike with the independence and the responsibility of churches - with their independence, because it takes from them the right to judge of the qualifications of those whom they receive to their highest privileges; and with their responsibility, because it deprives them of the power to guard the table of the Lord against the approach of the unworthy.” - *Prerequisites to Communion.*, page 62.

Dr. Gardner says:

“A member of one Baptist church has no more right to claim the privilege of voting in another Baptist church, than has a Campbellite, Methodist, or Presbyterian. The same is equally true of Communion at the Lord's Table, which is a church act, and the appointed token, not of Christian or denominational, but of the church fellowship subsisting between communicants at the same table. Hence it follows that a member of one Baptist church has no more right, as a right, to claim Communion in another Baptist church, than he has to claim the right of voting, for both are equally church acts and church privileges. The Lord's Supper being a church ordinance, as all admit,⁽²⁾ and every church being required to exercise discipline over all its communicants, it necessarily follows that no church can scripturally, [and it is certain that it cannot unscripturally!] extend its communion beyond the limits of its discipline. And this, in fact, settles the question of church Communion, and restricts the Lord's Supper to the members of each particular church as such.” - *Communion*, pages 18, 19.

(2) That Christ has not given the members of one church a right to the table spread in another church, see Curtis, Paxton, Adkins, Harvey, Pendleton, and Hovey.

Now if this be true - and who will presume to doubt it ? - can we for a moment suppose that the apostolic churches habitually contravened those fundamental principles, and the express instructions of the apostles without their remonstrance or reproof? If not, we cannot believe that the apostolic churches practiced Intercommunion.

I now propose still further to demonstrate that -

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES DID NOT PRACTICE INTERCOMMUNION.

My first argument is:

1.) There is not a precept for, nor an example of, Interconimunion in the New Testament.

If Baptists really believe that this is a valid argument against infant baptism and feet-washing being church ordinances, or even Christian duties, they must admit its equal force against Intercommunion. It is inferred to have taken place at Troas, but no one ever has, or can prove, that there was any church at Troas in the first century at the period of Paul's last visit; and, therefore, the expression "**when we come together to break bread,**" refers to a common repast, and not to the Lord's Supper.

My second argument is:

That the apostolic churches did observe this ordinance, as well as baptism, as the apostles delivered them unto them.

The churches were especially praised for this (**1 Corinthians 11:2, Colossians 2:5**).

In whatever respect any church departed from the traditions of the apostles, for this they were reprov'd (**1 Corinthians 11:17, 22; Revelation 2:3**). But we have no intimation throughout the New Testament that any church had transgressed in this respect. (See letters to the seven churches.) But I have shown, what is generally admitted, that Christ did appoint the Supper to be observed as a church ordinance, and among other things, to symbolize "church relations" - *i.e.*, that all who unite in partaking of it are fellow-members of the same church.

So Professor Curtis:

“So when our blessed Savior instituted the Supper, as He did upon one of these Paschal occasions, it was, we say, as a church ordinance that He ordained it.” – *Communion*, page 87.

He therefore committed it to His churches to be so observed to the end of time. Therefore, the apostolic churches did observe the Lord’s Supper as a church ordinance, and Inter-communion was unknown among them. But, strange to say, there are good Baptists who believe that in virtue of the independence of Baptist churches, they can invite members of other churches to participate in their church acts.⁽³⁾

⁽³⁾Is it in violation of the Scriptures for a member in good standing in a church of Christ, to partake of the Lord’s Supper, with another church of the same faith and order?

“Answer. - The Lord’s Supper is strictly a church ordinance; yet, by virtue of the independence of a church, she may, or may not, invite to her Communion, members of sister churches of the same faith and order, who she knows to be in good standing, and we advise the brethren to moderation and forbearance.” - *Answer of The Suwanee Baptist Association, Florida.*, 1881.

Now, it is evident that, if Christ did appoint the Supper to be observed as a church ordinance, as these brethren all admit, and as a symbol of church relations, then it is certain that He forbade the Intercommunion of members of different churches. This must be as evident to a Baptist as that Christ forbade the sprinkling of water on the head for Christian baptism, by appointing the act to symbolize his death, burial, and resurrection.⁽⁴⁾ Let not Baptists use the arguments they do to disprove sprinkling, unless willing to admit their force with reference to the Lord’s Supper. For a Baptist Church, then, to grant a right which Christ has withheld, it must be authorized by Christ to modify his appointments - in a word, to legislate. But scriptural churches are executive bodies only, and therefore have no authority to enact or abolish rites or ceremonies, or modify, in the least, any ordinance or appointment of Christ. For a church to presume to do this, would be to forfeit its claims to be considered a Church of Christ.

