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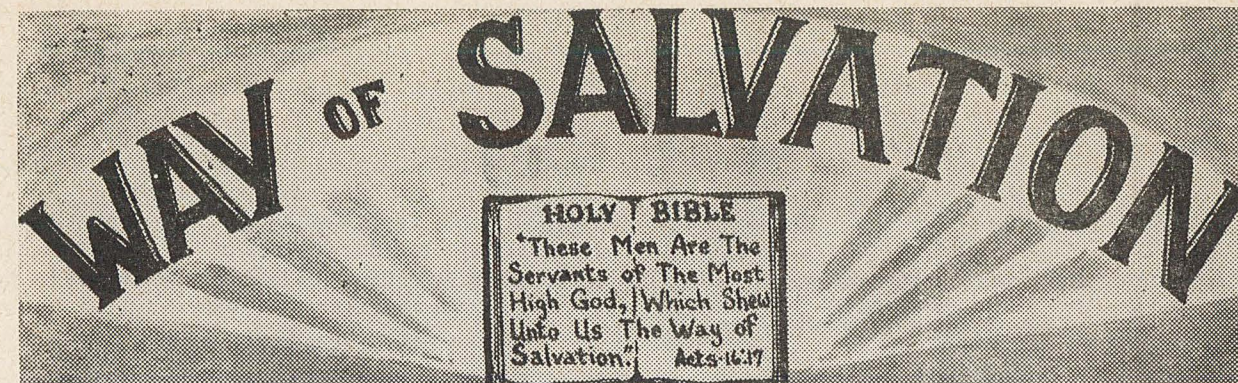
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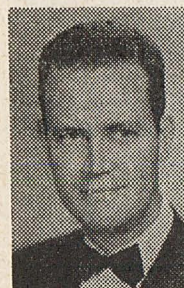
Will All Protestant Churches United in One Church?

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.
 The Question

A little more than a year ago there appeared in Collier's Magazine an article with this title: "Will All Protestant Churches Unite In One Church?" At the time this article was written, the World Council of Churches was having its annual meeting.

Issues Discussed

In the article referred to, the author affirmed that from his study of the problem there seem to be four major causes of Protestant church division. In my opinion these matters were discussed very objectively.



The four causes of division, as they were given by the Collier author, are these: baptism; the Lord's Supper; church government; and Biblical inspiration.

In this article the reader is invited to reflect upon a brief discussion of these issues.

Baptism

Baptism, as a point of contention among Protestant churches, is involved two ways: first, are sprinkling and pouring valid substitutes for immersion; second, should infants be "baptized."

The New Testament paints an unmistakable picture of baptism. In that picture are these elements: WATER, Acts 10:47; MUCH WATER, Jno. 3:23; COMING TO THE WATER, Acts 8:36; GOING DOWN INTO THE WATER, Acts 8:38; A BURIAL IN WATER, Rom. 6:4,5; A RESURRECTION FROM THE WATER, Rom. 6:4,5; GOING OUT OF THE WATER, Acts. 8:39.

It would require a complete perversion of the senses to make these elements describe sprinkling or pouring.

Such passages as Mark 16:16 and Acts 18:8 teach that believers, not infants, are subjects of baptism.

The Lord's Supper

Among Protestants the chief bone of contention in the Lord's Supper pertains to what is called "open" or "closed" communion.

Generally speaking, though not always, Baptists practice "closed" communion. That is, the Lord's Supper is not passed to those outside the fellowship of each Baptist congregation.

Indiscriminate passing of the Lord's Supper, is, of course, "open" communion.

1 Cor. 11:28 teaches an individual examination. Hence, there can be no "official" screening of those who choose to partake of the elements of the communion.

I conducted a funeral with a Baptist preacher who said "his" church did not practice "closed" communion. He cited 1 Cor. 11:28 in refutation of his brethren who practice "closed" communion.

Church Government

Among Protestants there are three major types of church government: government of Bishops; government of Presbyters; and the congregational type of government.

Government of Bishops probably finds its most elaborate and intricate arrangement in the structure of the Roman Catholic Church, though this body is not classified as "Protestant."

