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ECCLESIA

by B.H. Carroll

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ECCLESIA

THE CHURCH

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“Revival Messages,” etc.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

LECTURE ONE - Etymology of Ecclesia

LECTURE TWO - Usage of Ecclesia

APPENDIX - Passages Listed in the Classics, Septuagint, Apocrypha and New Testament

INTRODUCTION

A theory that is held by most of Christendom today is that the New Testament Church is a “universal, invisible” church not to be confused with the “local” church. This theory is believed throughout Protestantism and now a sizeable element of Baptists have accepted this theory also.

Dr. B. H. Carroll has written this book in order to prove the falsity of this concept and to prove that the New Testament Church is to be considered as local and visible and not universal and invisible, and this book is a very strong defense of the New Testament Church.

However, this book does contain one weakness. Dr. Carroll does interpret some Scriptures as referring to the “Glory Church” which he states does not exist now but is still future. Dr. Carroll has stated that “the general assembly, by all accounts, includes all the saved.”

Roy Mason in his book “**The Myth of the Universal Invisible Church Theory Exploded**” has pointed out how inconsistent this position really is. He writes:

To hold that the church is local and visible, and is a continuation of the institution that Christ started and promised to perpetuate, then to shift from this, the true church, and to teach that the church that finally assembles over yonder will be composed of all of these redeemed regardless of whether they ever belonged to any church or not, is an inexcusable contradiction. If that were true, then several other things would have to be true:

1 - As already argued, the Bride would turn out to be different from the one betrothed to Christ.

2 - Christ’s promise that nothing would prevail against His church, would be proven false, for the institution started by Him would completely flop, for the church in Glory would prove to be a different thing entirely.

3 - In such case, there would be no reward for the church that endured endless persecution for Christ, and that furnished fifty million martyrs for the defense of His truth.

4 - Why should so much be made of the church that Jesus started? Why should its truth be defended so arduously? Why should members of this church have been willing to die for their beliefs, if in the final windup, the ultimate triumph is to be given to those who - some of them - persecuted

those of the true church, or else ignored or disdained the true church? If all believers are to constitute the church in Glory - the Bride - then in the climax the church turns out to be something different than Christ's church here on this earth. (Pages 62-63)

In spite of this weakness, we believe that this book can serve a very useful purpose in helping to expose this heresy that has done so much harm to the New Testament Church, the universal, invisible church heresy.

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LECTURE 1

ECCLESIA - THE CHURCH

“And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” - ~~41638~~Matthew 16:18, 19.

This passage, ~~41638~~Matthew 16:18, 19, has been for many centuries a battle-ground of theological controversies. Though millions of the disputants have passed away, the questions which arrayed them against each other still survive to align their successors in hostile array.

The most important of these divisive questions are:

1. What is the church?
2. Who established it and when?
3. What the foundation?
4. What the “gates of hell?”
5. What the “keys?”
6. What the “binding and loosing?”

In this lecture there will be time for answer to the first question only:

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

From the given list of passages, taken from the Englishman’s Greek Concordance, and which you may verify by reference to the Bible, it appears that the word *Ecclesia*, usually rendered “church” in our version, occurs 117 times in the Greek New Testament (omitting ~~41677~~Acts 2:47 as not in the best texts).

Our Lord and the New Testament writers neither coined this word nor employed it in any unusual sense. Before their time it was in common use, of well-understood signification, and subject like any other word to varied employment, according to the established laws of language. That is, it might be used abstractly, or generically, or particularly, or prospectively, without losing its essential meaning.

To simplify and shorten the work before us, we need not leave the New Testament to find examples of its classic or Septuagint use. Fair examples of both are in the list of New Testament passages given you.

What, then, etymologically, is the meaning of this word?

Its primary meaning is: An organized assembly, whose members have been properly called out from private homes or business to attend to public affairs. This definition necessarily implies prescribed conditions of membership.

- (1) This meaning, substantially, applies alike to the *ecclesia* of a self-governing Greek state (^{418B}Acts 19:39);
- (2) the Old Testament *ecclesia* or convocation of National Israel (^{417B}Acts 7:38); and
- (3) to the New Testament *ecclesia*.

When, in this lesson, our Lord says: “On this rock I will build MY *ecclesia*” while the “my” distinguished His *ecclesia* from the Greek state *ecclesia* and the Old Testament *ecclesia*, the word itself naturally retains its ordinary meaning.

Indeed, even when by accommodation, it is applied to an irregular gathering (^{418D}Acts 19:32, 41) the essential idea of *assembly* remains.

Of the 117 instances of use in the New Testament certainly all but five (^{417B}Acts 7:38; 19:32, 39, 42; ^{812D}Hebrews 2:12) refer to Christ’s *ecclesia*. And since ^{812D}Hebrews 2:12, though a quotation from the Old Testament, is prophetic, finding fulfillment in New Testament times, we need not regard it as an exception. These 113 uses of the word, including ^{812D}Hebrews 2:12, refer either to the *particular assembly* of Jesus Christ on earth, or to His general assembly in glory (heaven).

Commonly, that is, in nearly all the uses, it means: The particular assembly of Christ’s baptized disciples on earth, as “The church of God which is at Corinth.”

To this class necessarily belong all abstract or generic uses of the word, for whenever the abstract or generic finds concrete expression, or takes operative shape, it is always a particular assembly.

This follows from the laws of language governing the use of words.

For example, if an English statesman, referring to the right of each individual citizen to be tried by his peers, should say: “On this rock England will build her *jury* and all power of tyrants shall not prevail against it,” he uses the term *jury* in an *abstract* sense, i.e., in the sense of an *institution*. But when this institution finds *concrete* expression, or becomes operative, it is always a particular jury of twelve men, and *never an aggregation of all juries into one big jury*.

Or if a law writer should say: “In trials of fact, by oral testimony, the court shall be the judge of the law, and the jury shall be the judge of the facts,” and if he should

add: “In giving evidence, the witness shall tell what he knows to the jury, and not to the court,” he evidently uses the term “court,” “jury” and “witness” in a generic sense. But in the application the *generic* always becomes *particular* - i.e., a particular judge, a particular jury, or a particular witness, and *never an aggregate of all judges into one big judge, nor of all juries into one big jury, nor of all witnesses into one big witness*. Hence we say that the laws of language require that all abstract and generic uses of the word *ecclesia* should be classified with the particular assembly and not with the general assembly.

As examples of the abstract use of *ecclesia* that is in the sense of and *institution*, we cite ^{<163>}Matthew 16:18; ^{<180>}Ephesians 3:10, 21.

^{<187>}Matthew 18:17 is an example of *generic* use. That is, it designates the *kind* (genus) of tribunal to which difficulties must be referred without restriction of application to any one particular church by name. I mean that while its application must always be to a particular church, yet it is not restricted to just one, as the church at Jerusalem, but is equally applicable to every other particular church.

As when Paul says: “The husband is the head of the wife,” the terms “husband” and “wife” are not to be restricted in application to John Jones and his wife, but apply equally to every other specific husband and wife.

But while nearly all of the 113 instances of the use of *ecclesia* belong to the particular class, there are some instances, as ^{<123>}Hebrews 12:23, and ^{<163>}Ephesians 5:25-27, where the reference seems to be to the general assembly of Christ. But in every case the *ecclesia* is *prospective*, not actual. That is to say, there is *not now*, but there *will be* a general assembly of Christ’s people. That general assembly will be composed of all the redeemed of all time.

Here are three indisputable and very significant facts concerning Christ’s general assembly:

- (1) Many of its members, properly called out, are now in heaven.
- (2) Many others of them, also called out, are here on earth.
- (3) An indefinite number of them, yet to be called, are neither on earth nor in heaven, because they are yet unborn, and therefore non-existent.

It follows that if one part of the membership is now in heaven, another part on earth, another part not yet born, *there is as yet no assembly*, except in prospect.

And if a part are as yet non-existent, how can one say the general assembly *exists now*?

We may, however, properly speak of the general assembly now, because, though part of it yet non-existent, and though there has not yet been a gathering together of the other two parts, yet, the mind may *conceive* of that gathering as an accomplished fact.

In God's purposes and plans, the general assembly exists now, and also in our conceptions or anticipations, but certainly not as a fact. The details of God's purpose are now being worked out, and the process will continue until all the elect have been called, justified, glorified and *assembled*.

Commenting on our lesson, Broadus says:

“In the New Testament the *spiritual* Israel, never actually assembled, is sometimes conceived of as an ideal congregation or assembly, and this is denoted by the word *ecclesia*.”

Here Broadus does not contrast “spiritual Israel” with a particular church of Christ, but with national or carnal Israel.

The object of the gospel, committed to the particular assembly in time, is to call out or summon those who shall compose the general assembly in eternity.

When the calling out is ended, and all the called are glorified then the present concept of a general assembly will be a fact. *Then and only then actually, will all the redeemed be an ecclesia*. Moreover, this *ecclesia in glory* will be the real body, temple, flock of our Lord.

But the only *existing* representation or type of the *ecclesia in glory* (i.e., the general assembly) is the particular assembly on earth.

And because each and every particular assembly is the representation, or type, of the general assembly, to each and every one of them is applied all the broad figures which pertain to the general assembly. That is, such figures as “the house of God,” “the temple of the Lord.” “the body.” or “flock.” The New Testament applies these figures, just as freely and frequently, to the particular assembly as to the general assembly. That is,, to any one particular assembly, by itself alone, *but never to all the particular assemblies collectively*.

There is no unity, no organization, nor gathering together and, hence, no *ecclesia* or assembly of particular congregations collectively. *So also the term ecclesia cannot be rationally applied to all denominations collectively, nor to all living professors of religion, nor to all living believers collectively*. In no sense are any such unassembled aggregates an *ecclesia*. None of them constitute the flock, temple,

body or house of God, either as a type of time or a reality of eternity. These terms belong exclusively either to the particular assembly now or the general assembly hereafter.

