

Old Landmarkism – What is it?
Chapter 4 – 30 Minutes

INTRODUCTION

- The Divine and Inalienable Rights of a Christian Church
[1Ti 3:15] But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Axiom I. Each Church is a living body, to which Christ committed both the sacred oracles and ordinances of Christianity.

Axiom II. The true Churches are the only authorized exponents of Christ's revelation, and of what Christianity is; and, therefore, to them is thus committed its wholeness and its symmetry.

1. Christ commissioned His Churches alone to preach His gospel.

- The first commission, the limited commission to go only to the house of Israel, was issued by the Lord to that body of disciples who John called "The Bride."
- The last commission was given of the Lord to the same body.
- The last commission was a repetition of the first to include all the world.
- The Church was delivered once for all time "the faith" another word for "gospel"
- When the Church received "the faith" it also received the ordinances.
- The Church alone has the gospel entrusted to be preserved in its purity, to be published to all the world, for it alone is the pillar and ground of the truth.
- Heb 12:28, "...we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved..."
- 1 Tim 3:15, "...the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth"
- If the Church alone is commissioned to preserve and preach the gospel, all other organizations entrench upon the divine rights of the Church by trying to do so.
- It is through the Church that Christ wishes all glory to flow to Him in all ages.

2. Christ commissioned His Churches to elect and commission---i.e., ordain---her own officers.

- The Lord established the Church and gave her officers.
- The Church was given authority to conduct the Lord's work and the officers are subject to that authority.
- It is the Church that makes officers, ordained members, Not the other way around
- The Church at Jerusalem elected Matthias to replace Judas, Acts 1:15-26
- Notice that qualifications for the position were given; the Church used these
- The Church later selected seven deacons to administer temporal affairs.
- Acts 6:1-6 shows qualifications were given to the Church, the Church used the qualifications to select the candidates, the Apostles then laid hands on them.
- Acts 13:1-3 shows how the Holy Spirit directed the Church to set Barnabas and Saul (Paul) apart for the work of the ministry.
- There is No record of them administering ordinances before this.
- The pattern of the presbytery laying on hands as part of ordination is seen.

- The same Holy Spirit would later inspire qualifications to be recorded as found in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1.
- In each of these examples, the Church is the one who performed the ordination
- They followed qualifications to select ministers or deacons
- Laying on of hands by those who made up the presbytery; ordained members
- Realize the warning given to these men as found in 1 Tim. 5:22
- Authority to perform, oversee, and carry out the work is in the Church
- The ordained serve the Church and Not the other way around
- 3. The Church is alone authorized to receive, to discipline, and to exclude her own members.

- It is the duty of the Church to exercise her authority; she is unable to delegate it
- Reading Revelation chapters 2 and 3 makes it obvious the Lord holds the Church responsible for exercising the authority He has entrusted to it.
- What is delegated cannot be delegated
- So, a minister has No right to decide who is qualified to receive ordinances
- Instances of administration must be authorized by the Church to be valid
- In 1795, Goshen Association in Virginia decided this way; preacher excluded
- Can a Church receive a member who has Not be dismissed properly?
- Considered disorderly baptism, disorderly Church, character of applicant
- The Church bears the responsibility before God for the decision it makes
- 4. It is the inalienable and sole right and duty of a Christian Church to administer the ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

- The perpetual existence of the Church is found in its ordinances
- It as an organization is the only one who can administer them; uses ministers
- Corollary 1. No Baptist Association or Convention can ordain ministers; dictate discipline of Churches; administer baptism and the Lord's Supper; and if Catholic, Protestant, or other religious groups are Not scriptural Churches, then they have no more right to preach, ordain ministers, or administer ordinances than a Masonic Lodge.

- Corollary 2. Speaks of the official acts of a minister, whether or Not they are valid, if material defects as to his legal qualifications for the office are found.
- This is an area of discussion, whether or Not a Church has the ability to approve what is clearly contrary to what God has disapproved.
- Caution has to be applied here because ministers are still human and will need to repent of personal, lingering sin.

QUESTIONS

1. How does the Lord authorizing His Church effect all other religious societies?
2. Is the Church subject to the authority of its officers or vice versa?
3. Where is the perpetual existence of a Church found?
4. Does an association of Churches have more authority than one Church?
5. What is required of a Church in order for the ordinances to be valid?
6. In 3 pages or less, use the scriptures to identify the pattern of ordination set forth in the scriptures?