Among Protestant churches the rule of Bishops is found in Episcopal and Methodist churches. These churches insist that this order is scriptural. However, even if there were such a thing in the New Testament as "The" Bishop, there would still be no justification for the modern Bishop. And for this reason: where in the New Testament is there a Bishop over several churches?

In the Presbyterian church a number of local churches compose a Presbytery and several Presbyteries compose a Synod. It is true that in the New Testament arrangement each local congregation has several elders or presbyters. But it is no true that there was an organization higher than those local churches.

The government of the New Testament church is strictly congregational. Each church has a plurality of elders and deacons, Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17.

In Paul's day there was no "super" church. No church directed the affairs of another; neither the affairs of several. There was no synod, association, or missionary society; to the contrary, each congregation was entirely independent of every other church.

(Continued on Page Three)

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"What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?"

Hardly a day passes without someone asking this writer, "Of what denomination are you a member?" to which he replies that he is not a member of any denomination, and would not belong to such an organization. Then the person will usually ask: "What's wrong with denominationalism?"



PERVIE NICHOLS

There are many things wrong with denominations, any of which things make membership in any of them impossible as long as one abides "in the doctrine of Christ." (2 Jno. 9-10). Let us thoughtfully consider a few things wrong with them.

Not Authorized by Christ

Jesus promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18), and consequently did build it in 33 A.D. (Acts 2). More than 500 years after the Lord established His church the first denomination, the Catholic Church, came into existence in 606 A.D. with Boniface III as the first pope. Crystallizing into its present form at that time, it exists today as the mother of all denominations. Jesus did not build denominations; he built his church. Denominations were started by teaching and practicing things not found in the gospel of Christ. Therefore, denominations are neither authorized nor sanctioned by the Lord. They are plants which the "Heavenly Father hath not planted," and "shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15:13).

Foster Religious Division

The religious world is divided into sects and parties with at least 260 different denominations in America alone, each claiming to be the church of Christ or a denomination of the church of Christ. Yet they contradict themselves as well as each other in much of their teaching. (2 Jno. 9-11; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 3:9-10).

God is opposed to such discord. (Prov. 6:16-19; Cor. 14:33). Jesus prayed for unity among believers. (Jno. 17:19-22). The apostle Paul pleaded for unity and condemned division. (1 Cor. 1:10-

12; 1:8; Eph. 4:3-5). But denominations say that unity is impossible and thank God for division, "for the many different ways to heaven." (See Matt. 7:13-14; Jno. 14:6; Acts 16:17; Heb. 10:19-20). Such division is a prolific cause of unbelief. (Jno. 17). After observing the divided state of religion some have concluded that if the Bible is responsible for such condition they want no part of it. To be a member of a denomination is to help promote such sinful conditions.

Unscriptural Teaching and Practice

Denominations teach and practice many things not authorized in the Will of Christ, and exclude many things commanded in the New Testament. (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19. (1) They reject God's plan of salvation, and teach "salvation by faith only." (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21). (2) They refuse to follow the apostolic example to eat the Lord's Supper every first day of the week. (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:33). (3) Mechanical music has been added to their worship without divine authority. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). (4) Their organization and government are without divine authority, being ruled by majority vote and/or unscriptural officers. (Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). (5) They encourage people to join the church of their choice whereas the Lord adds all the saved to the church of His choice. (Acts 2:41-47). (6) Each sect has its own man-made creed or rules of faith and practice, when in fact the Bible is an all-sufficient guide in religion. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3).

Another Religion

The church of Christ, as spoken of in the universal sense, embraces all children of God everywhere. (Matt. 16:18; 1 Tim. 3:15). When it is referred to in the local sense it is applied to a congregation in a local community. (See 1 Cor. 1:1-2; Gal. 1; Rev. 1-). In the plural sense it refers to a group of churches in a certain area. (Rom. 16:16). These were not denominations; they were a part of the church or body of Christ, and were all alike in doctrine, name, faith, worship and practice.

A denomination is a religious body larger than a local New Testament church, yet smaller than the body or church of Christ. Hence, no denomination is a part of the church built by Christ. No one can become a member of a denomination while following the Bible; he must either do more or less than the Lord requires of him in becoming a Christian and a member of His church.

