

CHAPTER II.

Facts and axioms, with their logical inferences demonstrative of the one fact, that, of the thirty-four sects in America, only one can be an Evangelical Church—"The Branch Church," "The Army Church," "The Breastplate Church," "The Rainbow Church," "The Currency Church," and "Universal Church," theories refuted.—The admission that opposing sects are Evangelical Churches fraught with disastrous consequences—(1) It yields the claims of Baptist Churches to be evangelical; (2) It must have a direct influence to infidelize the nation.—Infidel France.

That the reader may clearly apprehend the objections I am about to make to the statements of most Baptist authors who have preceded me in the discussion of the Communion question, it will be necessary for me to lay down a few fundamental facts, which every intelligent, unprejudiced Christian will, I think, admit.

FIRST FACT.

That Christ, while upon the earth, did set up a visible kingdom, of which each local church is an integral or constituent part.

It is enough to refer the reader to the fact that all the prophets which foretold the coming of Israel's Messiah and the world's Redeemer, declared it to be a part of his mission to "set up a kingdom" on this earth, unlike earthly kingdoms in the beneficence of its mission, the character of its subjects, and the unchangeableness of its duration. Daniel says: "In the days of these kings"—the Roman Emperors—"the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom"—but **one** kingdom and **visible**—"which shall not be given to other people, but it shall stand forever." Christ did appear on earth in the days of the Cæsars—the kings of the fourth Universal Empire—and his herald announced this fulfillment of the prophecy in these words: "The kingdom of heaven has approached," and subsequently, the king himself, in the same language.

From this we learn that this visible kingdom of visible saints did not exist upon this earth prior to or in the days of Daniel (600 B. C.); and, since it is composed of visible churches as its constituents, we decide that Christ had no visible Christian Church or churches prior to his advent. We learn from his own lips that he did have a visible kingdom on earth. He could say in truth, that "the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you," which would have been impossible if that kingdom had then no **visible** existence. He could in truth declare that "from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffered violence—*i. e.*, was assaulted—and that the violent—his enemies—take it by force"—violent persons are endeavoring to ravage or destroy it. Christ explained what he meant in the next verse, but the translators have put other words in his mouth than those he used. "For," said Christ, as recorded by Matthew, "all the prophets and the law prophesied until John"—and Luke finishes the sentence (xvi: 16)—"since which time the kingdom of heaven is preached, and every one is

violently opposing it,”¹—not all men are pressing into it, which would make Christ contradict his statements throughout the whole chapter and the preceding one, but his general statements throughout the Gospels (read especially vs. 16-26). John the Baptist bore direct testimony to the statement of Christ, that all men (comparatively) opposed his kingdom. “He that cometh from heaven is above all; and what he hath seen and heard that he testifieth, and **no man receiveth his testimony.**”—Jno. iii: 32.

Christ, in definite terms, declared that his kingdom was present; and upon the soil of Judea, and within the jurisdiction of Herod, “my kingdom is among you, not within you.”—*See Alford.*

SECOND FACT.

Christ never set up on earth but ONE kingdom, which is a visible one, composed of his true churches as constituencies.

THIRD FACT.

Christ did not “set up” his kingdom of constituencies in deadly antagonism to each other, and in open rebellion to his authority also – a kingdom CONSTITUTIONALLY divided against itself – of materials so heterogeneous and discordant that they could never be “fitly framed together.”

Christ, the Founder, hath said:

“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.”

But Christ’s kingdom is never to be brought to desolation, but is to stand forever; and, therefore, it is not divided against itself—composed of discordant and antagonistic constituencies—churches.

DIRECT INFERENCES FROM THESE FACTS.

FIRST INFERENCE.—That these constituencies of Christ’s kingdom are each and all the equals of each other in every quality that constitutes logical **differentia**—*i.e.*, essential qualities.

In a Christian **ecclesia**—church—the essential features are—1. The character of its members; 2. Organization; 3. Ordinances, with their respective designs or symbolisms; 4. Fundamental doctrines, etc.

I shall take it for granted that my readers will admit that the essential features of a visible church of Christ are clearly revealed to us by Christ and his apostles, so that we need not err in the description; and—

That no organization, however old, numerous or respectable, or however pious and saintly its members, can rightly be called a Christian or **evangelical** church, unless it possesses the divine essentials of a true church of Christ.

This statement of the late Bishop Doggett is in place here:

¹ The natural force of the terms **biazo** and **harpazo**, in Greek usage, is to indicate the violent action of an enemy, and not the loving movement of friends, *e.g.* **biazesthai ton parthenon** and **biazemia auton**, to do oneself violence – to kill oneself. **Eis** before the accusative, with **biazo**, indicating hostile intent, means to *force against*, *i.e.* to assault, to violently assail. See Harrison on **Eis**, with verbs of hostile motion, p. 213.