A man once said to me, “How dare you apply such broad terms as ‘The house of God.’ ‘The body of Christ,’ ‘The temple of the Lord,’ to your little fragment of a denomination?” My reply was, I do not apply them to any denomination, nor to any aggregate of the particular congregations of any or of all denominations, but the Scriptures do apply every one of them to *a particular* New Testament congregation of Christ’s disciples.

Here the Word of God:

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul says:

“In whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit” (⁴⁰²Ephesians 2:21, 22, R.V.).

Here are two distinct affirmations:

First - Each several building or particular assembly growth into a holy temple of the Lord. That is by itself, it is a temple of the Lord.

Second - What is true of each is true of the church at Ephesus, “In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Just before this he had written of the church as an *institution*, or abstractly, in which Jew and Gentile are made into one. But the abstract becomes concrete in each several building.

To the elders of this same particular church at Ephesus he said: “Take heed to yourselves, and to *all the flock*, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, *to feed the church of the Lord* which he purchased with his own blood” - ⁴⁰³Acts 20:28.

This flock, this church of the Lord, purchased by His own blood, is a particular assembly.

Again to the particular church at Corinth Paul wrote: “Ye are God’s building - ye are *a temple* of God and the Spirit dwelleth in you ... Now ye are the *body* of Christ, and severally members thereof” (⁴⁰⁶1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 12:27).

When concerning the body of Christ he says: “And whether one member suffereth all the members suffer with it,” he is certainly not speaking of the *Ecclesia in Glory*, all of whose members will be *past* sufferings when constituting an *ecclesia*.

Again concerning the particular church at Ephesus, he writes to Timothy whom he had left in that city:

“These things write I unto thee hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know, how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

He is certainly not writing of behavior in the general assembly in glory. The things he had written touching behavior were, when and how the men should pray, how the women should dress and work, and the qualifications of bishops and deacons. Even that remarkable passage, so often and so confidently quoted as referring exclusively to some supposed now-existing “universal, invisible, spiritual church,” namely: ^{<402>}Ephesians 1:22, 23, “And gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, “filled unto all the fullness of God,” *is presently applied, in his prayer, to the particular congregation* (^{<409>}Ephesians 3:19).

It may be asked, but why, if already filled, pray that each particular congregation might be filled unto all the fullness of God? The reply is obvious. Each particular assembly is an habitation of God, through the Spirit. The Spirit occupies each several building. Into each he enters not with partial power, but in all the fullness of Omnipotent power.

But though the fullness is there, the church is so dim-eyed - so weak in faith - so feeble in graces - it does not realize and lay hold of and appropriate this fullness of God. Hence the prayer that the eyes of their understanding might be open to see the fullness, their faith increased to grasp and appropriate it, their graces enlarged to corresponding strength to stand and work in that fullness. So fulfilled they realize in *experience* that fact that the Holy Spirit in all the fullness of God had already entered this particular body of Christ, and was only waiting to be recognized. It is like the expression, “Being justified by faith, let us have peace with God,” etc., ^{<411>}Romans 5:1. That is, we are entitled to it, let us take it.

In a great revival of religion we see Paul’s prayer fulfilled in the particular body of Christ. Gradually the church warms up to a realization of the fullness of God dwelling in them through the Spirit. Their spiritual apprehension becomes eagle-eyed. The grasp of their faith becomes the grip of a giant. Presently they say, we “can do all things.” No barrier is now insurmountable. And as more and more they comprehend

the height and depth and width and length of the love of God, they glow like a spiritual furnace. Thus it is proven that all these broad terms appertaining to the future general assembly, are equally applied to the present particular assembly, and that, too, because it is the only existing representation of the prospective general assembly.

This leads to another conclusion:

All teaching in the direction that there now exists a general assembly which is invisible, without ordinances, and which is entered by faith alone, would likely tend to discredit the particular assembly, which does now really exist and which is the pillar and ground of the truth.

More than once when I have inquired of a man, are you a member of the church? The reply has been, I am a member of the invisible, universal, spiritual church.

To make faith the exclusive qualification of admission into the general assembly is more than questionable and naturally generates such replies.

The general assembly, by all accounts, includes all the saved. But infants, dying in infancy, are a part of the saved. Yet never having been subjects of gospel address they are saved without faith. But it may be said that such use of the term faith is only a way of saying "a new heart," and dying infants are not without regeneration. To which we may rejoin that generation alone is not sufficient to qualify for membership in the general assembly. All the regenerates we know have spots and wrinkles, while the general assembly is without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Nor does complete sanctification of soul go far enough. There must also be glorification of body. Enoch, Elijah and probably those who rose from the dead after Christ's resurrection are the only ones as yet qualified for membership in the general assembly. And they must wait until all whom God has called and will yet call have arrived with the like qualifications, before there can be a general assembly in fact.

As has been intimated, all organized assemblies have prescribed terms or conditions of membership. In the Greek state *Ecclesia* membership was limited to a well-defined body of citizens. Not all residents of the territory could participate in the business of the ecclesia. So with the Old Testament *ecclesia* or national convocation of carnal Israel. One must have the required lineal descent and be circumcised or become a proselyte and be circumcised. Correspondingly the conditions of membership in the church on earth are regeneration and baptism.

But for the church in glory the conditions of membership are justification, regeneration and sanctification of soul and glorification of body.

We submit another conclusion:

Some terms or descriptives commonly applied to the church by writers and speakers are not only extra-Scriptural, that is, purely human and post-apostolic, but may be so used as to become either misleading or positively unscriptural. For example, to put *visible*, referring to the particular assembly alone, over against spiritual as referring to the general assembly alone, as if these terms were opposites or incompatible with each other.

The particular assembly or church that now is, is both visible and spiritual.

To confess Christ before men, to let our light shine before men, to be baptized, to *show forth* the Lord's death in the Supper, are both visible and spiritual acts of obedience. And when the general assembly becomes a reality instead of a prospect, it, too, will be both visible and spiritual.

Speaking of the general assembly, John says: "*I saw* the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband."

When the king came to the earth in His humiliation He was visible. And when He *appears* in glory every eye shall see Him.

A city set upon an earthly hill cannot be hid. And the New Jerusalem on Matthew Zion, the city of the living God, will be the most conspicuous and luminous object the universe ever saw.

The confusion wrought by these human appellatives is manifest in the growth of what is commonly mis-called "The Apostle's creed." In its earliest historic forms it says: "I believe in the holy church." Later forms say: "I believe in the holy catholic i.e., universal church." Still later: "in the holy catholic and apostolic church." Still gathering increment from other creeds it becomes: "The holy Roman catholic and apostolic church." Then comes "visible vs. invisible," or "visible, temporal, universal vs. invisible, spiritual, universal," and so ad infinitum. But the Bible in its simplicity knows nothing of these scholastic refinements of distinction. In that holy book the existing church is a particular congregation of Christ's baptized disciples, and the prospective church is the general assembly. But mark you:

These are not co-existent.

ONE CANNOT BE A MEMBER OF BOTH AT THE SAME TIME. WHEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMES THE PARTICULAR ASSEMBLY WILL HAVE PASSED AWAY.

To impress more deeply the scripturalness of these reflections, let us consider the subject from another viewpoint:

A house is built for an inhabitant. Unless the tenant is hard pressed, he will not move in until the building is completed. God is never hard pressed.

A long time may be consumed in getting out and gathering together and preparing the material of a house. It is not a house, however, except in purpose, plan or prospect, until it is completed and ready for its occupant.

In this light let us take a look at some Bible houses:

(a) *The house that Moses built.*

This was the Tabernacle of the Wilderness, or tent for God. The 40th chapter of Exodus tells of the completion of this house. When it was finished and all things ready for the occupant it became a house, and then the cloud, that symbol of Divine glory, moved in and filled the tabernacle.

(b) *The house that Solomon built.*

The 6th, 7th and 8th chapters of 1 Kings tell us about this house. When it was finished and furnished and dedicated, it also being now a house, then the cloud symbol of divine presence and glory, that had inhabited the tabernacle, left the tent as no longer useful and moved into and filled the new house.

(c) *The house that Jesus built.*

The gospel histories tell us about it. John the Baptist prepared much material for it. Receiving this material from John, and adding much of His own preparation, Jesus built a house. That is, He instituted His *ecclesia* on earth. At His death the veil of Solomon's restored house was rent in twain from top to bottom. Henceforward, it was tenantless, and, being useless, soon perished. But though the new house *was built*, it was empty until our Lord ascended into heaven, and fulfilled His promise to send the Holy Spirit as the indweller of this new habitation. Acts 2 tells us how this house was occupied. The useless temple of Solomon now passes away as the useless tabernacle of Moses passed away for its successor. The only house of God

now existing on earth is the particular ecclesia of our Lord. But it in turn must have a successor in the general assembly.

(d) *The house Jesus will build.*

The tabernacle, the temple and the church on earth are all forecasts of the coming church in glory. The work of gathering and preparing material for the general assembly has been in progress for six thousand years. But material, much of it yet in the quarry or forest and much of it fully prepared, does not constitute a house. God is not hard pressed. His patience is infinite. Millions and millions have already been called out to be members of this prospective assembly. God is calling yet and will continue to call throughout the gospel dispensation. His mind is fixed on having a general assembly indeed - a great congregation - "a great multitude that no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, to stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and with palms in their hands."

The time of the constitution of this assembly is at the second coming of Christ and after the resurrection of the dead and the glorification of the bodies of Christians then living. The processes of constitution are clearly set forth in ^{<485>}1 Corinthians 15:51-54; ^{<543>}1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; ^{<487>}Ephesians 5:27; ^{<601>}Revelation 21:2-9.

It has now indeed become a church - a glorious church, or church in glory - to be presented to himself. When He comes He will be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe.

That *ecclesia*, like the one on earth, will be both visible and spiritual.

