

## **CHURCH AUTHORITY.**

The church of our Lord Jesus Christ is composed of converted people only, and is of divine institution.

Christ is the only Head of the church; and the Word of God the only rule of faith and practice.

Every person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and who obeys the gospel of God our Saviour, is a member of his Spiritual Church, and entitled to a recognition as such by fellow members.

There is but one church, of which Christ is the living head.

When men affirm that something more than membership in the body of Christ is essential to membership in their religious organizations, they make it other than the church of Christ, and make themselves greater than the Lord, for they refuse to receive him whom they admit the Divine Master has accepted.

The only division that is recognized by the divine word is a local division. All the members of this holy church who are found in a given locality, are the church of that place. They ought, indeed, to recognize and receive one another, but only as Christ has received them. In all things they ought to regard it as his church, that he alone can constitute membership, and that all whom he has accepted are for that reason to be recognized as members of his church in that place.

Let all then who regard each other as members of the body of Christ, come together in any given place as the church of that place. Let the great object be in all cases, not the building up of an organization, but growth in grace and knowledge; let such local churches be in true fellowship with all of God's people; not because

they hold to certain beliefs or are organized in a peculiar method, but because they belong to our common Lord.

– *Selected.*