Membership in a denomination is not necessary in order to be a Christian and go to heaven. This fact is admitted by denominational authorities. However, in order to practice the religion—the system of faith and worship—set forth in the New Testament one must be a member of the church of the Lord. Therefore, denominations are not part of the church of Christ; they are not Christianity, but another religion. Since denominationalism began and exists today without divine authority it is contrary to and in competition with Christianity, and is an enemy of the church Jesus purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20:28;—R. V.)

What Are Your Chances?

One Negro was worrying about the chance of his being drafted for the army. The other consoled him.

"There's two things that can happen, boy. You is either drafted or you ain't drafted. If you ain't, you can forget it; if you is, you still got two chances. You may be sent to the front, and you may not.

"If you go to the front, you still has two chances, you may get shot and you may not. If you get shot, you still has two chances. You may die and you may not! And if you die you still have two chances."

One's chances at being drafted are largely dependent on others than himself. His chances for heaven are determined by the individual himself. "That each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" is the purpose of the judgment (II Cor. 5:10).

If you are lost, you are without excuse. Your salvation now depends upon you. You have the opportunity to be saved. It requires taking time out to learn the truth, the way God intends for man to worship and live, what you must do in order to be saved. You can learn error as easily as you learn truth. "There are many false prophets gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1).

It will take some private study on your part to make sure. It will necessitate a sincere investigation of the Bible. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). In order to be a disciple of Christ this is essential. "If you abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciple" (Vs. 31).

A man is never abiding in Jesus' word if he joins a church Jesus' word does not mention, wears a name it does not authorize, or worships in a way it does not prescribe.

"The disciples were called Christians" (Acts 11:26), and they were all members of the church of the Lord (Acts 2:47). The individual congregations of the Lord's body were known as "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16).

To "give the more diligence to make our calling and election sure," to make our chances for heaven as certain as possible, churches of Christ remain faithful to the Bible, refusing to "go beyond the things that are written." This is the only way to do it. When we do Bible things in Bible ways, and call Bible things by Bible names, speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent, we have divine assurance that we are safe.

Plainly, that is the purpose and position of the churches of Christ. They are not a denomination, and have no denominational machinery. They are simply New Testament Christians, doing the Lord's will in the Lord's own appointed way.

It will be a mighty fine thing to attend the church of Christ in your community and see if these things are so. Won't you do that now?

Because the church is the body of Christ, and since one cannot be saved out of Christ, a person cannot be saved out of the church.

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The article by Clovis Caudle in the May issue on CHASTITY vs LEWDNESS has been reprinted. This tract should be read by every woman, both young and old. Price of these four-page tracts is \$2.00 per 100. Mail all orders to: Clovis Caudle, 2908 W. Brainerd, Pensacola, Fla.

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Filling the Lord's Orders

By J. E. GREEN

Did you ever do business with a mail order company? You probably have. Most people have. It is very simple isn't it? There is a place on the order blank to put the name of the merchandise, a place to specify how many or how much is desired. There are also places to name the color, size and price of that which you are ordering.

Now let's suppose that you place an order with some prominent mail order house for a man's suit. The size is 40, the color is blue and the price is \$39.95. You would simply place this information in the spaces provided on the order blank, send it to the company, and your order will be filled according to specifications. You would not accompany the order with a long letter saying, "Don't send size 30 nor 36 nor 42. Don't send black nor green nor gray." The company will know what you want by what you specify on the order sheet. Hence the company will send what you ordered or nothing. If for any reason your order cannot be filled as specified, you will be informed to that effect and your money returned.

The Bible contains God's orders to man. In it God has written down what He wants man to do. Now let's take a look at the order and see what we find. Here is one of them, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:16. Another says, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him." Col. 2:12. Here is another, "Let the word of Christ dwell with you in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:19. Some one says, "It does not say that the believer who is not baptized shall not be saved." Another says, "It does not say that sprinkling and pouring is not baptism." Still another says, "It does not say not to use instruments of music in the worship." All of this is true. The Bible does not say all these things. What does it say? What do the orders say? It is imperative that we go by what the orders specify, instead of what they do not say.

When Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" that is the way he meant it and intended for it to be. If not he would not have said it that way. When he said he buried in baptism and raised up, that is the way he intended for it to be. When the Lord said "sing and make melody in your hearts," that is what he wanted done. Nothing else fills the order. That is simple isn't it? It is logical and safe. The inspired writer says "Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:14.

The Lord's commandments are his orders for man and what he says in them is what he wants done. They that do them will have a right to the tree of life and will be permitted unto the golden city. Jesus presents the same lesson when he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven." Mat. 7:21.

The will of God for man today is the New Testament; and what he specifies in that is what man must do. The way to do His will and fill His orders is to go by what the orders say and not by what they do not say.

Faith in What?

Faith in Christ is not simply mental assent to His authority but it is also the principle on which we function in our relationship to Him. It is trust in and reliance on Christ. Faith produces action for "we walk by faith." (2 Cor. 5:7). Faith leads us forward.

The Faith That Saves

1. THE NATURE TO FAITH. Faith implies a previous knowledge of the object of faith. None can believe in that of which he has not heard. (Rom. 10:14; John 9:35-58). Faith requires not only evidence but also a willingness to believe the truth (John 5:40; 2 Thess. 2:10-12). Those who refuse to believe will not be persuaded by any amount of testimony. Faith implies a firm persuasion of the truth of a given proposition (Rom. 4:20-21).

2. THE NATURE OF FAITH THAT SAVES. Saving faith is based on divine truth John 20:30,31; Rom. 10:17). Its object is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The faith implies a full consent of the mind and will unto God and His will (John 12:42,43; Matt. 10:32-33). Thus one trusts in Christ's blood for salvation and follows Christ.

The Manifestation of Faith

1. FAITH MUST HAVE ITS WORKS. The works of faith are those which manifest trust in Christ in that the individual follows His guidance. It takes effort to study the word of God and arrive at a conclusion of trust in Christ. It also takes effort and work to walk by faith and follow Christ. James taught that "by works was faith made perfect" and that man is justified by the works of faith and not by faith only (James 2:22-24).

2. FAITH AT WORK. Let us notice some of the characteristics as it enables us to do the things required by God. First. The works of faith are evident when there is not reason to do the thing commanded except that God has required it (Heb. 11:8; Gen. 12:14; 22:1-19). Faith maintains that when God gives a certain commandment the fact that it is God's word gives us the highest reason for obedience. Second. Faith is manifested when we do a thing, commanded by God, when there is no apparent connection between that which He has commanded and the end to be accomplished (Heb. 11:30; Josh. 6:20; Acts 2:38; 2 Cor. 5:7). Third. We manifest faith when we do God's commandments although reason and experience pronounce such actions foolish (Heb. 11:7; Gen. 6:13-22; 1 Cor. 1:21). Fourth. Faith is manifested when we do God's word although it involves self-denial, sacrifice and danger. Fifth. Faith is manifested when we try to do everything that God has commanded and do it exactly as He has commanded it (Heb. 8:5; John 2:4; Luke 6:46; Gen. 6:22; Matt. 7:21).

3. FAITH AND SALVATION. Faith saves because it is faith in the Savior. Faith relies on His cleansing blood. It does this in that, in faith, one meets whatever conditions of salvation God has laid down. Just as God did not bring down the walls of Jericho until faith met the conditions (Heb. 11:30), just so faith today must meet God's requirements. When faith meets those requirements man has not merited salvation, but God saved man by His grace. But faith must meet the conditions.

—James D. Bales.

If I Were Determined to Lead People Away From the Bible

By GARDNER S. HALL

1. I would never announce my intention. No. I would praise the Bible and laud it to the skies. I would read certain portions and emphasize them often.

2. I would try to avoid suspicion in the brotherhood. I would even write in the papers and condemn the doctrines and commandments of men unsparingly. I would urge soundness on every hand. Of course I would be careful not to specify as to what is sound and what is unsound. This would build up brotherhood confidence and if some faithful brother should try to expose my innovations, brethren abroad would not believe him.