Recurring to the figure of a house, Revelation 21 and 22 exhibit it as at last completed and occupied. At last completed God Himself inhabits it, for says the Scripture, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall be with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Mark that, brethren, "The former things are passed away." *Former and latter things are not co-existent.* The tabernacle of the wilderness passes away for the more glorious temple of Solomon. The temple then passes away for the still more glorious church on earth. In like manner the church on earth must pass away for the infinitely glorious church in heaven. There is a Jerusalem on earth, but the heavenly Jerusalem is above. It is free, and the mother of all the saved. *But, brother, the general assembly is not yet.* The church on earth, the house that Jesus has already built, the house of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the

truth - *this house has the right of way just now*. It is the only existing assembly. Honor the house that now is.

Quite naturally, if tabernacle and temple had been coexistent, one then living would have preferred the temple and discredited the tent.

Equally so if the particular assembly and general assembly are now co-existent, side by side on earth, could you seriously blame a man for resting content with membership in the greater and more honorable assembly?

But as the Scriptures represent these two assemblies, one *existing* now on earth, the other *prospective* in heaven, if a man on earth and in time, not qualified by either sanctification of spirit or glorification of body for the heavenly assembly, shall despise membership in the particular assembly because claiming membership in the general assembly, is not his claim both an absurdity and a pretext? *Does he not hide behind it to evade honoring God's existing institution, and the assuming of present responsibilities and the performing of present duties?* Yet again, if one believes that there are co-existent on earth and in time, two churches, one only visible and formal, the other real, invisible and spiritual, *is there not danger that such belief may tend to the conviction that the form, government, polity and ordinances of the inferior church are matters of little moment?* Has not this belief oftentimes in history done this very thing? And is it not an historical fact that, since Protestant Pedobaptists invented this idea of a now-existing, invisible, universal, spiritual church, to offset the equally erroneous Romanist idea of a present visible, universal church, reverence and honor for God's New Testament particular church have been ground to fine powder between them as between the upper and nether millstones? Today when one seeks to obtain due honor for the particular assembly, its ordinances, its duties, is he not in many cases thwarted in measure, or altogether in some cases, by objections arising from one or the other of these erroneous views?

And when some, endeavoring to hedge against the manifest errors of both these ideas, have invented middle theories to the effect that the church on earth is composed either of all *professing* Christians living at one time, considered collectively, or of all *real* Christians so living and so considered, or of all existing denominations considered as branches of which the church is the tree, have they not multiplied both the absurdities and the difficulties by their assumed liberality of compromise?

Finally, replying to some of your questions:

1. When our Lord says, On this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, does He refer to the church on earth or to the church in glory?

My answer is, to the particular assembly on earth, considered as an institution. *The church in glory will never be in the slightest danger of the gates of hell. Before it becomes an assembly, both death and hell, gates and all, are cast into the lake of fire* (⁽⁶¹⁴⁾Revelation 20:14; 21:4). It is the church on earth that is in danger, from the fear of which this glorious promise is a guaranty.

2. Does your idea of a “general assembly” depend exclusively upon that phrase of doubtful application in ⁽⁸¹²³⁾Hebrews 12:23, which many good scholars, including prominent Baptists, construe with “myriads of angels” instead of with “the church of the First Born?” Certainly not. Though I myself strongly hold with our English versions in referring both the *pne gyros* (general assembly) and the *ecclesia* (church) of that passage to saved men and not to angels. The idea of general assembly is clearly in other passages as ⁽⁸¹²⁵⁾Ephesians 5:25-27; ⁽⁶⁰⁹⁾Revelation 7:9; 21:2-4).

3. If the figure, “body” applies to each particular church, does not that teach that Christ has many bodies? My answer is, first, that your objection, or supposed difficulty, lies not against my view, but against the express teaching of many Scriptures. What the Scriptures teach is true, and difficulties and objections may take care of themselves. But, second, the objection is specious and the difficulty only apparent, since each particular assembly is *a representation or type* of the general assembly, and therefore the broadest figures of the antitype may be applied to all its types without being obnoxious to the criticism. There may well be many representations of the body of Christ.

4. Do you dis-fellowship your Baptist brethren who teach the present existence of “an universal, invisible, spiritual church?”

Most certainly not so long as they duly honor the particular assembly and its ordinances, as multitudes of them do, in spite of the natural tendency of their theory to discredit it. Many of them, known to me personally, are devoted to the particular church and its ordinances, responsibilities and duties.

It will take a wider divergence than this to make me dis-fellowship a Baptist brother, though I honestly and strongly hold that even on this point his theory is erroneous and tends practically to great harm. Yes, I do most emphatically hold that this theory is responsible for *incalculable dishonor* put upon the church of God on earth. I repeat that the theory of the coexistence, side by side, on earth of two churches of Christ, one formal and visible, the other real, invisible and spiritual, with different terms of membership, *is exceedingly mischievous* and is so confusing that every believer of it becomes muddled in running the lines of separation. Do let it sink deep in your minds that the *tabernacle* on Moses had the *exclusive right of way* in its allotted

time and the *temple* of Solomon had the *exclusive right of way* in its allotted time - so the *church of Christ* on earth, the particular assembly, now has the *exclusive right of way* and is without a rival on earth or in heaven - and so the *general assembly in glory*, when its allotted time arrives, will have *exclusive right of way*.

Had I lived in the days of Moses I would have given undivided honor to the tabernacle - in the day of Solomon to the Temple alone - and when the general assembly comes, that shall be my delight. But living now I must honor the house that Jesus built. It is the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. To it are committed the oracles and promises of God. — To it is given the great commission. It is the instructor of angels and in it throughout all the ages of time is the glory of God. *If I move out of this house, I must remain houseless until Jesus comes. It is the only church you can join in time.*

5. What is the distinction, if any, between the kingdom and the church?

My answer is that the kingdom and church on earth are not co-terminus. Kingdom, besides expressing a different idea, is much broader in signification than a particular assembly or than all the particular assemblies. The particular church is that executive institution or business body, within the kingdom, charged with official duties and responsibilities for the spread of the kingdom.

In eternity and glory, church and kingdom may be coterminous. Like the church, the kingdom in both time and eternity has both visible and spiritual aspects.

6. As a sufficient reply to several other questions:

Let it be noted that this discussion designedly avoids applying certain adjectives to the noun “church,” not merely because the New Testament never applies them to *Ecclesia*, but because they are without distinguishing force when contrasting the particular assembly with the general assembly.

For example: “Local,” “visible,” “spiritual.”

Locality inheres in Ecclesia. There can be no assembly now or hereafter without a place to meet. When existing in fact, both the particular assembly in time, and the general assembly in eternity, are both visible and spiritual. Why attempt to distinguish by terms which do not distinguish?

Katholikos (Catholic or Universal) is not a New Testament word at all and hence is never applied by inspiration to *Ecclesia*. Nor is it a Septuagint word at all.

In post-apostolic times it crept without authority into the titles of certain New Testament letters, as “The First Epistle General (*Katholikos*) of Peter.” And even there it could not mean “universal,” since Peter, himself, four times limits his address:

- (a) First to *Jews* (not Gentiles).
- (b) Then to “elect” Jews (not all Jews).
- (c) Then to elect Jews of the *Dispersion* (not to Jewish Christians in Palestine).
- (d) Then to elect Jews of the Dispersion in “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,” i.e., the comparatively small district of Asia Minor (not in the rest of Asia, Europe and Africa).

Neither in the sense of every place, nor of every person in the universe, can the English word “universal” be applied to *Ecclesia*.

LECTURE 2

ECCLESIA - THE CHURCH

It was not the original purpose to extend the discussion of the question, What is the Church, into a second lecture. It was supposed that you would be able of yourselves to classify all New Testament uses of *ecclesia* under the several heads of *abstract*, *generic*, *particular* and *prospective*, by applying the principles of the first lecture.

But the nature and variety of your new questions constrain me to enlarge the discussion somewhat and to supply you with a wider usage of the word than the New Testament affords. Of the great number of instances from the classics, read to you, at my request, by Mr. Ragland, our Professor of Greek, your attention is recalled to a few. specially pertinent.

(1) Those which so clearly show the distinction between *ecclesia* as an organized business body and all unofficial gatherings, e.g., “Pericles seeing them angry at the present state of things - did not call them to the *ecclesia* or any other meeting.” - *Thucydides*.

Again, “When after this the *ecclesia* adjourned, they came together and planned - for the future still being uncertain, *meetings* and speeches of *all sorts* took place in the market. They were afraid the *ecclesia* would be summoned suddenly.” - *Demosthenes*. Compare this distinction with the town-clerk’s statement in ~~HEB~~ Acts 19:39, 40.

(2) Those concerning the *ecclesias* of the several petty but independent Greek states, Sparta, Athens and others, bringing out clearly the business character of these assemblies, their free and democratic deliberations, their final decisions by vote, and reminding us so forcibly of the proceedings of independent Baptist churches of our day.

(3) Those showing the discriminating character of the Greek mind in the use of *panyegyros*, as distinguished from *ecclesia*. *Ecclesia* was the particular and independent business assembly of any Greek state, however small. *Panegyros* was the general assembly of the people of all the Greek states. It was a festive assembly looking to rest, joy, peace, glory, and not to business and war. Let not the Lacedaemonians come up armed to this assembly.

It was a happy Greek conceit that all the Heavenly beings were present at these Olympian meetings. How felicitously does the inspired author of the letter to the Hebrews adapt himself to this discrimination, when in contrast with the particular

ecclesia on earth, he writes of the general assembly and church of the first born in glory - *panegyros kai ecclesia*. There, not Zeus, but God the judge. There not a pantheon or inferior deities and demi-gods, but myriads of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. There war and toil have ceased, and peace and rest reign forever. There are bestowed not fading laurels, but everlasting crowns of life, righteousness, joy and glory. (See ~~402~~1 Corinthians 9:25; ~~508~~2 Timothy 4:8; ~~5012~~James 1:12; ~~6084~~1 Peter 5:4; ~~6020~~Revelation 2:10; 9:7).

