

# The Baptist Examiner

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).<sup>87</sup>

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## The Great Commission And The Church<sup>80</sup>

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(Being half of the first chapter of a hitherto unpublished book entitled: "Christian Union and The Great Commission.")<sup>75</sup>

"And Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth; <sup>87</sup> go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even <sup>95</sup> unto the end of the age"—Matt. 28:18-20.<sup>18</sup>

The Duke of Wellington called this the marching orders of the ministry; but it would be more correct to call it the marching orders of the churches, for this commission was not given to ministers, but to churches.<sup>174</sup>

### Some Patent Points.

I. The author of this commission is Jesus Christ, the only Lord and lawgiver of his churches.<sup>90</sup>

Men may establish their own churches, and give to them man-made laws; but they have no right to make laws for the blood-bought churches of Christ.<sup>117</sup> "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," said Christ.<sup>67</sup>

II. The commission was given to an organized body of believers, known as His church, which He had already constituted.<sup>13</sup>

The following points are not only self-evident, but preeminently scriptural:<sup>44</sup>

1. The commission was not given to the apostles as such, for in that case the commission would have ceased at the death of the last apostle; the apostles having no successors.<sup>140</sup>

2. The commission was not given to preachers as such, for that would keep it out of the churches [and would make preachers the pillar and ground

of the truth instead of the church.]<sup>134</sup> See 1 Tim. 3:15.—Ed.]

3. The commission was not given to individual disciples, for in that case the churches would not be the custodians of the gospel; and would have no authority to execute any part of the commission. This would leave the churches without a mission in the world.<sup>218</sup>

4. The commission was not given to Christ's enemies, for they would not carry out his will among men.<sup>78</sup>

*As stated above, this article comprises half of the first chapter of a hitherto unpublished book. In response to our request that he furnish something for publication in this paper the author of this book kindly sent us the first chapters. We begin the publication of the book in this issue with the intention of continuing it in succeeding issues. The book deals instructively with some very timely and interesting questions. Other chapters deal with the relation between the commission and alien immersion, open communion, pulpit affiliation, union meetings, a basis of union, missions, Christian education.*

*Unionism is the order of the day in so-called Christendom. Therefore, we covet for this book a wide reading and close study.*

*Also the contention of this first chapter that the commission was given to the church is significant in view of modern mission methods that leave nothing for the church to do, except to foot the bills.*

*Wherever the author is known, he is acknowledged to be an eminent Bible teacher and preacher. Verily, he is "mighty in the scriptures."—Editorial Note.*<sup>925</sup>

5. The commission was not given to those who profess to love Christ, but are fundamentally wrong in doctrine, for this would send down through the centuries the very opposite of what Christ wanted.<sup>161</sup>

6. The commission was not given to a false church, for such an institution would divert, invert, and pervert the whole system of salvation and service.<sup>121</sup>

Then to whom was the commission given? It was given to the church Christ had already constituted.<sup>99</sup>

III. Jesus Christ constituted His own church during His personal ministry on earth, and, as an institution, he called it "my church," saying: "Upon this rock I will build my church."<sup>139</sup>

Let the following be well considered:<sup>31</sup>

I. What does the word "church" mean? Some would have us believe it means a religious denomination, as the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Christian Church, the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church, the Catholic Church, etc. Others teach that it is all the saved considered together, including the saints of the past and present upon the earth and those in heaven. Still there are others who think it means a kind of

"trunk," out of which all religious sects grow as branches. Yet others would have us believe that it is invisible, and is known only to the eye of God. Finally, some think it is a state church, such as the Church of France, the Church of England, etc. But such designations are foreign to the scriptures, as we shall see.<sup>515</sup>

Light is thrown upon the meaning of the word "church" from two sources:<sup>56</sup>