3. Regardless of how much worldliness I led the church into, I would condemn worldliness unsparingly. Of course, I would not be specific. I would just be against worldliness, and with a vengeance. Then everybody would say, "Why you know this is not worldly or Brother H. would have nothing to do with it; he surely hates worldliness."

4. And I would be so-o-o-o humble. I would exude piety from every pore. Then I would not have to prove anything by the Bible. I could just quote a few obscure verses and lift my eyes heavenward and few would dare question one so sweet, holy, pious and humble.

5. I would never allow myself to be drawn into a discussion. If criticized, I would just move along smoothly and appear not to know about it. If someone should call the criticism to my attention, I would remark quickly, "Well, they criticized our Lord, you know." I might let a little tear slip down my cheek. Then the fellow who mentioned it would feel ashamed and beg my pardon. He would say I was a martyr.

I wrote all of this to say this: BEWARE of the man who makes a display of humility, sweetness, piety; also those who are against sin, but never specify. Deceivers (effective ones) use just these very tactics.

With and Without Christ

By THORNTON CREWS

The joy and the hope of life here and hereafter is largely determined by our relationship and attitude to, or toward Jesus the Christ. The purity of our thinking and the wholesomeness of our conduct and the benefits and blessings of our conversations is increased many folds by the proper appreciations of Christ, the Redeemer of mankind. Life's successes and failures can be traced to the right or wrong attitudes toward the Son of God, for "in Him was life; and the life was the light of men" Jn. 1:4. Very briefly, I desire to point out some things that are without Christ and some things that are within Him.

WITHOUT CHRIST

CHRIST IS THE WAY—Men without Him are like Cain, wanderers and vagabonds in the earth, with no certain goal for time or eternity, Gen. 4:12. HE IS THE TRUTH—Men without Him are liars and untrustworthy, like the Devil in his sphere of

untruthfulness, Rom. 3:4; Jno. 8:44. HE IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD—Men without Him are dead in their trespasses and sins while they live, Jno. 8:12; Eph. 2:1; Tim. 5:6. HE IS THE TRUE VINE—Men who are not in Him are withering branches, preparing for the fire of final destruction, Jno. 15:6; Rev. 21:8. HE IS THE ROCK OF AGES—Men who are not builded on Him are carried away by the flood of destruction at the judgment, Matt. 7:24-28. HE IS THE BREAD AND WATER OF LIFE—Men without Him will hunger and thirst through all eternity, Luke 16:24; Jno. 6:35, 48, 50, 58; 4:10,11. HE IS THE ALPHA AND OMEGA—Men without Him have neither Beginning of Good nor end of Misery, Rev. 1:8; 21:16; 22:13.

With(in) Christ

IN HIM—We have Hope and can do all things, 1 Cor. 13:13. I want you to note that these things are ours in Christ and they are of an ABIDING nature in Him. See 1 Cor. 15:19; Phil. 4:13; Heb. 6:18,19. IN HIM—We have all the promises of God. 2 Cor. 1:20. IN HIM—We have and can enjoy all Spiritual Blessings, Eph. 1:3. IN HIM—We have our redemption, and the forgiveness of our sins, Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:13,14; 1 Jno. 1:7. IN HIM—We have Salvation, 2 Tim. 2:10; the privilege of working it out, Phil. 2:12; of worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth, Jno. 4:23,24; Col. 3:16,17.

WITH AND WITHOUT CHRIST

IN CHRIST—We have companionship of God, Christ, and The Holy Spirit, and care of the Universal Fatherhood of God, and the blessings of the universal brotherhood of the saints of God. Matt. 28:20. IN CHRIST—One is Never Alone.

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PROTESTANT CHURCHES

(Continued from Page One)

Biblical Inspiration

Among Protestants there are two concepts of inspiration: verbal and ideal. By verbal inspiration is meant an actual word for word inspiration; that is, that we have in the Bible the very words of God. By ideal inspiration is meant the "inspiration" of the broad principles of the Bible, but not the minute discussions of the Bible. For example, one preacher said, "I know Paul said that, but I don't agree with Paul."

1 Cor. 2:9-16 teaches a verbal inspiration of the Bible. Often a Bible writer, even Jesus, made an argument on a single word, cf. Gal. 3:16; Jno. 10:34-36.