That general assembly is not bound by the limitations of the one Greek nation but infinitely transcends the Olympian gatherings in a countless multitude out of every nation, tribe, tongue and kindred. Jew, Greek, Roman, Scythian, barbarian, bond and free mingle in one tide of brotherhood (~~6009~~Revelation 7:9).

SEPTUAGINT USAGE

Some of your questions induced me to supply you with the entire *Septuagint* usage. You have before you now all the instances of this use of *ecclesia*, including the readings of the several texts, in both the canonical books and Apocrypha. To these have been added the additional instances from other Greek versions of the Old Testament, Aquila (A.D. 130), Theodotion (A.D. 160), Symmachus (A.D. 193), *et al*; *i.e.*, so far as they are cited in the concordance of Abraham Trommius (A.D. 1718) and the new mammoth concordance of Hatch & Redpath, Oxford (1893). These instances, about 114 in all, nearly equal the New Testament number, giving us a total of about 230 uses of the word not counting the classics. This is every way sufficient for inductive study. Of course the post-apostolic versions of Aquilla, Theodotion and Symmachus had no influence in determining the earlier New Testament usage, but as the work of Jews in the second century they confirm that usage.

It was to the classic and Septuagint usage the first lecture referred in saying that the New Testament writers neither coined the word nor employed it in an unusual sense.

They wrote in Greek, to readers and speakers of Greek, using Greek words in their common acceptation in order to be understood. With this usage before us let us seek an answer to your new questions:

I. As in the Septuagint *ecclesia* translates the Hebrew word *gahal*, does it not mean, "All Israel, whether assembled or unassembled?"

My reply is, I see not how this question could have risen in my mind from a personal, inductive study of all the Septuagint passages, since in *every instance* of the 114 cited the word *means a gathering together - an assembly*.

You can see that for yourselves by the context of your English version. The Septuagint usage is as solidly one thing as the Macedonia phalanx. Unfortunately in our broad theological reading our minds become so preoccupied with the loose generalizations of the great Pedobaptist scholars, Harnack, Hatch, Hort, Cremer and others, that we unconsciously neglect to investigate and think for ourselves. Let not admiration for distinguished scholarship blot out your individuality. Accept nothing blindly on mere human authority.

In determining this question, have nothing to do with the meaning of *gahal* in its other connections. Rigidly adhere to the passages where *ecclesia* translates it. Because a word sometimes serves for another, do not foist on it all the meanings of the other word.

It is well enough to illustrate by synonyms, but do not define by them. Definition by supposed synonyms was the curse of the Baptismal controversy. Because a question about *purifying* arose between a Jew and John's disciples, Edward Beecher must write an illogical book to show that *Baptizo* means only to *purify*, and, of course, by any method. Study Carson on Baptism and you will learn much about the principles of accurate definition.

II. "But," another question asks, "do not some of these *Septuagint* passages justify the meaning of *unassembled*?" While I accepted Pedobaptist ideas, I thought so, but never since I looked into the matter for myself. *I do not know of even one such passage. I never heard of a definite claim being set up to more than four out of 114.* Turn now to these four in your Revised English Bibles. They are ^{<108>}1 Kings 8:65; ^{<108>}1 Chronicles 28:8; ^{<108>}Ezra 10:8; ^{<108>}Ezekiel 32:3.

The first two settle themselves by a mere reading. In Ezra "*the assembly* of the captivity" might be supposed to refer, in a loose way, to the people while captives in Babylon. But in fact it has no such reference as the context shows. It simply means the 42,360 who returned from captivity as a definite Jerusalem assembly, repeatedly called together. In ^{<108>}Ezekiel 32:3, an unreliable reading has *ecclesia* for the English word *company*. But even then the idea is the same. "Many peoples" in that sentence signify nothing against the usual meaning of the word. They do not constitute an *ecclesia* until gathered into a company. Xerxes, Timour, Napoleon, the White Tzar, and many others have formed a great company out of the contingents of many people.

Heretofore the advocates of the present existence of "an universal, invisible, spiritual, unassembled church" have boldly rested their case on the *Septuagint usage*. The premise of their argument was, that the New Testament writers must have used the

word in the sense that a Jew accustomed to the Greek Old Testament would understand. A fine premise, by the way. But to save the theory from total collapse some new line of defense must be invented. And that is intimated in your next question:

III. “As Christ was establishing a new institution, widely different from the Greek state *ecclesia*, was not *ecclesia* in the New Testament used in a new, special and sacred sense? Does not the word in the New Testament commonly mean the same as the *Kletoi*, or the called, without reference to either organization, or assembly?”

On many accounts I am delighted with the opportunity to reply to this question. The reply is couched in several distinct observations:

(1) This question demonstrates hopeful progress in the controversy and prophesies a speedy and final settlement. It not only necessarily implies a clean-cut surrender of the old line of defense, but also narrows a hitherto broad controversy into a single new issue, susceptible of easy settlement. If this new position proves untenable there is no other to which the defense can be shifted. This is the last ditch. And the fact that it is *new* indicates the extremity of its advocates.

(2) Like the former contention, this, too, is borrowed from the Pedobaptists. They tried hard and long to make it serve in the Baptismal controversy. Their contention then was that though *Baptizo* meant to dip or immerse in classic Greek, yet in the Bible it was used in a new and sacred sense. The scholarship of the world rebuked them. Words are signs or ideas. To mean anything they must be understood according to the common acceptance in the minds of those addressed. I know of no more dangerous method of interpretation than the assumption that a word must be taken to mean something different from its real meaning. Revelation in that case ceases to be revelation. We are at sea without helm, or compass, or guiding star.

(3) There is nothing in the difference between Christ’s *ecclesia* on the one hand, and the classic or Septuagint *ecclesia* on the other hand, to justify a new sense in the word. The difference lies not in the meaning of the word, but in the object, terms of membership and other things.

(4) This proposed new sense destroys the two essential ideas of the old word, organization and assembly, and thereby leaves Christ without an institution or official, business body in the world. From the days of Abel the *Kletoi*, or called, have been in the world. If therefore, the New Testament *ecclesia* means only the “called,” then what did Christ establish in His time?

(5) If by ecclesia, only the called in their scattered capacity are meant, why use both ecclesia and Kletoi?

How can there be a body of Kletoi if the essential ideas of ecclesia are left out? If there be no organization, no assembly, how can there be a body? Miscellaneous, scattered, unattached units do not make a body.

(6) Finally there is no the slightest evidence that ecclesia has any such arbitrary meaning. But this will more clearly appear if you examine the usage passage by passage.

IV. “But when Paul says, I persecuted the church, surely that can only mean that he persecuted the disciples?”

But it does mean much more. It means exactly what it says. The mere individuals as such counted nothing with Paul. It was the organization to which they belonged, and what that organization stood for. As proof of this our Lord arrested him with the question: “Why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” Jesus was not persecuted in person by Saul.

So when “Herod the King put forth his hand to afflict certain of the church” he aimed at the organization, in what it stood for, though directly his wrath fell only on James and Peter.

V. “But if the church means assembly does not that require it to be always in session?” No ecclesia, classic, Jewish or Christian, known to history, held perpetual session. They all adjourned and came together again according to the requirements of the case. The organization, the institution. was not dissolved by temporary adjournment.

VI. “But if the earthly *ecclesia* exists now. though many of its members forsake the assembling of themselves together and if it continually receives new members, why may we not say the general assembly exists now, though all be not actually assembled, nor all its members yet born?” This is the most plausible objection yet offered. and one that greatly perplexes some minds. Your rigid attention, therefore, is called to the reply. It is admitted that the particular assembly on earth is not always in session either as a worshipping or business body. The word *ecclesia* never did require perpetual session. Nor does it now. There has been no change of requirement in that respect from the days of Pericles till now. Nor does the word require that all its *Kletoi* or members shall be present at every session. Nor does the word itself forbid the accession of new members.

Moreover, a particular *ecclesia* might continue as an historic institution so long that there might be an entire change in the *personnel* of its members many times. There are particular Baptist churches now existing in which these changes have actually occurred. Seldom does the roll of members remain the same even one year. Some die, some are excluded, some move away into other communities, new members are received. The attendance upon the sessions for worship and business continually varies. Some are sick, some travel, some backslide. Conditions of weather, politics or war affect the attendance. Yea, more, storms, plagues, or persecution may for the time being scatter the members of a particular church over a wide area of territory. None of these things in the slightest degree affect the meaning of the word.

Ecclesia remains throughout an organized assembly whose members are properly called out from their private homes or business to attend to public affairs.

The difference between the earthly and heavenly *ecclesia* in regard to the foregoing mutations does not arise at all from the word but from the nature of the case.

By its very nature the earthly *ecclesia is imperfect*. It is a time institution. By the conditions of its earthly existence there are fluctuations in attendance and membership. By its location in a world of lost people and by its commission to save them, there is constant accession of members.

The changed nature of the case and of the conditions make these things different with the *general assembly*. It can not increase in members because there is no salvable material from which to gain accessions. Character has chrystalized and probation ended. The lost then, are forever lost, and Hell admits of no evangelism. The word would not forbid evangelism but the nature of the case does.

Not only the word, but the nature of the case renders present existence of the *general assembly* impossible. Into the earthly house material enters according to credible evidence of regeneration as men judge. There is no absolute guaranty against self-deception or hypocrisy. Moreover, this material even when the profession of faith is well founded, is never in a perfect state, but must be continually made better by progressive sanctification of soul. The earthly *ecclesia* is a workshop in which material is being prepared for the Heavenly house. Death is the last lesson of discipline for the soul. The resurrection and glorification of the body, its last lesson. No rough ashlar goes into the Heavenly House - no unhewn, unpolished, unadorned cedar timber. No half-stone or broken column would be received. If a soul, even one of the spirits of the just made perfect, were now put into that wall, the building would have to be reconstructed and readjusted to admit the body-part of that same living stone after the resurrection. There is no sound of hammer, axe, or

chisel when that building goes up. *All preparatory work of every stone in that building, and of every timber, must be completed before that building goes up.*

It was this heavenly *ecclesia*, which as a coming event, cast its shadow before David and Solomon and constituted their inexorable plan for the typical temple. Because the plan given them was a shadow of better things to come they were not allowed to vary a hair's breath from the pattern of the Divine Architect.

