



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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DID JESUS COMMAND IMMERSION FOR BELIEVERS?

By Wayne Camp

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

In the light of these words of God, some are probably wondering if I have lost my mind because I have asked the question, “**Did Jesus command immersion for believers.**” But, it will not seem so far-fetched when you read further.

A few weeks ago I received a tape of a sermon by a brother titled something to the effect of “**Line Upon Line, Precept Upon Precept**” in which he took at least two very unscriptural positions that I will discuss in a moment. My first impression was to write an article showing his error but I just attributed it to his being somewhat of a novice in the ministry and in the Lord also and decided not to reply at all. I was sure that any mature Christian, especially if he were a Baptist, would see the error so clearly that no one need point it out.

But, now (last week of September, 2000) I have received a Landmark Baptist paper and was surprised and disappointed to see that they

had printed the sermon. In fact, it was the most prominent article in the paper.

DENIES THAT A PRECEPT IS A COMMAND

The first thing wrong with the article is that it promotes the idea that “Precept upon Precept” is teaching by example, not by commandment. It says,

I have heard many say that they want "chapter and verse where God commands" such and such. Or, that they want a "direct command" from the Word of God that churches should be established this way or that. God gives us certain ways to do things, but, it is not always shown to us by "direct commandment" from God. More often than not,

God gives us "precept upon precept." In today's language, we might say God gives us examples to follow. It is this subject that we shall endeavor to "rightly divide" today.

Before I proceed, I would ask, “Is it wrong to ask for chapter and verse in which something is commanded and taught?”

As one Baptist writer has said,

“Baptists of all parties have, from the beginning, persistently and consistently maintained the absolute supremacy of the canonical Scriptures as a norm of faith and practice. They have insisted on applying the Scripture test positively and negatively to every detail of doctrine and practice. It has never seemed to them sufficient to show that a

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doctrine or practice, made a matter of faith, is not contradictory of Scripture; it must be distinctly a matter of Scripture precept or example to command their allegiance or secure from them a recognition of its right to exist." (*A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States*, A. H. Newman, 1894, Pp. 1-2.)

The text of the article was Isaiah 28:9-13. In

that verse the expression "**precept upon precept**" is used a couple of times. My Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary says the word means "**a command or principle intended as a general rule of action or conduct.**" My Unabridged Webster's gives as the first two meanings of the word "**a command, an injunction.**" One does not need to have knowledge of the Hebrew to see that a precept is a **command** or an **injunction**. Anything that is taught by "precept upon precept" is taught by laying command upon command or injunction upon injunction.

The Hebrew word for precept is **TSAV** which means a precept or command. It is from the Hebrew word **TSAVAH** which is translated "command" a mere **514 times** in the Old Testament. It is translated "charge" 39 times and "commandment" 9 times. To my knowledge it is never translated "**example.**" It is a case of **gross misinterpretation** to infer that it does not mean a commandment but rather means "example." Whether it was intentional or oversight on the preacher's part, he has misled the unsuspecting reader to think that a "precept" is an example, rather than a command or injunction. Of course, most discerning readers and listeners would know the word was being misapplied, for whatever reason. Any discerning reader reading this article will see that the goal of rightly dividing the word of truth was missed by a long shot.

DENIES THAT IMMERSION WAS COMMANDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The article goes,

In fact, there is no command anywhere in Scripture to immerse when we baptize.

However, the "direct command" brethren might have to begin accepting sprinkling and pouring as a method of baptism since there is no "chapter and verse where God directly commands" baptism by immersion.

Lest there be some who deny that the article teaches such, let me repeat part of the above statement. The article said, "**In fact, there is no command anywhere in Scripture to**

"... there is no command anywhere in Scripture to immerse when we baptize."

immerse when we baptize.”

This denial that immersion was ever commanded in the New Testament is an even more serious error that is found in this message. The article clearly infers that baptism may be administered by sprinkling and pouring. The brother wrote, *“However, the ‘direct command’ brethren might have to begin accepting sprinkling and pouring as a method of baptism since there is no ‘chapter and verse where God directly commands’ baptism by immersion.”* Any sound Baptist knows that baptism **IS** immersion. This is one reason that I was especially amazed when this article was let it without so much as a disclaimer. On page 90 of this paper, the erroneous argument is made that the Bible does not command immersion. This is the first Landmark Baptist I have ever heard or read who made that outrageous statement.