⁽⁴⁾It would not be strange for Protestants and Catholics to believe that a church may change Christ's appointments, for the right is incorporated in the very creeds of those sects.

“Each particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.” - Acts xxii; *Methodist Discipline*.

And they have changed both the subjects and the acts which Christ commanded, for their convenience; but this doctrine has always been, and should be, peculiarly repugnant to all Baptists.

This fact should be indelibly impressed upon the mind and heart of every Baptist - a church of Christ has no authority to enact laws or to change, in the slightest respect, what Christ has appointed. It cannot be true, therefore, that a church may grant a privilege which Christ has withheld, and much less to so modify an ordinance of His Church as to change its entire character. This would be equivalent to enacting a new law. If a church can enact one law, she can a thousand; if she can change one law or ordinance of Christ, she can abolish all His laws, and enact those suited to her tastes, feelings, and convenience. By granting a church the authority to modify the least appointment of Christ in the least, is to concede all the powers claimed by the Papacy. A principle cannot be divided.

2.) But suppose it is conceded that Christ did authorize His churches to legislate, in some things, in some peculiar circumstances, can we for a moment suppose that He authorized them to make changes, or do that which would contravene His own appointments, or vitiate the very symbolism of His ordinances, and thus render them null? But it has been shown that it inheres in the very nature of a church act or privilege, that its participation is limited to the members of the one church; that it cannot be extended beyond the jurisdiction of the church celebrating it; that Christ appointed the Supper to be such an ordinance, as to symbolize church relations, and therefore we cannot suppose that He has authorized His churches to change His appointment at their pleasure; and therefore we cannot suppose that the apostolic churches ever changed this ordinance, or extended the right to eat, any more than the right to vote, beyond the limits of their discipline.

3.) My second argument is:

(1) If Christ appointed the eating of the “one loaf” to symbolize church relations subsisting between all those who jointly partake of it, then we must conclude that all the apostolic churches, which observed the ordinances as delivered, did symbolize

the fact that all who ate together were members of the one self-same church, and they did not therefore extend the Supper to the members of sister churches.

(2) But it is admitted by all our authors, who have thoroughly examined the subject, that the symbolism of the “one loaf” is the organic unity of all the participants *i.e.*, that they are members of the same local church (See Symbolism of the “One Loaf,” Tract III).

(3) We are thus forced to the conclusion that the apostolic churches observed it, among other things, as a symbol of church relations, and therefore did not practice Intercommunion.

My third argument is:

From the fact that the guardianship of the Supper is strictly enjoined upon the local churches, she is to judge all with whom she is authorized to commune.

The apostolic churches were required to allow no one, whose faith or practice was “leavened,” to come to their table. They were not only authorized, but commanded, to judge all with whom they ate. They were strictly required to know, so far as they were able to judge by their observation, or reliable information, that they were “unleavened” as respects their Christian faith and conduct.

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no, not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within ?” (1 Corinthians 5:11-12).

Each church, then, has not only the right, but is commanded, to judge all she permits to eat with her - judge of their baptism, and be assured that they have indeed received Christian baptism; judge of their faith, and decide if they are heretical; judge of their Christian conduct, and decide and declare openly by the act whether they are qualified or disqualified to partake of the Lord’s Supper. Is there a church in all this broad land that will grant that a sister church has the right to sit in judgment upon the faith and conduct of her members? Is there a Baptist who will acknowledge the right of a church, of which he is not a member, to sit in judgment upon his faith and Christian walk, and discipline him according to her judgment? Not one, who has any regard for the appointments of Christ, or self-respect. But by partaking of the Supper

with another church, he does symbolically declare that he subjects himself fully to its government and discipline.

Dr. Harvey, of Hamilton Theological Seminary, in his late work, "The Church," says:

"When a man eats of that '**one bread,**' and drinks of that 'one cup,' he, in this act, professes himself a member of that '**one body,**' in hearty, holy sympathy with its doctrines and life, and freely and fully subjecting himself to its watch-care and government. (**1 Corinthians 10:17.**)

"Hence, in **1 Corinthians 5:11**, the church is forbidden to eat (in the Lord's Supper, as the context clearly shows) with immoral persons, thus distinctly making the ordinance a symbol of church fellowship." – page 221.