There is nothing in the word *ecclesia* itself to forbid its application to "the Spirits of the just made perfect" now in heaven and continually receiving accessions. They are an assembly in fact. And Thayer seems to so understand ~~8023~~ Hebrews 12:23. I do not agree with him in making "general assembly and church of the first born" synonymous with "the spirits of the just made perfect." To my mind, they represent two very distinct ideas. But he is certainly right in supposing that the assembled spirits of the righteous dead may be called an *ecclesia*. *But when one defines the general assembly to be the aggregate of all the elect, and then affirms its present existence, he does violence to philology, common sense and revelation.* The earthly *ecclesia* is an organization now, an assembly now, though not always in session. The general assembly is not an organization now, is not an assembly now, and therefore exists only as a prospect.

VII. You ask for a particular explanation of several Scriptures which seem difficult to harmonize with the contentions of the first lecture, all of which in turn will now receive attention:

(1) ~~408~~ Acts 9:31 - "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied" (R.V.) To my mind, this is the only use of *ecclesia* in all Biblical or classic literature that is difficult of explanation. The difficulty is frankly confessed. Nor am I sure that such explanation as I have to offer will be satisfactory to you. In any event, nothing is ever gained for truth by lack of candor. Judging from the uniform use of the word elsewhere one would naturally expect here a plural noun with plural verbs as we have in the King James Version. And this expectation would be entirely apart from a desire to serve a theory. The difficulty here does not help the theory of "the now-existing universal, invisible, spiritual church."

It is quite easy to explain it so far as any comfort would accrue to that theory. The difficulty lies in another direction entirely, and seems to oppose a Baptist contention on another point, in whose maintenance my Baptist opponents in the present controversy are fully as much concerned as myself. On its face the passage seems to justify the *provincial* or *state-wide* - or *national* use of the word church on earth

which all Baptist deny. That is the only difficulty I see in the passage. All the context shows that the reference is to the earth church and not to the heavenly. The limits of this lecture forbid a discussion of the text question. The texts vary. Some manuscripts and versions have the very plural noun with its plural verbs that one would naturally expect from the uniform usage elsewhere. The King James Version follows these. The oldest and best manuscripts, however, have the singular noun with corresponding verbs. The Revised Version follows them.

Now for the explanation:

(1) The reading, “Churches,” followed by the common version may be the right one, leaving nothing to explain. In all other cases, whether in Old or New Testament, where the sense calls for the plural, we have it in the text. Not to have it here is an isolated, jarring exception. See ^{<485f>}Acts 15:41; 16:5; ^{<56f>}Romans 16:4, 6; ^{<407>}1 Corinthians 7:17; 11:26; 14:33, 34; 16:1, 19; ^{<400>}2 Corinthians 8:1, 18, 23; 11:8, 28; 12:23; ^{<400>}Galatians 1:2, 22; ^{<504>}1 Thessalonians 2:14; ^{<500>}2 Thessalonians 1:4; ^{<600>}Revelation 1:4, 11, 20; 2:7, 11, 17, 20, 23; 3:6, 13, 22; 22:16; ^{<502>}Psalms 26:12; 68:26; Ecclesiasticus 24:2. It is well to note that Murdock’s translation of the Peshito Syriac cites a Greek plural in the margin.

(2) But accepting the singular, according to the Revised Version, then, says Broadus, “the word probably denotes the original church at Jerusalem, whose member? were by persecution widely scattered throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and held meetings wherever they were, but still belonged to the one original organization. When Paul wrote to the Galatians nearly twenty years later, these separate meetings had been organized into distinct churches; and so he speaks (^{<402>}Galatians 1:22), in reference to that same period, of the churches of Judea which were in Christ.” - Com. on Matthew, p. 359.

This was the church which Saul persecuted and of which he made havoc. Concerning the effect of this persecution the record says “they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria” - ^{<400>}Acts 8:1. “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word” - ^{<411b>}Acts 11:19. So, when in the paragraph just preceding our Scripture, there is an account of Saul, as a convert, worshiping and preaching with the church he had formerly persecuted, we may not be surprised at the statement “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace.” Meyer says the “So draws an inference from the whole history in vv. 3:30: in consequence of the conversion of the former chief enemy and his transformation into the zealous apostle.”

But you may say, when they are thus scattered does not that break up the *assembly* idea in the word? This question has been previously answered in this lecture. It has been said that a storm, like that which swept Galveston, or a plague, like the yellow fever in Memphis, or war, as during the colossal strife between the states, or persecution, as in this case, might scatter far and wide, for the time being, the members of a particular church, but that would not change the meaning of the word church. When Tarleton made a dash at the Virginia legislature the members fled in every direction. When Howe moved on Philadelphia the Continental Congress dispersed and sought rest in safer places, but who would infer from these cases a change of meaning in legislature or congress? Under the advice of Themistocles the entire Athenian *ecclesia* abandoned their sacred city and sought safety from Persian invasion on their ships, but *ecclesia* retained its meaning.

(3) There is a third explanation possible. You may like it better than I do. It is not in harmony with one statement of my first lecture. It certainly, however, excludes comfort from the theory of the invisible general church

Meyer understands *ecclesia* in ~~408~~ Acts 9:31 in a *collective* sense, not of Christians collectively, but of *churches* collectively. His language is: "Observe, moreover, with the correct reading *ecclesia* (singular number) the aspect of *unity* under which Luke, *surveying the whole domain of Christendom* comprehends the churches which has been already formed, and were in process of formation. "

Note that he says that the word *church* "comprehends the churches," not Christians. Some Baptists follow Meyer. Hovey, in Hackett on Acts, seems to quote Meyer approvingly. This explanation necessarily implies the existence, at this time, of many organized assemblies in Judea, Samaria and Galilee of which we have no definite historic knowledge. True, Philip had evangelized the city of Samaria and there was time enough, in the three years since Paul's conversion for forming some churches, if only the record would say as much. If Meyer be right, of course, I was wrong in saying that *ecclesia* could not be used in the collective sense of comprehending many particular churches.

My own explanation is given in

(1) and

(2). Now, if a theory harmonizes all of 231 uses of a word but one, and gives a possible explanation of that one, the theory is demonstrated.

VIII. The next class of Scriptures which you wish explained is represented by ~~402~~ Ephesians 1:22, 23; ~~5018~~ Colossians 1:18; ~~6016~~ 1 Peter 2:5; ~~5816~~ Hebrews 3:6; ~~5106~~ John 10:16.

My first remark is that the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians were *circular* letters, meant to be read to other churches with equal application. Hence the use of the term church in a more general way than in other letters. The general use, however, does not forbid, but even requires, specific application to any one particular church, as ^{<402>}Ephesians 2:21, 22, R.V., shows. In like manner Peter's first letter was written to Jewish saints of the dispersion in Asia Minor, but not specifically to any particular church. Hence, when he says, "Ye, also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house," he does not mean that all the Jewish saints in Asia Minor constitute one church. To say the least of it. that is certainly an unbaptistic idea. It also contradicts the record in Acts showing the planting of many particular churches in this section, made up of Jews and Gentiles, and also ignores the seven churches of Revelation, all in the same section. But Peter means, using the word "house" in a generic sense, that whenever and wherever enough of you come together to form a particular church, that will be a spiritual house in which to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Just as in ^{<402>}Ephesians 2:21, 22 RN., the apostle in the same breath converts the general or abstract idea of church into particular churches. Murdock's translation of the Syriac Peshito reads: "And ye also, as living stones, are builded and become spiritual *temples*" in ^{<405>}1 Peter 2:5.

It is characteristic of circular letters to use terms in general form that must find concrete expression in particular forms. A man writing a circular to Texas Baptists at large, or to all Baptist churches of Texas would find it difficult to refrain from using some general expressions which must be left to the common sense of each particular church for making specific application. It is a matter of congratulation that since the *circular*, called the letter to the Ephesians, employs more of these general terms than any other letter, we have been so thoroughly safeguarded from misconstruction of its generalities by three distinct instances of specific application, in ^{<405>}Acts 20:28, 29; ^{<402>}Ephesians 2:21, 22; ^{<514>}1 Timothy 3:14, 15, to this Ephesus church.

The epistle to the Hebrews is even more general in its address than the two just considered, and we have only to apply the same principles of interpretation heretofore set forth to understand ^{<516>}Hebrews 3:6 - "Whose house are we. " The writer certainly never intended to convey the impression that all Hebrew Christians constituted one church. That also, to say the least of it, is an unbaptistic idea. We know it to be an unscriptural one, because it contradicts Paul in ^{<402>}Galatians 1:22. It is utterly illogical to claim either ^{<516>}Hebrews 3:6 or ^{<405>}1 Peter 2:5 for examples of the so-called "universal church" idea. If the advocates of this idea insist on denying the particular church in these cases because one letter was addressed to all the Hellenist converts of Asia Minor, and the other was addressed to all the converted Palestinian Hebrews, then I demand that they also stick to the text, and claim for

either case Jews and Jews only. This not only shuts them off from the general assembly in which Jew and Gentile form one new man, but forces them to the absurdity of having on earth one Jewish church big as Asia Minor - that big - no more - and the other big as Judea, that big, no more, and that leaves still running at large all the rest of the converted Jews of the dispersion, and puts them in conflict with Scripture history which shows many particular churches in these sections. To show you the difference between the general use of the term “church” in *a circular* of miscellaneous address and its direct and particular use in a document addressed to specific churches, compare the use of church in Revelation with the use of church in the letter to the Ephesians. In the twenty times of Revelation we have more than one-sixth of the New Testament usage.