The article under consideration reflects a reckless disregard for the teachings of the Word of God. As an example, it says,

Any Jew will affirm that wine is used and has always been used in the Passover. The Bible itself affirms that. The Corinthian saints were made *drunken* from the drink in the Passover.

There is not one whit of evidence that the Corinthian church was observing the Passover when these became intoxicated. In fact, most commentators after whom I have read say that

the Corinthian assembly was primarily a Gentile assembly. What would they be doing observing the Passover? **1 Corinthians 11:20-21** *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the*

Lord’s supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. After 43 years in the ministry, this is my first time to hear that the Corinthian assembly came together to observe the Passover when these became drunk. The Passover was just read right into that passage for Paul certainly did not put it there.

Another example of this careless adding to the Word of God is seen in the following

statement,

They came back to Antioch and had a business meeting with the church touching upon what happened during their journey.

What saith the Scripture, Dear Reader? **Acts 14:27-28** *And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.* Do you read anything about a business meeting in those verses? Do you see where the church at Antioch conducted any business at that assembly? When one gets into the habit of reading things into Scripture there is no telling what he can find in the Bible that no one else can find unless he is inclined in the same direction.

More than once the article asserts that there is no command to immerse found in God’s Word. It argues that immersion is only taught by example and erroneously indicates teaching by example is *“precept upon precept”*.

We must be careful about developing the penchant for reading into Scripture that which is not there. When one practices this, he can as handily read **out** of Scripture what **is** there. I refer to his denial that there is any command in Scripture to immerse. I submit that every command to baptize is a command to immerse and can produce many witnesses to that effect. I

“. . . there is no ‘chapter and verse where God directly commands’ baptism by immersion.”

noted that the article cited scriptural examples of immersion, but carefully avoided those verses that directly command immersion.

It is true that we use examples of biblical baptisms to **enforce**

the doctrine that baptism must be by immersion. But, our use of those examples does not negate the fact that the Bible **does indeed command immersion**. As I have already indicated, any and every sound Baptist knows that any command to baptize is a command to immerse. In denying the command to immerse, the article thereby denies the command to baptize.

We call Matthew 28:18-20 “The Great Commission.” **Matthew 28:18-20** *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All*

power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. A commission is a charge to do something.

ROSCOE BRONG BELIEVED BAPTISM WAS COMMANDED FROM HEAVEN

I am reminded of something Bro. Roscoe Brong wrote on baptism. After proving conclusively and unequivocally that the Greek word **BAPTIZO** means immersion, Bro. Brong said, "The baptism *commanded* from heaven is committed only to Baptists." (*Christ's Church and Baptism*, Roscoe Brong, P. 65). Bro. Brong believed there was a command to immerse in Scripture. Bro. Brong was a Baptist. Bro. Brong contended that baptism, *i. e.*, immersion was "*commanded from heaven.*"

The argument that the New Testament does not command immersion is obviously not true. Let the sprinklers and pourers say that immersion is not commanded in Scripture, but not a true Landmark Baptist! The command to baptize is a command to immerse.

The only people I have heard argue otherwise were sprinklers or pourers. The article admits that the Greek word means immersion but denies that immersion is ever commanded in Scripture. What under heaven did Jesus command when he commanded his church to go and make disciples and to baptize those disciples if he did not command them to immerse those disciples? I have read after many Baptist writers on the subject of baptism. Each and every one of them held that baptism is immersion and only immersion is baptism.

S. E. ANDERSON HELD THAT IN BAPTISM (IMMERSION) ONE OBEYS HIS LORD

S. E. Anderson held that baptism was by

immersion. He also argued that that immersion was expressly commanded by God. Under the heading, ***In Baptism One Obeys His Lord***, Bro. Anderson wrote,

Christ commanded, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28: 19). How could any command be more solemnly stated, or be more impressive, or be more binding upon believers? They have no right to change any order of the Captain of their salvation; neither do they have license to ignore or disobey Him. Since this command is binding "unto the end of the world" none dare discontinue it or treat it lightly.