There is not a Baptist in the whole land who could be influenced to go to the table of a sister church if he was required to acknowledge himself a member for the time being, and subjected to its discipline. The church could arraign him before the Conference closed try and expel him for conduct not fellowshiped by her.

Reverend G. M. Savage, President of the Masonic College, Henderson, Tennessee, in a treatise lately put forth on "Communion," thus comments upon **1 Corinthians 5:11** showing that Paul, in this letter, was establishing the doctrine that the Supper was a church ordinance, and symbolized church relations between those communicating:

"Again, there is a man in the Corinth church who was living with his father's wife, whether married to her or not, cannot be determined. Paul, in giving orders to the church to exclude him, added: '**But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no, not to eat.**' - (**1 Corinthians 5:11**)"

"The first deduction I make from this passage is, that the celebration of the Lord's Supper cannot extend beyond the limits of church discipline. Suppose it does. Then the offender, without a satisfactory reformation, may go and join some organization, claiming to be a follower of Christ; and, at the very next communion season, when the usual general invitation is given, present himself, and the church thus having to eat with him would violate the command of Christ. The only way to avoid such guilt, such trouble (for cases of this kind sometimes occur), is carefully to restrict the

communicants to those within the limits of church discipline. From this deduction it follows, that communion is a sign of church fellowship; and, consequently, intercommunion is unscriptural.”

Dr. Gardner says:

“If another Baptist church thinks proper to invite him to its communion, then he may partake as an invited guest and as a temporary member. Such intercommunion [*i. e.* without membership] among Baptists is not only without Scripture warrant, but does much harm, and no real good. The practice, therefore, is unscriptural and of evil tendency; and, doubtless, will be abandoned by all our churches as soon as they reflect properly upon the subject, and can overcome the force of habit and prejudice.”
– page 204.

If the above positions, indorsed by such authorities, are conceded, then it follows –

That the apostolic churches did not practice intercommunion, for it cannot be conceded that they, unreproved by the apostles, habitually practiced what was unscriptural and of evil tendency.

My fourth argument is:

Let it be granted that the character and symbolism of the rite itself does not necessarily forbid the church extending it beyond her jurisdiction, nevertheless the special directions of the apostles to the churches, to refuse the Supper to the factious and heretical of that age, made it impossible for intercommunion to be practiced by them.

In the later years of Paul’s ministry a multitude of false religious teachers infested the churches he had planted, and taught doctrines that subverted the souls of men, and corrupted the faith of many. The churches of Galatia seem to have been influenced largely by these false teachers, and turned away from the true faith (**Galatians 3:1**) Paul called the doctrine of these Judaizing teachers “**leaven**,” and all persons who embraced it would be called “**leaven**,” and he commanded the churches to purge out and away all “**leaven**” from the feast.

Now it is a fact that all these heretical ministers and false teachers were members, in good standing, of sister churches, which means not under discipline, many of whom belonged to the church at Jerusalem; and there were “**many thousands**” of the members of that church who held this doctrine of the “**Concision**.”

“And certain men, who came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” - (Acts 15:1.)

These were members of the church at Jerusalem, as we learn from the letter of that church to that at Antioch, to which it sent up messengers to learn from the apostles of this church, it being their mother church, if the doctrine taught by these teachers was true.

During the discussion in the church at Jerusalem we read (verse 5):

“But there rose up certain of the sects of the Pharisees which believed, [*i. e.*, were members of that church] saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.” (Acts 15:5).

Paul thus describes these brethren in his letter to the Galatians:

“And because of false brethren, unawares brought in, who came privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these, who seemed to be somewhat [of influence in the church], (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person), for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise,” etc. (Galatians 2:4-7).

In the letter sent to the church at Antioch, the pastor, James the apostle, and the church, write thus:

“Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, ...” – (Acts 15:24.)

When Paul visited Jerusalem, eight years after, and had recounted his missionary labors and successes to James and the elders, we hear them warning Paul of his imminent personal danger from these zealots of the law in that church:

“Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who believe; and they are all zealous of the law.” - (Acts 21:20.)

How did Paul regard these ministers, church members though they were?

“As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.” – (Galatians 6:12)

“And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased.” – (Galatians 5:11)

“For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers [these Judaizing teachers and brethren] be transformed as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” – (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

“For many walk, of whom I told you before, and now tell you, even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction.” - (Philippians 3:18-19)

What does Paul say of their doctrine?