A few words will dispose of ⁻⁸¹⁰⁶⁻John 10:16 - “other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd. “ This passage is strong confirmation of my first lecture. Considering the church abstractly, that is, in the sense of an instituton, Christ purposed to make of twain, Jew and Gentile, one new man. In each particular church where Jew and Gentile blend, Christ’s purpose is partially fulfilled. But in the general assembly in glory it is completely fulfilled.

When in some of the foregoing Scriptures, Christ is represented as head over all things to the church - His body, you easily meet all the requirements of the language by saying:

- (1) He is head over all things to His earth church as an institution.
- (2) He is head over all things to any particular earth church.
- (3) He is head over all things to His general assembly in glory.

There remain for consideration only two other Scriptures and then all your questions are answered, ⁻⁴¹⁸⁵⁻Ephesians 5:25-27; ⁻⁸¹²⁸⁻Hebrews 12:18-24. And these will receive particular attention because they were cited in the first lecture as referring to the general assembly. On ⁻⁸¹²³⁻Hebrews 12:23, you inquire, Does not the tense of the verb “Ye are come . . . to the general assembly, etc.,” prove the present existence of the general assembly? How else can it be said, ye are come to it?

To which I reply:

In Galatians 4, Paul says that Hagar and Sarah, under an allegory, represent the two covenants. Hagar, or Matthew Sinai, in Arabia, answering to the Jerusalem that now is, is the law-covenant gendering to bondage. Sarah, or Matthew Zion, answering to the Jerusalem *above*, is the grace-covenant gendering to freedom.

So, when in Hebrews 12 it says, “Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched” (i.e., Matthew Sinai), it simply means ye are not under the law-covenant, with its threats and horrible outlook. And when it adds: “Ye are come to Matthew Zion, etc.,” (perfect tense), it simply means that we are under the grace-covenant with its promises and glorious outlook. In other words, what we have actually reached is a covenant, *a regime*, a standard of life, and are under its requirements and incited by its glorious prospects.

But an exegesis, based on the tense of that verb, which claims that Christians have already attained unto all the alluring elements of the outlook of the grace-covenant, enumerated in that passage, is as *mad as a March hare*.

That Jerusalem *is above*, and because not yet, is contrasted with the Jerusalem that *now is*. It is the city and country set forth in the preceding chapter, toward which the faith and hope of the patriarchs looked. It was a possession to them only in the sense that they were the heirs of a promised inheritance reserved in Heaven. Abraham, with the other heirs of that promise, patiently dwelt in tents, “for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” And all the patriarchs “died in faith, *not having received the promises*, but having seen them and greeted them afar off, yea, *promises*, but having seen them and greeted them afar off, yea, “and these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better things for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11). And so we also (³⁸²¹ Hebrews 12:1) run the race set before us, not yet having attained the goal or received the prize (Compare ⁴⁰²⁵ 1 Corinthians 9:25-27; ⁵⁰³⁷ Philippians 3:7-14; ⁵⁰⁴⁶ 2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Our Lord Himself held out the promise, “The pure in heart shall see God.” But not yet have we actually come “to God, the judge.” But John, in his apocalypse of the Heavenly City, with its general assembly, tells the time of attainment: “And they shall see his face” - ⁶²⁰⁴ Revelation 22:4.

The imagery of Hebrews 12, is that of the Olympic races. A goal marked the terminus of the race. There sat the judge, who, when the races were over, awarded the prize to the victor. In the Christian race the goal is the resurrection and then only comes the prize. (See ⁵⁰³⁷ Philippians 3:7-14 and ⁵⁰⁴⁶ 1 Timothy 4:6-8). It is then we come to God the judge who awards the prize.

The example of our Lord is cited, ⁵⁸²² Hebrews 12:2, “The joy set before him” was prospective and reached when he sees the travail of his soul and is satisfied.

The angels of that category, make unseen visits to us now *in our* earthly home. but then we shall in fact go to the myriads of shining ones in *their* celestial home.

Now, on earth, with the blood of Christ, our consciences, are cleansed from dead works to serve the living God. But there, we enter the true Holy of Holies, and behold where Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, did place the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things for us than the blood of Abel, on the true Mercy-seat to make atonement for sin. As our *forerunner*, the Lord, Himself, has passed through the veil. But to us, this safe passage, is as yet only a glorious hope set before us; which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast” - ^{<867>}Hebrews 6:17-19.

We, yet in our bodies, have not joined “the spirits of the just made perfect” nor entered “the general assembly and church of the first born, who are written in heaven.” When we read Revelation 21 and 22, we sing: “O when, thou city of my God, shall I thy courts ascend!”

Your question on ^{<465>}Ephesians 5:25-27 is similar. “Verse 29 declares that Christ *nourishes* and *cherishes* the church, as a husband does his wife. Does not this demand the present existence of the general assembly?”

To which I reply:

(1) The nourishing and cherishing of verse 29 refer to after-marriage conduct, as the context shows, and Christ’s marriage with the bride is far away in the future (See ^{<687>}Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2, 9, 10).

But let it be misapplied to the prenuptial state - it matters not. The force of any argument in the question is all in the tense of the verbs “nourisheth and cherisheth.” Let us turn that argument loose and see what it proves. In the whole passage, Christ and the church come before us under the figures of bridegroom and bride. The church is conceived of as a unit, a person, and all the verbs employed, namely, “loved - gave himself for - might cleanse - might present-nourishment and cherisheth” follow the requirements of the figure. But when we come to historical facts we find:

(1) That the love, in eternity, preceded the existence of any part of the church.

(2) The giving Himself preceded the existence of the greater part of the church.

(3) The cleansing (and the nourishing and cherishing if misapplied) applies to the process of preparing the members, as each in turn comes upon the stage of being throughout the gospel dispensation from Adam to the second advent.

(4) The presentation of the completed and perfected church follows the second advent.

(5) The nourishing and cherishing (rightly applied) of the perfected church follows the presentation.

Now if the present tense of the nourishing proves present existence of the general assembly, does not the past tense of “loved” prove past existence of the general assembly before man was created? Why should the tense of one of the verbs have more proof force in it than another in the same connection? To grant this, however, proves too much and so the argument based on tense is worthless in this case.

APPENDIX

The object of this appendix is to enable the “average” preacher with few books, and who knows nothing of Greek, to form his own conclusions as to the meaning of *ecclesia*, based upon an inductive study of the usage of the word. A few instances only are cited from the classics, out of the great number read to my class in second lecture, but enough for the purpose. These citations will be particularly helpful in showing the distinction between the particular *ecclesia*, or business body of even the smallest Greek state, and *panegyros* (general, festive assembly) when the people of all the Greek states assembled. By this means even an uneducated preacher may understand the fitness of calling the great heavenly gathering in glory the “general assembly and church of the firstborn” (*pane gyros kai ecclesia*) in contra-distinction to the particular business assembly on earth.

The New Testament usage is given entire because so few country preachers have the Englishmen’s Greek Concordance.

The Septuagint usage is also given entire so far as the Tromminus Concordance (A.D. 1718) cites instances. This usage is regarded as particularly valuable for three reasons:

- (1) Only about one preacher in a thousand has access to a Septuagint concordance.
- (2) Nearly all their ideas of the meaning of the word in the Greek Old testament have been derived from the loose generalizations of the great Pedobaptist scholars, Harnack, Hatch, Hort, Cremer, *et. al.*, who seeing that *ecclesia* sometimes translates the Hebrew word “*gahal*,” foist upon *ecclesia* all the meanings of *gahal* in other connections. You have nothing to do with *gahal* except where *ecclesia* translates it.

By an inductive study of all the *ecclesia* passages, you will see for yourselves that in the Septuagint it never means “all Israel whether assembled or unassembled, but that *in every instance* it means a gathering together, and assembly.

- (3) This classic, and particularly this septuagint usage, are specially valuable to you, because as the first lecture states, the New Testament writers neither coined this word nor employed it in an unusual sense. The apostles and early Christians were more familiar with the Septuagint than with the Hebrew Version. From it they generally quoted. They wrote in Greek to a Greek-speaking world, and used Greek words as a Greek-speaking people would understand them.

It is a fiction of Pedito-baptists that they used “*baptizo*” in a new and sacred sense. Equally is it a fiction that *Ecclesia* was used in any new, special sense. The object of Christ’s *ecclesia*, and terms of membership in it, were indeed different from those of the classic or Septuagint *ecclesia*. But the word itself retains its ordinary meaning. In determining this meaning we look to the common, literal usage. If occasionally we find it used in a general or figurative way, these few instances must be construed in harmony with the common, literal signification.

CLASSIC USE

Ecclesia. Primary meaning. An organized assembly of citizens, regularly summoned, as opposed to *other meetings*.

Thucydides 2:22: - “Pericles, seeing them angry at the present state of things... did not call them to an assembly (*ecclesia*) or any other meeting.”

Demosthenes 378, 24: - “When after this the assembly (*ecclesia*) adjourned, they came together and planned ... For the future still being uncertain, meetings and speeches of all sorts took place in the marketplace. They were afraid that an assembly (*ecclesia*) would be summoned suddenly, etc.” Compare the distinction here between a lawfully assembled business body and a mere gathering together of the people in unofficial capacity, with the town-clerk’s statement in ~~4:18~~ Acts 19:35, 40.

Now some instances of the particular *ecclesia* of the several Greek states -

Thucydides 1,87: - “Having said such things, he himself, since he was ephor, put the question to vote in the assembly (*ecclesia*) of the Spartans.”

Thucydides 1,139: - “And the Athenians having made a house (or called an assembly, *ecclesia*) freely exchanged their sentiments. “

Aristophanes Act 169: - “But I forbid you calling an assembly (*ecclesia*) for the Thracians about pay.”