Baptism is the first command of Christ to the new-born believer. No other obligation stands between conversion and baptism. That is why converts in the New Testament were baptized immediately after they accepted Christ, and before they partook of the Lord's Supper. As good soldiers of the Lord, they did not hesitate to put on His uniform.

Faithful pastors and evangelists ought to keep their congregations always informed as to the prerequisites, meanings, and obligations of baptism so that their converts will be prepared at the time of conversion for the ordinance. Then lengthy waiting periods of instruction will not be needed. (*Your Baptism is Important*, Stanley Edwin Anderson, Pp. 55-56).

Since there are evidently others who apparently agree with the article, I am forced to ask, "Do you believe a believer is obeying his Lord when he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Do you believe that Christ commanded his church to go and immerse believers? Do you believe that "the first command of Christ to the new-born believer" is to be immersed?"

BENJAMIN MARCUS BOGARD HELD THAT IMMERSION IS COMMANDED IN SCRIPTURE

Ben M. Bogard was a Landmark Baptist. He held that immersion was commanded in the

". . . there is no command anywhere in Scripture to immerse when we baptize."

great commission. He wrote,

When the Lord commanded the church to baptize those who had become disciples (Matt. 28:18-20) what did He intend should be done? When He said "baptize" the newly made disciples He used a Greek word. To learn the meaning of a Greek word we should look for its meaning in a Greek dictionary. A few samples of what the Greek Lexicons say will suffice.

Liddell & Scott: Baptizo, to dip.

Bagster : Baptizo, to bathe, immerse.

Sapulo : Baptizo, to dip, to immerse.

There is no Greek Lexicon that does not give "to dip" or "immerse" as the primary meaning of "baptizo."

If the Lord had meant for the church to sprinkle the new disciples He would have used the word "rantizo," which primarily means "to sprinkle." If He had meant for the church to pour water on the heads of the new converts He would have used the word "echeo," which primarily means "to pour." If the Lord meant to sprinkle or to pour, why did He use a word which primarily means "to dip"? This fact in itself is sufficient to establish the truth that He meant for the church to dip all who became disciples.

Dare I ask, "Did Christ intend that his church immerse when he commanded them to baptize?"

Every true Landmark Baptist believes that immersion is the only mode of baptism taught in Scripture, in fact, the only mode of baptism that exists. Henry D'Anvers, in his 1675 A. D. answer to Mr. Will, wrote,

Baptizing is dipping In English:

And as for plain word, to dip over head, and ears, the word it self doth it, because dipping, or Emerging, as I make appear against Mr. Will's Sophistry, signifies nothing else, but so putting the thing under water, as to cover it all over; and that not only by the most eminent critics, but the constant usage of the word, both in the Old, and New Testaments.

D'Anvers held that the word baptize means

nothing else than dipping. And dipping is immersion. If one admits that the Bible commands baptism, he is admitting that the Bible commands immersion for that is what baptism is, no more and no less. One could as correctly say "Immersion by baptism" as to say "Baptism by immersion." Or, "Dipping by baptism" as to say, "Baptism by dipping." Or, "Submerging by baptism" as "Baptism by submerging." Or, "Dunking by baptism," as "Baptism by dunking." To say, "Baptism by immersion" is tantamount to saying that there are other modes of baptism. Though we all probably do it at times, it is redundant and superfluous to say, "Baptism by immersion." I repeat that to say that immersion is not commanded in the New Testament is to say that baptism is not commanded

". . . there is no 'chapter and verse where God directly commands' baptism by immersion."

in the New Testament.

