

Sectarianism

Not of God

Sect Names Unscriptural and Evil

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”—1 Cor.3:11.

“Upon this rock I will build My church.”—Matt.16:18.

“Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.”—1 Pet. 2:5.

“No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.”—John 6:44.

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”—Acts 2:47.

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Christ's law of unity, for which He so earnestly pleads in five petitions in one prayer (John 17: 20-23), is most grossly violated in sectarianism. This applies to all denominations alike, but to those sects which profess the Bible as their "rule of faith," and Christ and the Apostles as their "guide and example," thereby being the most inconsistent, this must first apply. Every place in the Bible where Christians were called a "sect" it was by the Jews or outsiders. When Paul was a Pharisee he belonged to a sect.

The prophecy of Isaiah, 62, says of God's church: "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. . . . They shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." So they are called "Christian," the "Church of God," "Saints," etc. (to this prophecy Seventh-day Adventists and some others have the effrontery to refer in defense of their sect name), in the New Testament, all terms meaning the same body of believers. Paul says, "Of whom the whole family of heaven and earth are named" (Eph. 3: 15). "I will write upon him the name of my God." "His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 3: 12; 22: 4).

Says John Bunyan, a saint for whom we have the most profound regard: "Since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you I would be, and hope I am, a *Christian*; and choose, if God should count me worthy, to be called a *Christian*, a believer, or other such name which is approved by the Holy Ghost. And as for these fictitious titles of Anabaptist, Presbyterian, Independent, or the like, I conclude that they come from neither Antioch nor Jerusalem, but from hell and Babylon, for they tend to divisions. You may know them by their fruits."—"*Bunyan's Works*," by Gulliver, page 18.

Zwingle says, "All Christians are brethren of Jesus Christ, and brethren of one another, and they have no father upon the earth, therefore all orders, sects, and parties fall to the ground"

Melancthon says: "Let not the pope, the priests, the Jesuits, and bishops say, 'We are the Church; whoever separates from us separates from the Church.' There is no other church than the assembly of those who have the Word of God and are purified by it."

Says Luther: "Call not yourselves Lutherans. Who is Luther but a miserable bag of dust and ashes? Call yourselves Christians, after Him who died for you."

Just so are those naming themselves for some doctrine, such as Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, although they boast of no creed, but are sectarian. Their name itself brands them as such. A sectarian name is nowhere sanctioned by Christ and His apostles. A name is man's invention, and divides the religious world into antagonistic sects, and robs Christ of His leadership. There is no difference between Lutheran and Christian as a sect name. Some sects, however, gotten up by man, such as "Latter Day Saints," "Church of God," "Seventh-day Adventist," "Disciples," etc., are more subtle than all the rest in the choice of a name. (The Seventh-day Adventists received their's by "revelation" through their prophetess, Mrs. White.) While it is true that the followers of Christ are *Christians* and disciples, and together constitute the Church of God (Acts 20: 28), yet to crystalize one of these into a sect name which is under the control of a conference is as bad as, if not worse than if the name be of less subtle choice, because it is more deceptive and dangerous; but the fraud is made apparent by the fact that a man cannot *join* one of these sectarian divisions and stand on the Bible as his sole guide.

All followers of any man or woman are "yet carnal." The human tendency is the same now as it was in the days of the apostles. We find men and women all down the ages looking to the Pope, to Emanuel Swedenborg, to Joseph Smith, to Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, to Mrs. White, to Madame Blavatsky, to Joanna Southcote, to "General" Booth, to Alexander Dowie, to Ann Lee, to the Fox sisters, and others, saying, as did the deceived of old concerning a man who gave "out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed . . . saying, This man is the great power of God" (Acts 8: 9, 10). Thus are the people "bewitched" now, as then.

Christ cannot be the head, nor door, nor foundation of any sect. *Sectarianism is heresy.* A heretic is one forming an *opinion* not in accordance with the Word of God. In sectarianism they have set up memorials to themselves, robbing Christ of His headship. Every sect owns and controls its members as stock companies do their cattle. "They make merchandise of you." If you are a member of a sect, you are its merchandise, and valued according to the amount of money you are able to pay into its treasury.

When any denomination comes together in their conference or associations, they enthuse in love for one another, and apply to this emotional feeling the text, "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." They do not realize that this is a sect love, and will apply as well to Spiritualists, Buddhists, or Theosophists. Let them mix up a number of sects in a meeting and spring some doctrinal point, then see where comes in the love of the brethren.