Thucydides 6,8: - “And the Athenians having convened an assembly (*ecclesia*) ... voted, etc. “

Thucydides 6,2: - “And the Syracusans having buried their dead, summoned an assembly (*ecclesia*).”

This historical reading concerning the business assemblies of the several petty but independent, self-governing Greek states, with their lawful conference, their free speech. their decision by vote, whether of Spartans, Thracians, Syracusans or

Athenians, sounds much like the proceedings of particular and independent Baptist churches today.

Panegyros - A general, festive assembly of the people of all the Greek states.

Decret. ap. Demos 526,16: - "Embassies to the festal assemblies (*panegyros*) in Greece."

Plato, Hipp. 363: - "Going up to Olympia, the festal assemblies (*panegyros*) of the Greeks."

Pindar: - "The general assembly (*panegyros*) in honor of Zeus (Jupiter)."

Isocrates 41 A: - "I often wondered at those who organized the general festivals (*panegyros*).

Aeschylus Theb. 220: - "May this goodly, general company (*panegyros*) of gods never fail the city in my life time."

Thucydides 5, 50: - "And fear was produced in the general assembly (*panegyros*) that the Lacedaemonians would come in arms." Upon this usage note how bright and discriminating the Greek mind.

This general assembly was not for war but peace. Let not the Spartans come to it with arms in their hands. It was not for business but pleasure - a time of peace, and joy and glory.

In the happy Greek conceit all the heavenly beings were supposed to be present. How felicitously does an inspired apostle adapt himself to the Greek use of the word, and glorify it by application to the final heavenly state. God the judge, not Zeus. is there. Myriads of angels, not Greek demi-gods and inferior deities, are there.

There is a general assembly in magnitude, multitude and constituency, transcendently above the poor limitations of a small Greek nation - this is made up of every tribe and tongue and kindred. Jew. Roman, Greek, barbarian. Scythian, bond and free. Here warfare is over and rest has come. Here crowns are awarded. not of fading wreaths of time, hut crowns of life, righteousness, joy and glory.

ECCLESIA - USAGE IN SEPTUAGINT

Cited in the concordance of Abraham Trommius (1718). Chapters and verses here given according to Revised Version for Canonical books; and according to Haydock's Douay Bible for *Aprochryphal* books.

Greek text used for verification Henry Barclay Sweet — Cambridge, 1891.

The English word in italics is the translation of *Ecclesia*.

- <688> Leviticus 8:3 - “*Assemble* thou all the congregations.” Here the verb (*ecclesiazo*) is used. Though Trommius cites a reading which has the noun.
- <689> Deuteronomy 18:16 - “In the day of the *assembly* “ (referring to the convocation at Sinai).
- <621> Deuteronomy 23:1, 2, 3, 8 - “Shall not enter into the *assembly* of the Lord.” Here four times used to proscribe certain specified classes from admission into the Lord’s assembly.”
- <683> Deuteronomy 31:30 - “And Moses spake in the ears of all the *assembly* of Israel the words of this song.”
- Joshua 8:35 - “Joshua read before all the *assembly* of Israel. “
- <722> Judges 20:2 - “And the chiefs of all the people presented themselves in the *assembly* of the people of God.” The place of this assembly was Mizpah.
- <725> Judges 21:5 - “And the children of Israel said, Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that came not up in the *assembly* unto the Lord.”
- <728> Judges 21:8 - “There came none to the camp from Jabesh-Gilead to the *assembly*.”
- <977> 1 Samuel 17:47 - David said, “That all this *assembly* may know there is a God in Israel.”
- <982> 1 Samuel 19:20 - And when Saul’s messenger “saw the *company* of the prophets prophesying.”
- <1084> 1 Kings 8:14, 22, 55, 65 - “Blessed all the *congregation*” - “in the presence of all the *congregation*” - “blessed all the *congregation*” - “and all Israel with him, a great *congregation*.”
- <1312> 1 Chronicles 13:2, 4 - “David said unto all the *assembly* of Israel” - “And all the *assembly* said.”
- <1332> 1 Chronicles 28:2 - “David stood up upon his feet - (in the midst of the *assembly*). “Nothing in Hebrew text for the words in parenthesis, and hence nothing in English version.
- <1338> 1 Chronicles 28:8 - “In the sight of all Israel, the *congregation* of the Lord.”
- <1391> 1 Chronicles 29:1 - “The King said unto all the *congregation*.”
- <1392> 1 Chronicles 29:10 - “David blessed the Lord before all the *congregation*.”
- <1393> 1 Chronicles 29:20 - “David said to all the *congregation*.”

- <4008> 2 Chronicles 1:3, 5 - “Solomon, and all the *congregation* with him.” “Solomon and the *congregation* sought unto it” (the altar).
- <4008> 2 Chronicles 6:3, 12, 13 - “The King turned his face and blessed all the *congregation*.” “He stood... in the presence of all the *congregation*.” “He kneeled down... before all the *congregation*.”
- <4008> 2 Chronicles 7:8 - “Solomon held the feast... and all Israel with him, a very great *congregation*.”
- <4006> 2 Chronicles 29:5, 14 - “Jehosaphat stood in the *congregation*.” “Then upon Jahaziel... came the spirit of the Lord in the midst of the *congregation*.”
- <4038> 2 Chronicles 23:3 - “And all the *congregation* made a covenant with the King.”
- <4034> 2 Chronicles 28:14 - “So all the armed men left all the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the *congregation*.”
- <4023> 2 Chronicles 29:23, 32 - “And they brought ... the sin offering before the King and the *congregation*” - “And the number of the burnt offerings which the *congregation* brought.”
- <4002> 2 Chronicles 30:2, 4, 13, 17, 23, 24, 25 - “The King, his princes and all the *congregation*.” “In the eyes of the king and all the *congregation*.” “A very great *congregation*.” “Many in the *congregation* who had not sanctified themselves.” “And the *congregation* took counsel.” “Hezekaih did give to the *congregation*.” “And all the *congregation*.”
- <4034> Ezra 2:64 - “The whole *congregation* together was 42,360.”
- <4501> Ezra 10:1 - “There is gathered together a very great *congregation*.”
- <4509> Ezra 10:9 - “That whosoever came not within three days ... should be himself separated from the *congregation* of the captivity.”
- <4502> Ezra 10:12 - “Then all the *congregation* answered.”
- <4504> Ezra 10:14 - “Let... rulers of the *congregation* stand” (Sinaiatic)
- <4087> Nehemiah 5:7 - “And I held a great *assembly* against them.”
- <4083> Nehemiah 5:13 - “And all the *congregation* said Amen”
- <4076> Nehemiah 7:66 - “The whole *congregation* together was 42,360.”
- <4082> Nehemiah 8:2 - “Ezra brought the law before the *congregation*.”
- <4087> Nehemiah 8:17 - “And all the *congregation* of them ... made booths. “
- <4031> Nehemiah 13:1 - “An Ammonite and Moabite shall not enter the *congregation*.”
- <4028> Job 39:28 - “I stand up in the *assembly* and cry for help.”
- <4222> Psalm 22:22 - “In the midst of the *congregation* will I praise. “

- <B25> Psalm 22:25 - “Of thee cometh my praise in the great *congregation*.”
- <B26> Psalm 26:5 - “I have hated the *congregation* of evildoers.” <B27> Psalm 26:12 - “In the *congregations* will I bless the Lord.”
- <B28> Psalm 35:18 - “I will give thee thanks in the great *congregation*.”
- <B29> Psalm 49:9 - “I have published thy righteousness in the great *congregation*.”
- <B30> Psalm 68:26 - “Bless ye God in the *congregations*.”
- <B31> Psalm 89:5 - “Thy faithfulness in the *assembly* of the holy ones.”
- <B32> Psalm 107:32 - “Let them exalt him in the *assembly* of the people.”
- <B33> Psalm 149:1 - “Sing his praise in the *assembly* of the saints.”
- <B34> Proverbs 5:14 - “In the midst of the *congregation* and assembly.”
- <B35> Jeremiah 31:8 - “A great *assembly*” - instead of “*company*” is a variant reading.
- <B36> Lamentations 1:10 - “They should not enter into the *congregation*.”
- <B37> Ezekiel 32:3 - “Here Codex A. has *assembly (ecclesia)* instead of “*company*.”
- <B38> Joel 2:16 - “Sanctify the *congregation*.”
- <B39> Micah 2:5 - “Cast the line by lot in the *congregation of* the Lord.”

APOCHRYPHA JUDITH

- 6:2 - "Ozais took him from the *assembly* to his house."
7:29 - "Great weeping in the *assembly*."
13:29 - "In the *assembly* of the people."
14:6 - "Saw the head of Holofernes in the hand of one of the *assembly*." (A reading.)

ECCLESAISTICUS

- 15:5 - "In the midst of the *assembly* she shall open his mouth."
21:20 - "The mouth of the prudent is sought after in the *assembly*."
23:34 - "This woman shall be brought into the *assembly*."
24:2 - "Wisdom shall open her mouth in the *assemblies* of the Most High."
26:6 - "My heart hath been afraid of the *assembly* of the people."
31:11 - "And the *assembly* shall declare his alms."
33:19 - "Hear me, ye rulers of the *assembly*"
38:37 - "They shall not go up to the *assembly*."
39:14 - "The *assembly* shall show forth his praise."
44:15 - "Let the *assembly* declare his praise."
50:15 - "Before all the *assembly* of Israel."
50:22 - "Lifted up his hands over all the *assembly* of the children of Israel."

