

The Church

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Perhaps no institution on earth has been more misunderstood and abused than the church Jesus established. In a sense, of course, the church is not an institution but a group of people. In another sense, however, while differing from all other institutions, it is an institution which possesses a visible identity, and which is to be organized and operated in a certain way. In discussing the church, I do not refer to the competing counterfeit institutions that men have begotten, but that glorious, vibrant, Spiritual kingdom described in the New Testament. None have abused it or misunderstood it more than those who have founded their own religious orders and foisted them off on a gullible public as part of the Divine institution. Under such banners as "One church is as good as another" and "It makes no difference what you believe as long as you're sincere," the believing world has become convinced that Scripture-teaching concerning the organization, worship, purpose, purity, and overall pattern for the church is unimportant.

Such a position is satanic, both in its origin and consequence. One may as well say that "One death is as good as another to redeem man from sin" as to say that "One church is as good as another." If it makes no difference **what** one believes as long as he is sincere, then it likewise makes no difference **why** one believes as long as he is sincere. The world has swallowed this so fully that mere men are being followed and respected far more than is Christ. If what the Scriptures teach about the church is unimportant, who is to say that what the Scriptures teach about stealing, lying, murder, adultery, etc., is important? If one can found a church like he wants it, ignoring the Divine pattern, why can't another construct a plan of salvation to his own liking (which many have done)? If the Bible can be ignored concerning the church, why can't it be ignored concerning the virgin birth, Jesus' miracles, the atoning crucifixion, or the resurrection?

The only way to have the New Testament church in existence in any age is to carefully reproduce what the Scriptures teach concerning it. Christ alone knows what He wants His church to be and to do and He has revealed this only in His Word. We call all men back to this infallible rule.

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