“We do not suppose that any unprejudiced mind would call any body of men or women the true church—**so particularly described by the inspired writers as the true church has been**—unless it comes up fairly and fully, in every minute particular, to a description proceeding from that wisdom that could not err in the description in any remote or conceivable degree.”

The churches of Christ, then, are not diverse the one from the other, but the equals of each other, having the same character of **membership**, the same **form of organization**, the same **ordinances** in form and design, and holding and teaching the same fundamental **doctrines**.

SECOND INFERENCE.—That the popular “church-brand theory” is a bad absurdity. This theory—which is so popular with all those ministers and members who pride themselves upon being “undenominational Christians”—is that the leading popular “sects,” at least, variant and antagonistic though they be, are branches of “The Church” of Christ—the constituents of his kingdom visible! Branch is a relative term, and necessarily implies a **trunk** or **body**; but these people are unable to tell us what or where the **trunk** of this tree is! The absurdity of this conception must be apparent to the dullest comprehension, when one thinks of a tree bearing **natural** branches of **sixty-three different kinds of wood, and without a body!**

THIRD INFERENCE.—That the “Church Army” theory is equally absurd with the former. This theory, so popular with the “broad-gauge” preachers and members, is that all the different denominations compose but one allied army, Christ being the “Captain,” and the various sects the regiments, brigades, etc., and the different **creeds** the **flags** under which they fight, etc.

This theory sadly breaks down when we recall the fact that the various parts of an army are all under the **same laws** and **regulations**, drilled by the **same tactics**, and not in deadly conflict with each other,—regiment against regiment, and brigade against brigade, as the different denominations called “churches” have ever been from the day they were originated, are today, and must be to the end of time, so long as they hold and teach different and antagonistic doctrines. They are not fighting a common foe, but are endeavoring to betray and deliver each other over to a common enemy.

FOURTH INFERENCE.—We learn that the “Breastplate theory,” and the “Rainbow theory,” (Dr. Burrows), and the “Currency-Church theory” (gold, silver, nickel and copper, representing the different churches of different values—Lorrimer), are all equally fallacious and God dishonoring, though so popular with all our “go-easy” preachers and members. The simple fact being, that **paste**, in a breastplate, or anywhere else, **is not a gem**, however illusive, no more than an unscriptural Church is a ray of real light, or a counterfeit coin, currency, in any sense, but a cheat and a fraud.

FIFTH INFERENCE.—The above facts equally lay bare the absurdity of the “Universal Church theory”—a church theory so popular with all pedobaptist theologians, and those Baptists who are their disciples.

This theory is, that all the different and opposing sects—the respectable ones at least, taken together constitute “The Church and Kingdom of Christ visible.” The fatal disease of this theory is, that it squarely antagonizes with the first **fact**—that the constituencies of Christ’s kingdom must be concordant and equal the one to the other, else Christ would have a kingdom divided against itself. But the various denominations which “liberalists” call Christian and **Evangelical** Churches, are discordant and irremediably divided against themselves, and engaged, like the men who sprang up from the dragon teeth, in destroying each other. If any one should succeed in obtaining the universality it is striving for, it would annihilate every other Church of Christ from the face of the earth! One part of the kingdom destroying and swallowing up all the rest! As I have said, it is too **preposterously absurd** to be put forth by men who have any

respect for the wisdom of the Divine Founder of the Christian Institution called a Church of Christ. Infidels could wish for no better argument against Christ or Christianity. I honestly believe that more infidels are made by those who teach these absurd and unscriptural church theories than by all the speeches and writings of avowed infidels themselves. Convince a man that Christ did originate all these diverse sects, and that he really is the Author of all the absurd and contradictory doctrines and systems of faith, if not a **fool**, he must be an **infidel**. Christ has no more two Churches, one visible and the other invisible, than he has two kingdoms.

FOURTH FACT.

There are in American alone fifty-four distinct sects of professed Christians, all diverse, and most of them radically differing from each other in the **essential elements** of a Church of Christ, but each claiming to be alone conformed, or at least, more than any other conformed—to the scriptural model of a Christian Church. Now the unthinking multitude is taught, from the pulpit and the press, to believe and to call all these antagonistic sects, **Evangelical Churches**, which means Scriptural Churches of Christ, and equally entitled to our Christian consideration; and that it is proof of “intolerant bigotry” to deny that they are not all Churches of Christ, or that any one is more conformed to the scriptural pattern than any other, or that one alone is so conformed. This is a plain statement of an existing fact.

The honest Christian has but one alternative, either to stultify his reason and common sense, and admit what he knows to be false, or he must dare the burning fiery furnace of a perverted public opinion, which modern and idolatrous liberality has prepared, heated to a sevenfold intenser heat by sectarian hate than it is wont to be heated for any other offense.

There is no proposition easier demonstrated than that two—must less two score—different and unequal things can not be equally true or equal to a third thing.