Some might be inclined to say, "Surely you have misread the article. Surely it did not mean that immersion is not commanded in the New Testament." Once more I ask the reader to look at this statement. ***"In fact, there is no command anywhere in Scripture to immerse when we baptize."*** How much clearer could it be said than has been written. ***". . . there is no command anywhere in Scripture to immerse when we baptize."*** And again, ***". . . there is no 'chapter and verse where God directly commands' baptism by immersion."***

Every true Landmark Baptist I know holds that baptism is an ordinance of the local church of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, what is an ordinance? According to my Dictionary of Synonyms and my Thesaurus, it is a **command**. It is a **decree**. It is an **order**. It is a **rule**. It is a **regulation**. It is a **law**. It is an **edict**. The suggestion that immersion is not commanded in Scripture is nonsensical absurdity and is plainly unscriptural. On the bottom of page 95 of the latest issue of the paper in which said article appeared, it is written, "We believe that the Lord's church only has the authority to baptize . . ." I am in full agreement with that statement. I am made to wonder, "Do they also believe that ***the Lord's church only has the authority and the***

command to immerse?" Or do they share the erroneous conviction of the author when he said ". . . there is no command anywhere in Scripture to immerse when we baptize"?

It seems to me from Scripture that the rejection of immersion is a rejection of the counsel of God, which certainly implies a command. **Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.**

ELD. MILBURN COCKRELL HOLDS THAT NEW TESTAMENT IMMERSION IS AN INSTITUTION OF HEAVEN AND A COMMAND OF GOD

Someone might object to this heading when they read the following quotes from the pen of Bro. Milburn Cockrell. I will be the first to admit that he never uses the word "immerse" in the following lines. But, Dear Reader, I will stake my life on the fact that anytime Bro. Cockrell uses the word "baptize" or "baptism" with reference to that ordinance he means immersion. I will venture to say that to him New Testament Baptism, the first ordinance of the Lord's churches, is immersion, only immersion, and always immersion.

The question is, of course, **"Does Bro. Milburn Cockrell hold that immersion is commanded in the New Testament?"** It is unequivocally evident that he does. He wrote,

"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized with the baptism of John" (Luke 7:30).

The counsel of God toward the Pharisees and lawyers was the solemn admonition by John to repent, to be baptized and to prepare for the Messiah's kingdom. But this generation of vipers rejected the counsel of God against themselves. This does not mean they frustrated God's eternal purpose, for this can never be. It means that they merely violated His command. The Ethiopic version renders it: "They despised the command of God." By despising His command they rejected

His counsel. This they did to their own hurt or detriment.

From this text we see it is the command of God for a penitent believer to be baptized. To despise and disobey this command is to reject the wise counsel of God. He who rejects what God commands, rejects it to his own injury. It will go ill with any penitent believer who despises and disobeys the mandate of Divine Wisdom.

Bro. Cockrell further commented,

We teach that baptism is the first act of obedience on the part of the saved soul.

If baptism is an act of obedience, then immersion must be commanded in Scripture. To obey means to follow the commands of another. One cannot be obedient in baptism unless there is a command to be baptized, *i. e.*, a command to be immersed. Again, Bro.

Cockrell wrote, Baptists have given their blood in rivers at a martyr's stake because they believed baptism was an institution of Heaven. And again,

We affirm it is essential to obedience and acceptable worship of God.

One would have to be totally blind to doubt that Bro. Cockrell believes that immersion is commanded in the New Testament. Surely no reader has difficulty in seeing that from the quotes above.

THE OLD LANDMARKER J. M. PENDLETON HELD THAT IMMERSION IS THE BELIEVER'S FIRST PUBLIC DUTY

An Old Landmarker by the name of J. M. Pendleton wrote,

In answer to the oft-repeated question, What is Baptism? it may be said, Baptism is the immersion in water, by a proper administrator, of a believer in Christ, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Immersion is so exclusively the baptismal act, that without it there is no baptism; a believer in Christ is so exclusively the subject of baptism, that without such a subject there is no baptism. In these two

. . . there is no 'chapter and verse where God directly commands' baptism by immersion."

statements all Baptists will agree. (*Baptist Church Manual*, J. M. Pendleton, Pp. 64-65).

Pendleton later wrote,

Baptism is the first thing after a person is disciplined to Christ. It is the believer's first public duty. It is the first external manifestation of his internal piety. It is an open avowal of allegiance to Christ. (*Ibid.* P. 94).