Please Note

Throughout this discussion I have used the term Protestant in its commonly accepted sense: a description of all denominationalists who are not Catholic. However, in the term Protestant I do not include the church of the New Testament, which is neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Jewish.

New Testament Christianity Today

By J. W. EVANS

The Bible was inspired of God—written for and adapted to mankind. In the Bible we are told all we know about Jesus Christ and the beginning of His church, the kingdom of God—Christianity.

Conditions Today

Most of us were born and reared under the impression that it doesn't make any difference which of the many churches we belong to, or whether we belong to any of them or not. When we came into the world, we found "Christendom" to be divided into over 250 different denominations, each teaching a different doctrine and practicing different things and each in competition with the others. People are told it doesn't make any difference what you believe, nor which church you belong to, so long as you are honest. To some this is entirely satisfactory, but to others this situation furnishes many perplexing problems. How can all churches be different in doctrine and practice, and all be right? Why does the Bible not speak of all these different churches? Is God the author of confusion? Does God call preachers to preach conflicting doctrines?

What To Do

Do you find yourself bewildered and frustrated as to just what to do religiously? Don't you think the proper thing to do is to take the Bible and learn the characteristics of Christianity during the time of the Apostles, then search for the same characteristics today!

Establishment of the Church

Jesus promised to build His church. (Matt. 16:18). The church was established with power (Mark 9:1) at Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2,3; Luke 24:46-49) on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4). 3000 souls were added to the church that day, and the Lord added daily such as should be saved. (Acts 2:41,47).

The word "church" simply means the "Called out". There are two spiritual kingdoms—the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Christ. (Col. 1:13,14). When an individual becomes a Christian, he is "called out" of the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of Christ. Hence, all those who have been redeemed, saved, or "called out" were translated into the kingdom of Christ which is simply called the "church". "Church" is never used in the Bible to refer to a denomination.

Visible or Invisible

Many people think that the "called out" is God's kingdom of saved people, but that this kingdom is invisible and the only way that one can get into the "visible kingdom" is to join some denomination. No such idea can be gleaned from the Bible, but quite the contrary. 3000 people were added to the church (called out) at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers" (Acts 2:42), yet they joined no denomination. It was visible enough to be persecuted and scattered abroad. (Acts 8:1). The church at Troas was no denomination, yet they came together on the first day of the week for preaching and the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). All the "called out" in every city met on the Lord's Day and worshipped God, yet they joined no denomination. They were simply the "called out" of God worshipping as such.

Can It Be Done Today?

All agree that a person can be saved, in Christ, have sins forgiven, and go to heaven when they die, without belonging to ANY DENOMINATION. But a person MUST belong to the "called out," the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, if he is to be saved. (Acts 2:47, John 3:5; Eph. 1:7; Rom. 8:1; 2 Tim. 2:10). Can these saved people who are members of the kingdom of God come together to worship God after the New Testament pattern WITHOUT JOINING AND DENOMINATION? If not, why not?

Conclusion

It is possible, therefore, to be a Christian and only a Christian, a member of the kingdom of God and to meet with fellow Christians for worship on the Lord's Day WITHOUT BELONGING TO A SINGLE DENOMINATION ON THIS EARTH. his is exactly what the Church of Christ IS and is pleading for. BE A CHRISTIAN AND ONLY A CHRISTIAN, and worship God ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE without addition, subtraction, or alteration, WITHOUT JOINING ANY DENOMINATION. MAKE AN HONEST INVESTIGATION.

"Pretty Please"

By RAY MARCUM

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).

What speech you use, Stephen! Are you not ashamed of such unsociable words? Why use such language? I verily thought you were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Should Stephen stand me "face to face" there is no doubt to his reply, "I chose to please God rather than man." Stephen stated the facts, not sugar coated ones. He was preaching to men who denied our Lord. They were "stiffnecked" and would not submit to the government of God. Their hearts were hard and their ears were stopped to the hearing of God's word. I thank God for the sermon which cost Stephen his life, for in his audience stood one who "was consenting to his death" yet he became the bearer of the gospel to our race.