I will state two Axioms that will apply to this subject as well as to mathematics.

FIRST AXIOM.

Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other.

And its converse—

SECOND AXIOM.

Things unequal to each other can not all be equal to the same thing—one, and only one, may be.

This is but the equivalent to the truth stated in another axiomatic form.

THIRD AXIOM.

Of contradictory propositions, if one be true all the others are false.

Now apply these axioms. There are fifty-four sects in America, each claiming to be equal to the same thing—an Evangelical Church—but are they equal to each other in all the elements essential to an evangelical church? Ask each one separately to testify concerning the others, and each will deny that the others are equal to itself or to the evangelical model. The question is thus answered by themselves: Try their claims by the second axiom. Are these fifty-four sects unequal to each other—any two of them essentially alike? Put the question to their respective representatives, and they will affirm that each is widely, if not vitally, unlike the others, and this unlikeness is their sectarian glory. It is the boast and glory of Methodists that

they are radically unlike the Presbyterians in doctrines and organization, and in all the distinguishing features of Methodism. So it is of the Presbyterians, that they are unlike the Methodists, and so of each of the other denominations. They all can not be equal to the same thing—an evangelical church; if one is evangelical, whether that one be the Catholic, or the Methodist, or a Baptist Church, **only that one** is an evangelical or scriptural church.

Try these sects by the third. That the creeds or faiths of those sects are diverse and contradictory, needs no proof. Who could conceive of two creeds, touching the vital doctrine of grace, more contradictory than the Calvinism or Presbyterianism and the Arminianism of Methodism in common with Catholicism? Or that of the Baptists and Campbellism? They are the very **antipodes** of each other. All these fifty-four **contradictory** sects, built upon as many contradictory propositions, can not be equally true—if one is evangelical, only one can be. Now, if this be a fact, ought not every honest Christian—and can a Christian practice habitual dishonesty, falsehood, and deception?—to say so, though the burning fiery furnace stands in appalling fierceness before his eyes? Has he not a God able to deliver, if not to place on his brow a martyr's glorious crown?

I have said all this to prepare the reader to see the force of this irresistible mathematical conclusion. If I should affirm that the Catholic is an **evangelical** church, would I not thereby affirm that Baptist churches, and all the other fifty-three sects, were not evangelical? And so of any other one, should I admit any one to be evangelical, it would be affirming that only that one is evangelical; while, if I should admit that all were evangelical, I would convict myself of—what? I will not say of hypocrisy, but of **self-stultification**.

The reader can now understand the force of my complaint, that so many—nearly all—Baptist authors, who have written on the Communion question, have admitted that Protestant denominations—if not Campbellites also—are “**Christian** denominations,” “evangelical churches,” “Christian churches.”

I complain for two reasons—I. The admission is fatal to the claims of Baptist churches to be evangelical, or Christian, as we have seen above. In attempting to defend strict Communion, every one who has made this admission, has surrendered his denomination; 2. It is a concession to infidelity fatal to Christianity. (1.) It admits that Christ is the originator of fifty-four conflicting faiths, and that he, himself, originated, or authorized the origination, of fifty-four antagonistic organizations, that must, from their very constitution, be in perpetual conflict until one shall have exterminated all the rest,—a kingdom divided against itself, which the founders of earthly kingdoms would not think of doing; and (2.) It concedes to infidels, that the oceans of blood that have been shed in religious persecutions, all the martyr fires that have been kindled, and all the racks and instruments of infernal torture that have been invented, have been shed, and kindled, invented and use by the **evangelical** churches of Christ, upon evangelical churches, Christians playing the **role** of infernal **fiends** upon their fellow Christians! Make the world believe this, and will it be strange if it should rise up with demoniacal frenzy and spurn Christianity from the land as the red-armed butcher of innocency, **a fraud** upon human reason, and a damning **curse** to the race? It was the like of this that smote France with centuries of infidelity. It was the Catholic church, claiming to be the very embodiment of Christianity, while she proved herself the direst foe of humanity. **Scarlet**, but with the blood of saints and the purest and truest patriots of earth. **Mother**, indeed, but of those twin evils, and direst of all abominations, civil and religious tyrannies which she hung in double conjunction over the sky of Europe and France for half a century,—like the plague-struck sun of the apocalypse, tormenting the nations. It was with respect to **Catholicism**, as Christianity, and not toward **Christianity**

itself that France was infidel; and unless we would impregnate the veins of our populations with the **virus** of a like maddening unbelief, let us not, in God's name, teach them that Christianity has been the torture-armed inquisitor of the centuries; that evangelical churches have gored their spotless robes in the blood of their own children, or even denied to mortal man the divine and indefeasible boon of absolute religious freedom.

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The Center for Theological Research
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Fort Worth, Texas
Malcolm B. Yarnell, III, Director