In the light of these statements it is obvious that Bro. Pendleton held that baptism is immersion and only immersion. He said, "Immersion is so exclusively the baptismal act, that without it there is no baptism." He also wrote, "It is the believer's first public duty." In another place Pendleton said that "every man of ordinary intelligence knows that it (baptizo) was 'most commonly used'" to refer to immersion.

(*Christian Doctrines*, P. 344). It is apparent that Pendleton held that every command to baptize was indeed and in fact a command to immerse and that "every man of ordinary intelligence knows" that baptism is immersion. Therefore, any command to baptize is, in Pendleton's view, a command to immerse.

J. R. GRAVES HELD THAT THE FIRST COMMAND FOR A NEW CONVERT IS IMMERSION

Let me cite yet another well-known Old Landmarker on this matter of whether or not immersion is commanded in Scripture. I doubt that any Landmarker would deny that J. R. Graves was an Old Landmark Baptist. Did that Old Landmarker hold that baptism was commanded in Scripture? Let us see from his writing. He wrote,

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I command you?

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

"If a man love me, he will keep my words"—commandments."—Christ.

The above are the words of Christ, and fraught with meaning of the utmost moment to each one

of us. The reasonable inference from the above solemn declaration is, That Christ accounts no one as his friend, in fact, that no one loves him, unless he obeys whatsoever things Christ commands him. Now Christian immersion stands first and foremost among the commands Christ enjoined upon all who **profess** to love him—the first and representative of all future obedience—since, embraced in its profession, is the pledge of unqualified and continued obedience in all the requirements of Christ. (*The Relation of Baptism to Salvation*, J. R. Graves, Pp. 5-6).

Graves held, "Christian immersion stands first and foremost among the commands Christ enjoined upon all who **profess** to love him." Not only did Graves believe that Christ commanded "Christian immersion," that Old Landmarker held that "Christian immersion stands first and foremost among the **commands** Christ enjoined upon all who **profess** to love him."

Dear Reader, I say a hearty "AMEN, Bro. Graves." But the the article we are considering says, "No, Bro. Graves, immersion is not commanded in Scripture. There are examples that teach immersion but it is never commanded."

I have already cited the great commission as a command to baptize and I assert and insist that every command to baptize is a command to immerse.

Another verse that sounds very much like a command is **Acts 22:16**. "**And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**" Paul had shortly before been converted. Now, at the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, Ananias says, "**Arise, and be baptized.**"

Another verse that sounds very much like a command is **Acts 2:38**. **Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

Let us hear from some other Baptists on this matter. In the next issue, God willing, we will go

EDITORIAL

THE KIND OF OLD LANDMARKER I AM

(Second in a series)

I wrote last month, "I am the kind of **Old Landmarker** who believes in a truly local church and only in the local church. I believe that to be truly local, a church must assemble in **one place.**" I introduced Eld. J. R. Graves as the first of many witnesses whom I will call. He verified that one of the axioms of true **Old Landmarkism** is that a true New Testament type of assembly was required to assemble in one place. His exact words were, "**The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.**"

While searching through various old papers that I have, I found a single issue of **The Immanuel Light**, March, 1980, which was edited by Eld. Harold J. Harvey and Ed Norris. There was a sermon by Eld. Elton Wilson called **How Local Church Is The Local Church?** Bro. Wilson had used as his text Matt. 18:15-19.

In answer to his question, **How local is the local church**, Bro. Wilson set forth as his first point, **IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO ASSEMBLE.** Some of the proof which Bro. Wilson set forth reads as follows,

Acts 2:1— The church was assembled in one place, in one accord. The apostle Peter preached to this assembled group and the Lord added to this local church about 3,000 people (vs. 41). They continued to assemble and the Lord continued to bless them. So the church of our Lord is not a Radio church or TV church, it is a local assembly.

1 Cor. 11:17— They were coming together.

1 Cor. 5:4— When ye are gathered together.

Heb. 10:25— Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.

The Bible speaks of the church at Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, Colosse, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These were all local churches and not a part of a universal church. The Bible is so positive that when it speaks of the church in a plural sense it

says, "churches".