The Bible is full of the idea of true Christian unity, which is a unity of life and growth, and not of outward forms. In Christ's prayer for His disciples, He said: "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made *perfect in one*"

(John 17: 22, 23). "For as the body is one and hath many members, and *all* the members of that one body, being many are one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member but many" (I. Cor. 12: 12-14). The unity of belief in the Church is not formed by the church coming together and the majority defining the creed to be believed. The church cannot define doctrine, nor make laws for itself nor for anybody else. The Church of Christ is made up of all who obey the Lord's commands, *not a body to issue commands. The Head directs, the body obeys.* God speaks; each one must listen to His voice, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and no man can give faith to another. It is the gift of God.

More than one hundred years ago the Baptists came out from other sects, bringing with them some valuable truths. Later the "Church of God," who originated in 1844, came out with some added truths. The Seventh-day Adventists seceded from this sect, having received a woman as an inspired prophetess to rule over them, and who gave them their name by "revelation." They claim the Bible as their sole creed, but incorporate Mrs. White's "visions" into it, reading them out again as Bible, thus trickily deceiving the people. Her "Testimonies," which they blasphemously call the "testimonies of Jesus," are their creed, and no people on earth are held in a worse bondage of ignorance and bigotry, as they are instructed that they "cannot go to Christ alone," and their "private judgment must be surrendered" when their spiritual masters speak the word. The original church made the mistake of organizing, and consequently their growth, spiritually, ceased.

The sects which have sprung up within the past fifty years are, many of them, led by one man or woman. For example, the Christian Scientists are led by Mrs. Eddy; Salvation Army by General Booth; Christian Catholic Church by Alexander Dowie; Seventh-day Adventists by Mrs. White; Latter Day Saints by Joseph Smith, and many others of minor importance.

The editor of *Zion Watch Tower* embraces the apostolic pattern of the church, but publishes only his own writings, unless, perhaps, some letters chosen for their flattery of himself and works. But the addresses of these letter-writers are all withheld; the writers cannot be located except through him at his will. He includes all subscribers to the *Tower* as members of his Bible Tract Society, but all tracts published are his own composition. Colporteurs engaged in selling his works and soliciting subscribers to the "*Tower*" are directed where to go, and what to teach. This editor denounces in strong terms all other sects, and directs his followers to come out from among them, and adopt his methods, of course, as do Adventists, Dowieites, and others—even dictating letters for their use in taking this step, with printed envelopes to mail them in. In short, it is a *one-man system*, and by this means a strict monopoly is maintained over all his literature, and his followers kept within his own fold, making a bond of Russell, and what he teaches. By these methods a sect of the worst form is the result. The deluded followers of these

individuals are as devoted and ready to do obedience to their leaders as are the Catholics to the Pope of Rome. (Ps 146:3).

Some of these sects are boasted Bible students, and do embrace some valuable doctrines, but their knowledge of Scripture is circumscribed by their sectarian idolatry. They can and do teach only what is sanctioned by their spiritual "bosses." We can see, then, in these more recent Protestant sects, the *prototypes of the Papacy*.

The labor of God's true ministers, like all other spiritual gifts, should be free. No gospel can be pure that is made an article of merchandise. It must be one who, like the Master, lays down his life for the sheep. As a rule, a hireling cannot be depended upon. The title "Reverend" is found but once in the Scriptures, and there it refers to God (Ps. 111:9). Man's use of it then, is sacrilege. And those Bishops and Overseers whose names are so elaborately decorated, have often a lordly mien, and tyrannize over those beneath them. The only difference between the Pope of Rome and the lowest-paid minister is in degree. They are all carried over the heads of the people, living on the fat of the land. The apostles and early disciples will never know what they have missed by living in such primitive days. How proud Paul might have been could he have seen his name written, Very Rt. Rev. Bishop Paul, D. D., LL. D., Ph. D., but it had to be simply Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, and he had to suffer persecution and beheading for Christ's sake.

Recently many are embracing false "isms," while they remain in their respective church bodies. They are all saturated with spiritualism, and a strong, hypnotic influence is exercised to prevent those who are once ensnared, from ever getting free. Many of the clergy have taken up the study of hypnotism so they can induce their congregations to believe that their namby pamby sermons are masterly efforts.

These new, high-sounding names, such as Theosophy, Christian Science, Hypnotism, Telepathy, Spiritualism, Mind-cure, etc., are blinders, all covering the occult teachings of the necromancers, astrologers and wizards of old. The supernatural was not true under the old crude forms of the past; no more is it true under these more refined, fresh disguises of the present. Lift the mask and we find *Baal worship* revived and refined to suit the modern taste. Satan is busy portioning out to different peoples, in different coverings, the same old delusions with which he has "deceived the whole world." How unlike the pure, simple gospel of Christ.

Adventists, Baptists, and others who profess no creed, are loud in their boast of the Bible as their "rule of faith—Christ and the apostles their example," warning other sects to trust in the Word of God alone, failing to see that they also are bound about with a hoop of human creed,—sectism,—from which they should first free themselves (Math. 7:5). Their liberty is limited. It makes no difference what gem of truth is shown them from the Scriptures, they dare not tolerate it until accepted by "conference," or endorsed by the prophets, whose decisions are as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.—T. E. Reed, in "*Gleanings New and Old*."