“I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him who called you into another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some who trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach another gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed ... I would they were cut off who trouble you” ⁽⁴⁾ – [i. e. excluded from the church of which they were members, which it was not in Paul’s power to accomplish, and, I suppose, not in the power of the pastor at Jerusalem; but he could advise it]. **Galatians 1:6-8; Galatians 5:12)**

⁽⁴⁾Paul’s wish that the false teachers of his day “**were cut off**” – excluded - should satisfy those brethren who call for proof that these false teachers, false apostles, and false brethren were church members. If church members, then Baptists, since all the apostolic churches were Baptist churches.

“Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing ... Christ is become of none effect unto you ... Ye did run well; who did hinder, that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him who calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

How did Paul instruct the churches to treat these Judaizing brethren?

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the concision.” - (Philippians 3:2)

“Now, I entreat you, brethren, to watch those who are making factions and laying snares contrary to the teachings which you have learned, and turn away from them; for such like ones as they are not in subjection to our Anointed Lord, but to their own appetites; and by kind and complimentary words they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.” - (Romans 16:17)

To the Thessalonians he wrote this;

“Now, we charge you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly, and not according to the instructions which you received from us. But if any one obey not our word by this letter, point him out, and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame.”

These brethren, whom Paul called **“false brethren,” “false apostles,” “false teachers,” “dogs,” “ministers of Satan,”** and the multitudes of brethren, in many of the churches, corrupted by their teaching, with the many thousands in the church at Jerusalem, were all members of sister churches in good standing - *i. e.*, in their own churches. The question I ask is, “Could the church at Corinth, or any other, give the usual intercommunion invitation to all members of sister churches, in good standing in their churches, to come and eat, without openly violating the above instructions of Paul?” I have no further argument with any one who will say that it could.

But such like characters, leavened with the ungodliness Paul specifies (in **1 Corinthians 5**, and **Galatians 5**), abound in all our churches, and our general invitations are therefore unscriptural, and most inconsistent; and, since they are in violation of the apostle’s injunctions, and vitiate the ordinance of the Supper, they are of evil tendency.

I will take it for granted that all Christians will admit that such characters ought not to participate in the Supper. But the question arises, How are all such to be debarred the Supper, and the orderly of other churches admitted? Certainly not by “considering” (?) them all members for the time being, for these are leaven, and must be rejected as members; and no church has the right to receive applicants without a

rigid examination both as to their faith and practice, for those received must be “unleavened,” and no one can be received to membership without the unanimous consent of a church expressed in some way. This is universal Baptist practice, and founded on correct principles. To ascertain who, of a company of brethren present, are leavened as to faith or practice, it is evident that an examination before the church must be had, that all the members may be able to judge of their soundness, so as to receive the fellowship of all the church. But we have seen that no church has the authority to “judge” others, save its own members. It is quite as evident that no church would allow a sister church to sit in judgment upon her members, and decide by public vote which ones ought to be excluded from the Lord’s Supper and the Church, and which ones retained, for those unfit for the Supper are unfit for the Church. Everyone can see, that to invite the members of all sister churches, would have been to invite all the above characters to the Supper; but to have singled out these characters, and rejected them, would have been passing a sentence of judgment, by the church, upon members of those without its jurisdiction, which is strictly forbidden. Now it seems that every candid Baptist, who wants no shadow of practice not warranted from the Word of God, must perceive that, by observing the Supper as a church ordinance, as it was delivered, all the above difficulties are solved, and all the Scriptures harmonized, and the admitted symbolism of the Supper preserved. I therefore claim, with the utmost confidence, that I have established it as a fact-

That both the teachings of the apostles, and the practice of the apostolic churches, were opposed to the practice of intercommunion.

THE PRACTICE OF THE EARLIEST AGES.

Touching the practice of the churches in the earliest centuries, I will only add the statement of so careful a scholar as Professor Curtis:

THE LORD’S SUPPER

“The records of church history plainly show that originally the Lord’s Supper was every-where regarded as a church ordinance [observed by the members of one church only]; for, after centuries of gradual corruption had altered the forms of church government in many other respects, and many separate congregations were united under the care of one bishop, and were considered as only one church, there was ever one, and but one, altar to each bishoprick, at which alone the elements of the eucharist were consecrated. To set up another altar, or communion table, was considered a violation of unity, or a declaration of church independence. Each

bishoprick had the absolute power of receiving to, or excommunicating from, the Lord's table. The whole of this shows how contrary to all the centralizing tendencies, and amid many corruptions on all sides, this truth remained, embalmed and preserved, that –

“THE LORD’S SUPPER WAS A CHURCH ORDINANCE”