Of the local church Bro. Wilson made another point. In answer to his question, **How local is the local church?** he wrote,

IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Our Lord instituted His supper with His church (Mark 14:22-25; Matt. 26: 26-29; Luke 22:17-20). In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul instructs this local church on how they were to take the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34). Only members of the local church may examine themselves and take the Lord's supper in the church, where they are a member. Our Lord did not invite other believers to eat His supper and neither do we have the authority to invite other believers to partake of the supper. Only the local church can scripturally partake of the emblems at the Lord's supper.

I fear that some brethren are not exactly consistent on this matter of local-church-observance of the Lord's Supper. I remember a few years ago receiving a report from a missionary in which he was exulting that the pastor had made a visit to the "mission" for a special service and, while there, the "mission" congregation had take the Lord's Supper with the pastor of the sponsoring church administrating. Now folks, that is about as Scriptural as the pastor visiting a sick person in the hospital with two or three other members of the church and observing the supper at the hospital.

This is another problem faced by those churches that have two or more assemblies of baptized believers meeting in two or more places. Yes, Dear Reader, there are some churches that claim to hold to the local-church-only position that have a home base that is sometimes called the "sending church." It is also called the "mother church" or the "sponsoring church." This partial body of the church meets in one place, another part of the body may meet a hundred, a thousand, or 10,000 miles away, and another part of the body may meet in another distant or not-so-distant

location. The body is divided into two, three, or more parts. It never assembles as one, concrete body. It is always divided.

This editor fully agrees with what Bro. Wilson has declared in this sermon. A local church is local enough to assemble. To assemble it must meet in one place, as did the church in Jerusalem and other churches in the New Testament. A local church is local enough to assemble in one place to eat the Lord's Supper. **1 Corinthians 11:20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.** Because of divisions in the church at Corinth, even when they came together in one place they could not scripturally partake of the Lord's Supper. I propose the following question, **"When what is supposed to be a local church is divided into two or more assemblies assembling in two or more places, can any one of those assemblies scripturally observe the supper?"** The supper should only be observed when the church comes together in one place. Divisions render a church incapable of partaking of the supper. These divisions may be doctrinal or practical divisions. Is it not a practical division to have a divided body?

Divisions in a church body are condemned in Scripture. Paul warned the church at Rome to mark those who caused divisions and to avoid them. **Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.**

Paul admonished the church in Corinth to avoid divisions and to be perfectly joined together in mind and judgment. **1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**

Paul issued a scathing rebuke of this assembling assembly in Corinth for divisions that were in that local body. **1 Corinthians 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 1 Corinthians 11:17-19 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly**

believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Now some may make the argument that their division into two or more bodies meeting in two or more places is not the same kind of divisions that existed at Corinth. The church that meets in two or more assemblies in two or more places is nevertheless divided. Part of the body meets in Possum Grape, Arkansas, another part of the body may meet in a city in the Philippines, and another part of its body may meet in some city in Romania. You can't get more divided in the assembly than that. Supposing that your church meets in more than one locality, here is another question, **"Which part of the body has the authority to observe the supper?"** Also, may I ask, **"What gives one part of the body, higher privileges than another part of the body meeting in another place?"** Further, **"Are the members of your church that meet in another locality not second class members if they cannot observe the Lord's Supper while those at the so-called "mother church" can observe the supper?"**

Yet another question occurs to me. What about the equality of members? I don't know of a true Landmark Baptist who will not argue for equality of the membership. Yet, I have known of cases where a church with only a few members sponsored a work in some place and the members in that place soon out numbered the members in the "mother" church. If there is an equality of members in the body, should not the majority rule? Could the group in the mission not outvote the members in the "mother" church? What is to keep them from firing their pastor and calling one of their own number as pastor? If, indeed, majority rules, and if, indeed, the "mission" members are members of the same church as are those at the home base, and if, indeed, members are equal, it could be done. This is a potential problem for those who divide their church body into two or more assemblies meeting in two or more places.

I have also known of cases where a "mission" with more members in the body than there were in the home base decided they should be organized into a church. The fewer members of the "mother" church voted that they could not organize. If there is a true equality of membership, how under

heaven could a few members tell a majority of members they could not organize? If there is a true equality of membership, and the majority of the members of the church vote for the organization service, I see no scriptural ground for a minority in one place denying the vote of the majority in another place. This lordship of a few over the majority should not be so. This practice of operating "missions" is fraught with many pitfalls as is most anything that has no biblical basis. The Old Landmark doctrine that a true New Testament type of ecclesia must assemble in one place would solve this problem.