When men preach as did Stephen, the "seed" is not sown in vain and more Pauls will arise. The dead branches will fall but it is best, for God doth not accept unconverted souls.

Some of my brethren have turned from the preaching of Stephen and are using honeyed expressions which leave a nasty taste with all converted ones.

Can you picture Jesus, Peter, Paul or Stephen exhorting a congregation with such words, "Will you please give of your means and if you do not we are going to cut out some of God's work. Please start giving as you have prospered. Pretty please!"

Brethren, let us state the facts of God's word. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Let the people know of the Hell that faces them if they do not obey God's commands. Only then will we be pleasing God. "But he, (Stephen) being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God . . . (Acts 7:35). May God give us courage to be able to do likewise.

Duncan, Arizona.

How Can We Know We Are Saved?

By EARL FLY

Since this question concerns the eternal destiny of souls, it is very important that we learn the Bible answer. There are many false standards used by religious people today which satisfy their own minds that they are saved while actually they are lost. What are some of these false standards?

(1). FEELINGS. Many say, "I know I'm saved because I feel like I am." Mohammedan, Jew and Buddhist FEEL saved though they reject Christ as Saviour. Paul FELT like he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9), but he was wrong! IS A WAY RIGHT IF IT SEEMS RIGHT? "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12).

(2). CONSCIENCE. Others say "I know I am saved because my conscience is good." But having a good conscience depends on whether we are doing what we have been taught. If one is taught wrong he can do wrong with a good conscience! Saul of Tarsus had a good conscience while he was beating, imprisoning and murdering the saints of God! (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11). Thus one can be lost with a good conscience. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps." (Jeremiah 10:23).

(3). There are others who rely upon the promises of a favorite loved preacher, upon dreams, nightmares, ancestor's religion, voices in the night, etc., for their assurance (?) of salvation. The assurance received by using such false standards will only be temporary. In the judgment, truth will turn such hope into despair as men learn they have built upon a foundation of sand.

There is only one sure way of knowing whether we are saved. God says through John, "And hereby we do know that we know him, IF we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3-4). Away go feelings, conscience, preacher-promises, dreams, nightmares, ancestors' religion, voices in the night and human creeds as reliable standards. THE WORD OF GOD IS THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE STANDARD!

We kindly state that no one can possibly follow God's Word while a member of any denomination on earth for they all teach and practice many things contrary to the Bible. Do you really want to go to heaven? Then we urge you to be a Christian in Christ's church. There is no other way of salvation. Follow the Word of God and be saved.

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On Making Vows

By FLETCHER CAUTHEN

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon the earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou has vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error; wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God." Ecclesiastes 5:1-7.

Vow Defined

These words suggest the subject of "vowing." A vow defined: "A spoken, or written promise made to God or man to do some good things with God's help, and binding unless hindered by Providence, (not laziness) or by unavoidable circumstances." When Christians make vows, pledges, or give their word, they must fulfill them according to that which they have made.

A vow is the same as a promise. (Deut. 23:23). The law concerning the Nazarites is in Numbers 6:1-21. Paul may have taken this one (Acts 18:18). If he did it was only temporarily (1 Cor. 11:14). The law of Moses did not institute vows; it regulated them. They existed before and after the Law.

In the teaching of Jesus, vows are mentioned only to condemn the abuse of them: "But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, that wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God; he shall not honor his father. And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition." (Matt. 15:5ff). The carping, critical Pharisees had set artificial duties above natural ones and Jesus rebuked and condemned them for so doing.

New Testament Vows

Example of vows in the New Testament are baptism, marriage, giving of money, attending services. All of us have vowed more faithful service to God by leaving some sin, by performing some duty and even so small a thing as the answering our mail. To fail to answer a letter is as big an insult as to refuse to speak to a friend or brother when we meet him.

Vows and promises must be deliberately and devoutly entered into. We should never vow or pledge anything but what is in our power to perform. "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law." (Romans 13:8). Evil vows ought never to be made, and if made, should be broken. (Matt. 14:3-12). We often vow only when involved in a calamity. Too often we say, "When I get on my feet, I'm going to be more faithful in the service of the Lord." . . . A vow is binding and it is sin not to keep a promise.