1 MACCABEES

- 2:56 - "Caleb for bearing witness before the *congregation*."
3:13 - "Judas has assembled a *company* of the faithful."
4:59 - "Judas, his brethren and all the *assembly*."
5:16 - "A great *assembly* met."
14:19 - "Read before the *assembly* in Jerusalem."'-

REMARK ON SEPTUAGINT USAGE

The testimony here is univocal. It is as solid as the Macedonian phalanx. Some have tried to make it appear that four of these ninety-two instances refer to an unassembled *ecclesia*. Look at them, read the context and judge for yourselves. The four passages are: ^{<1086>}1 Kings 8:65; ^{<1308>}1 Chronicles 28:8; ^{<1508>}Ezra 10:8; ^{<1518>}Ezekiel 32:3. The first two settle themselves.

In Ezra “the assembly of the Captivity” simply means the 42,360 that returned from the captivity and are repeatedly, gathered together.

In ^{<618>}Ezekiel 32:3 an unreliable reading has *ecclesia* in the place of *company*. But whether company or *ecclesia* the idea is the same. The “many peoples” signify nothing, they do not constitute an *ecclesia* until formed into one company. Xerxes, Timour, Napoleon and many others formed one great company out of the contingents of many nations.

Observe prescribed conditions of membership in Deuteronomy 23 and Nehemiah 13.

The new and mammoth Septuagint Concordance of Hatch and Redpath, five folio volumes, Oxford. 1893, gives the following additional instances (not cited by Trommius) from one text or another:

CANONICAL BOOKS

^{<604>}Deuteronomy 4:10; 9:10; ^{<113>}1 Kings 12:3 (from Codex A.); ^{<408>}2 Chronicles 10:3; 29:28, 31; 30:25; all rendered *assembly* in our Revised Version, ^{<323>}Ezekiel 32:23 (from Codex A.) rendered *company*.

APOCHRYPHAL BOOKS

Judith 6:19, 21 *assembly*.

1 Maccabees 14:9 (assemblies instead of streets).

FROM OTHER GREEK VERSIONS OF OLD TESTAMENT

^{<604>}Leviticus 4:14, 21; 16:17; ^{<940>}Psalms 40:9, 10; ^{<133>}Proverbs 26:26; ^{<237>}Jeremiah 26:17; 44:14. All rendered *assembly* in our Revised Version. And ^{<337>}Ezekiel 23:47, 26:7; 27:27; 32:22, all rendered *company*.

This makes the Old Testament usage amount to about 114 cases, nearly equal in number to New Testament usage. In no one of the 114 instances does it mean an unassembled *ecclesia*.

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE OF ECCLESIA (COMMON VERSION)

^{<168>}Matthew 16:18 - “I will build my *church*.”

^{<187>}Matthew 18:17 - “Tell (it) unto the *church*: but if he neglect to hear the *church*.”

^{<186>}Acts 2:47 - “the lord added to the *church* daily.”

- ◀4181▶ Acts 5:11 - “fear came upon all the *church*.”
- ◀4178▶ Acts 7:38 - “he, that was in the *church*.”
- ◀4181▶ Acts 8:1 - “the *church* which was at Jerusalem.”
- ◀4183▶ Acts 8:3 - “He made havoc of the *church*.”
- ◀4181▶ Acts 9:31 - “Then had the *churches rest*.”
- ◀4112▶ Acts 11:22 - “the *church* which was in Jerusalem.”
- ◀4113▶ Acts 11:26 - “assembled themselves with the *church*.”
- ◀4121▶ Acts 12:1 - “to vex certain of the *church*.”
- ◀4126▶ Acts 12:5 - “without ceasing of the *church* unto God.”
- ◀4131▶ Acts 13:1 - “Now there were in the *church*.”
- ◀4143▶ Acts 14:23 - “elders in every *church*, and had.”
- ◀4147▶ Acts 14:27 - “had gathered the *church* together.”
- ◀4152▶ Acts 15:2 - “on their way by the *church*.”
- ◀4154▶ Acts 15:4 - “they were received of the *church*.”
- ◀4152▶ Acts 15:22 - “elders, with the whole *church*.”
- ◀4151▶ Acts 15:41 - “confirming the *churches*.”
- ◀4166▶ Acts 16:5 - “so were the *churches* established.”
- ◀4182▶ Acts 18:22 - “gone up, and saluted the *church*.”
- ◀4182▶ Acts 19:32 - “for the *assembly* was confused.”
- ◀4183▶ Acts 19:39 - “determined in a lawful *assembly*.”
- ◀4194▶ Acts 19:41 - “thus spoken, he dismissed the *assembly*.”
- ◀4117▶ Acts 20:17 - “called the elders of the *church*.”
- ◀4118▶ Acts 20:28 - “to feed the *church* of God.”
- ◀5161▶ Romans 16:1 - “is a servant of the *church*.”
- ◀5164▶ Romans 16:4 - “all the *churches* of the Gentiles.”
- ◀5165▶ Romans 16:5 - “the *church* that is in their house.”
- ◀5166▶ Romans 16:16 - “The *churches* of Christ salute you.”
- ◀5163▶ Romans 16:23 - “mine host, and of the whole *church*.”
- ◀4102▶ 1 Corinthians 1:2 - “Unto the *church* of God which.”
- ◀4147▶ 1 Corinthians 4:17 - “I teach everywhere in every *church*.”
- ◀4164▶ 1 Corinthians 6:4 - “least esteemed in the *church*.”
- ◀4177▶ 1 Corinthians 7:17 - “so ordain I in all *churches*.”
- ◀5182▶ 1 Corinthians 10:32 - “nor to the *church* of God.”
- ◀4116▶ 1 Corinthians 11:16 - “neither the *churches* of God.”
- ◀4118▶ 1 Corinthians 11:18 - “come together in the *church*.”
- ◀4112▶ 1 Corinthians 11:22 - “or despise ye the *church* of God.”
- ◀4128▶ 1 Corinthians 12:28 - “God hath set some in the *church*.”
- ◀4144▶ 1 Corinthians 14:4 - “that prophesieth edifieth the *church*.”
- ◀4145▶ 1 Corinthians 14:5 - “the *church* may receive edifying.”

- ~~4342~~ 1 Corinthians 14:12 - “to the edifying of the *church*.”
- ~~4343~~ 1 Corinthians 14:19 - “in the *church* I had rather speak.”
- ~~4343~~ 1 Corinthians 14:23 - “The whole *church* be come together.”
- ~~4343~~ 1 Corinthians 14:28 - “keep silence in the *church*.”
- ~~4343~~ 1 Corinthians 14:33 - “as in all *churches* of the saints.”
- ~~4344~~ 1 Corinthians 14:34 - “keep silence in the *churches*.”
- ~~4345~~ 1 Corinthians 14:35 - “for women to speak in the *church*.”
- ~~4350~~ 1 Corinthians 15:9 - “I persecuted the *church* of God.”
- ~~4361~~ 1 Corinthians 16:1 - “to the *churches* of Galatai.”
- ~~4363~~ 1 Corinthians 16:19 - “The *churches* of Asai salute you.” - “with the *church* that is in their house.”
- ~~4700~~ 2 Corinthians 1:1 - “unto the *church* of God which.”
- ~~4701~~ 2 Corinthians 8:1 - “on the *churches* of Macedonai.”
- ~~4708~~ 2 Corinthians 8:18 - “gospel throughout all the *churches*.”
- ~~4709~~ 2 Corinthians 8:19 - “was also chosen of the *churches*.”
- ~~4703~~ 2 Corinthians 8:23 - “the messengers of the *churches*.”
- ~~4704~~ 2 Corinthians 8:24 - “to them, and before the *churches*.”
- ~~4718~~ 2 Corinthians 11:8 - “I robbed other *churches* taking.”
- ~~4718~~ 2 Corinthians 11:28 - “the care of the *churches*.”
- ~~4723~~ 2 Corinthians 12:13 - “were inferior to the *churches*.”
- ~~4802~~ Galatians 1:2 - “unto the *churches* of Galatai.”
- ~~4803~~ Galatians 1:13 - “I persecuted the *church* of God.”
- ~~4802~~ Galatians 1:22 - “unto the *churches* of Judea.”
- ~~4802~~ Ephesians 1:22 - “gave him (to be) the head over all (things) to the *church*.”
- ~~4890~~ Ephesians 3:10 - “might be known by the *church*.”
- ~~4891~~ Ephesians 3:21 - “glory in the *church* by Christ Jesus.”
- ~~4893~~ Ephesians 5:23 - “Christ is the head of the *church*.”
- ~~4894~~ Ephesians 5:24 - “the *church* is subject unto Christ.”
- ~~4895~~ Ephesians 5:25 - “as Christ also loved the *church*.”
- ~~4897~~ Ephesians 5:27 - “to himself a glorious *church*.”
- ~~4899~~ Ephesians 5:29 - “even as the Lord the *church*.”
- ~~4899~~ Ephesians 5:32 - “concerning Christ and the *church*.”
- ~~5086~~ Philippians 3:6 - “Concerning zeal, persecuting the *church*.”
- ~~5045~~ Philippians 4:15 - “no *church* communicated with me.”
- ~~5008~~ Colossians 1:18 - “the head of the body, the *church*.”
- ~~5004~~ Colossians 1:24 - “body’s sake, which is the *church*.”
- ~~5045~~ Colossians 4:15 - “the *church* which is in the house.”
- ~~5046~~ Colossians 4:16 - “in the *church* of the Laodiceans.”

- ~~500E~~ 1 Thessalonians 1:1 - “unto the *church* of the Thessalonians.”
- ~~502E~~ 1 Thessalonians 2:14 - “followers of the *churches* of God.”
- ~~500E~~ 2 Thessalonians 1:1 - “unto the *churches* of the Thessalonians.”
- ~~502E~~ 2 Thessalonians 1:4 - “in you in the *churches* of God.”
- ~~508E~~ 1 Timothy 3:5 - “take care of the *church* of God.”
- ~~508E~~ 1 Timothy 3:15 - “the *church* of the living God.”
- ~~508E~~ 1 Timothy 5:16 - “let not the *church* be charged.”
- ~~500E~~ Philemon 1:2 - “to the *church* in thy house.”