Bro. Wilson made another point that is worthy of our consideration. He declared that the local church

IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO TEACH DOCTRINE AND PROVIDE FELLOWSHIP FOR ITS MEMBERS.

On this point he observed,

What a joy for God's people to be able to come together in one place and hear the teachings of God's Word. The Word of God is spiritual food to the soul of every born again person. It will provide the needed strength for babes in Christ to grow in grace and knowledge of the truth. We do not want to fail to mention the Christian fellowship that the local church has. No place in all the world is like the assembly of true believers in Christ. No wonder David said, "I was glad when they said unto me let us go unto the house of the Lord."

Thank the Lord for His church that is local enough that I can attend. (From *THE BIBLE BAPTIST REMINDER*, Reprinted in *The Immanuel Light*, March, 1980).

I especially call your attention to these words, "What a joy for God's people to be able to *come together in one place* and hear the teachings of God's Word." Sadly, a divided church with parts of the body meeting in one place, and another part or parts meeting in another place or places, never knows this joy of coming together in one place to hear the Word of God taught. The part of the body that is called the "mother church" may never have the privilege of assembly with the part of the body that meets in a foreign country. The part or parts of the body that

is/are called a mission/missions may never have the joy of assembling with the "mother church."

Even with their divisions, the whole church at Corinth was still able to and did assemble in one place. **1 Corinthians 14:23** *If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?* Here Paul speaks of the **WHOLE CHURCH** coming together into one place.

That Old Landmarker, J. R. Graves laid down as one axiom of **Old Landmarkism** that a true, New Testament type of assembly **MUST ASSEMBLE**, and it **must assemble in one place!** In fact, he wrote, "The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place. This is impossible for a universal or invisible church to do. It was often required to assemble. (Matt. 18: 17; I Cor. 11:18; 14:23.) Discipline, baptism and the Lord's Supper could only be administered by the assembled church." (Old Landmarkism, P. 40).

I ask anyone to affirm that a true New Testament ecclesia can regularly meet in two or more localities in two or more cities, in two or more states, in two or more countries, or on two or more continents, and still be called a local church. I ask anyone to affirm that such a divided body can scripturally observe the Lord's Supper. I believe that a true New Testament type of assembly is, as Graves declared, to assemble in one place. **"The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place."** As Bro. Elton Wilson has so ably declared, I believe that the local church **"is local enough to assemble in one place and observe the Lord's Supper."** And, Dear Reader, I am not alone in this position. Before I am finished with this study, I will present 30 or more witnesses to this position. Some are still living today and others are dead. But, the writings of both the dead and the living testify that Graves, Wilson, and I are right on this matter. **"The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place."**

THAT IS THE KIND OF OLD LANDMARKER I AM!!!! —Wayne Camp, Editor—

Bouquets and Brickbats

WWW: Since I'm a Roman Catholic and pride of it I would like to know are you a Roman Catholic or someone that looks at a faith and because you don't really know what you are talking about you just like to spins tales from the evil side. If you are a Catholic I believe you better start at the beginning of your faith and work towards the present. If you are just a person that likes to talk about a religion you don't even understand or care to learn about. then I suggest you take up reading and studying my faith you just might be suprized of what you learn. I've talked to other people like you and for some reason you just talk on and on about something you know nothing about and the problem is you are to self centered to even listen. Why is it always the Catholic faith that you people pick on. Don't continue being ignorant. Could it be that the evil side has you so blind and dumb that you can't think or are you just like others I know that read scripture and pull what you want to believe. If you are going to study scripture study the whole text don't be so narrow minded.

A PROUD ROMAN CATHOLIC

WWW: Thank God we live in a nation where we can express ourselves freely. After that sir, you missed it. Mary had the seed of Jesus placed in her by God because she was the first believer in the blood line of David that would in her heart, Belive. You know, have the Faith. Remember that was a time where you could be stoned for an out of wedlock relationship. Also Joseph "took his wife" after the conception and before the birth. Remember, the angel tells Joe to take his wife. She was only a virgin at conception, not at the birth. Study a bit, you'll see it. It's OK to celebrate a birth, if fact, God tells us this. Jesus, was born in Sept. That's why I don't observe Dec 25. We also know there are a dozen other reasons why Dec 25 is pagan related.

CALIFORNIA: I do not receive your paper via USPS. I visit your page on the net every once in a while. Your web page has provided me with numerous very good articles over the years. (Yes even the one on "wine") Your articles on the 'five points' are superb. I have shared them

with many. Your page is a constant blessing. Thank you for the work that you put into your web page! It is a much needed part of the web. I would be very blessed if I were added to your mailing list.

WWW: I'm thankful for this article on gambling. I believe that I'm a Christian and can truthfully say that I'm not a habitual gambler by any means. I don't play the lottos, I don't get into the drawings, etc.. What I wish to relate is an experience I just had over Labor Day weekend (Mon.-Tues.). I went to Niagara Falls for an overnight vacation, and had no real conscious intention of gambling. Anyhow, I did end up going to the Casino with the thought that I'd "play 4 or 5 dollars in the slot machines". I put \$2-\$3 worth in, and, sure enough, I started winning some money. I cashed out with about \$30 (and figured out later that I had probably spent about 15 or 20). My point? I felt drawn to go back a few more times, and I'd watch a ten disappear, then a twenty, then finally a five. Since I knew now how much I was putting in I had no illusions of thinking I was winning more than I was playing. After playing the last \$5 slot, an alarm finally went off in my head..."You're done, get out of there! You don't belong here at all!" That I can only attribute to the Grace of God since I realized that I'd gotten out of control (I ended up spending about \$40 that weekend, which was \$35 more than I had originally wished to spend)! This is just over 2 days, and my week has been miserable as I've been pondering my actions and recognizing more and more that this was indeed a sin. While I know some would say "Hey, \$40 isn't any big deal-don't worry so much about it.", I know between me and the Lord that only the Spirit of God finally restrained me and got me out of there! I can honestly say that I have no ongoing, continuous desire to repeat this experience and truly hope that God will Grace me by His Spirit never to set foot in a Casino again!

One more thing I wished to add-since I had never really seriously considered this issue from a Scriptural perspective (as I stated, other than this one experience I've pretty much avoided gambling and had never previously been plagued with the desire). I've been surfing

the web for articles just like yours so that I can gain a better Scriptural perspective on it. Being convicted at the outset of a sin such as gambling is better than being vague about it. Maybe if I'd read an article such as this or heard a sermon like this I wouldn't have been as prone to enter a casino at all! Maybe this experience will help others-"all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose". May God Grant His Mercy to me a sinner!

INDIA: Greetings in Jesus' Name! Today only I found your article in the web. Thank you. May God bless you abundantly so that you can serve Him more and more especially from now on when we are bout to meet Him.

WWW: I see that you don't believe in celebrating Christmas because, as I think I understand what you are saying, it is a pagan holiday and we should stay away from paganism.

I take it then that you are against brides using viels in weddings as this was a pagan belief that spirits could invade the bride before she was

wedded. I also assume that you are against saying "bless you" after someone sneezes as this too is based on a pagan concept. The concept was that by sneezing, you were then opening the door for evil spirits to enter the person. Finally, I assume that you are also against wedding rings because they too are from pagan traditions and beliefs.

I hope that you do not do any of the above. Afterall, while I might not agree with your stance or beliefs on such things, you would at least be consistent.

OHIO: My name is _____ I live in Chesapeake VA. I receive your paper every month and enjoy reading it.

I have a question from the August issue from the section on the eternal mystery. I have always wondered about how souls were saved in the Old Testament. I know that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice before the foundation of the world but in time he did not come to this earth until after a few thousand years had past.

It is a great mystery that I do not understand and would ask if you could provide some of your wisdom on the subject. Thank you Bro. Camp.

WWW: PK is godly men, why don't you judge them by thier fruits, moron.

WWW: RE: Is This Hatred. this very statement defies that which you proclaim...

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