THE BASIS.

The absolute sovereignty of the Creator on the one hand, on the other hand the absolute freedom of the human will to acknowledge or not to acknowledge that sovereignty, are the twin principles which form the basis of all reciprocal relation between God and man. And this basis, also, is the first point in the standard of measurement to which all religious doctrine and all religious practice must conform. For man is the image of God; and the image must be as free to choose as is the original; or the image is obliterated and man becomes a mere machine or animal. Any doctrine, therefore, that limits in any measure the sovereign rights of the Creator, or that intimates that He has yielded or abrogated His right of sovereignty over *any individual soul*, is necessarily untrue. And any doctrine or service that teaches or implies that any being who is in the image of God does not of right have absolute freedom of choice when in possession of correct knowledge, is constitutionally and necessarily untrue.

Therefore, any means or methods which may be imposed in gospel work, which in any measure prevents any soul from obtaining that knowledge of all sides and views of the subject, whereby an intelligent and discriminating choice may be made, is not from God, and is error; even though it should be instituted by an angel from heaven.

In accordance with this foundation, the Lord Jesus, having bought us with His own precious blood, I. Cor. 6:19, 20; 7:23; Acts 20:28, has by that transaction, and by appointment of the Father, become, by right, our sovereign Ruler; absolute Master (Gr. *despotus*, *despot*), and we have become to Him bond-men (Gr. *dulos*, slaves, personal property); a relation which we can acknowledge or not, as we may choose, when all the facts are known to us. Those having learned this, and, from the heart acknowledging it in this present life, constitute the household of faith, *the called-out body* (Gr. *ecclesia*) of which Christ Jesus is the head; the government of which is therefore a *pure theocracy*. Every individual member of the body of Christ is a member by virtue of having been called and chosen and *placed in the body*, not by man, but by God Himself, as it is written, "Now hath God set the members, *every one of them*, in the body as it hath pleased Him" (I. Cor. 12:18).

The Lord Jesus is the head of the body, and He is the sole director and manager of each and every individual member of the body.

Each member stands in respect to any kind of *authority* as if he were the only Christian on earth. He regards no teacher but the Lord Jesus only (Math. 23:11). He stands separate from all human religious combinations except that which is through Christ, by faith and love. As one person is joined to Christ by loving faith, and another person is joined to Christ by loving faith, these two are no longer apart, but are joined in one *center*—Christ Jesus. Faith and love being the only bond.

The divinely given and therefore perfect illustration of the relations of the members of Christ to the head and to each other, is that of the human body (I. Cor. 12), in which one member has no authority

over another member; but they have sympathy one with another; neither do the members confer together how best to manage the body; but each one always acts singly, and when several or all of them act at the same time, it is still each one acting as a single member under the impulse and guidance of the head. The body of Christ, therefore, does not admit of a humanly devised organization of its members, for the management of the body and the accomplishment of service. Hence, absolute personal freedom of each individual member from any degree of authoritative control by any member, or association of members, is a constitutional and fundamental principle of gospel service.

THE CALLED OUT BODY OF CHRIST.

The version of the New Testament made by order of King James of Great Britain, and "authorized" to be read by the common people, contains these words: "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Math. 16:18). The word *church* has no meaning at all like the Greek word for which it stands in the New Testament; and it therefore leaves the English reader entirely in the dark as to what it was Jesus said He would build. "*Church*" is not a translation of any word, but is a mispronunciation in the attempt to anglicize a certain Greek word, *kyriakos*, which occurs but twice in the New Testament. It is an adjective, and means "The Lord's," indicating property belonging to Him as, "The Lord's Supper" (I. Cor. 10:20); "The Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10). After the days of the apostles, when Christians became numerous and began to have meeting houses, these houses were called by them "the Lord's house," in distinction from other houses and heathen temples. In after centuries, when nominal Christianity had absorbed the barbarous nations of Western Europe, the attempt of the barbarians to adopt Christian nomenclature resulted in some contortions of language. Out of *kyriakos*, the Germans made *kirche*, the Scotch *kirk*, the English *church*. The name of the meeting house finally attached to the assembly of worshipers, and so, at the time the "authorized version" was made, *church* was understood to mean the visible body of Christians as well as the building in which they assembled. Hence the word *church* was substituted, instead of a translation, for the Greek word *ecclesia*, wherever *ecclesia* occurs in the New Testament referring to the body of believers.

There are four words in the Greek language occurring in the New Testament which mean an assembly of people. Of these *oklos* means an unorganized crowd, without denoting whether there were many or few; *plathos* was an unorganized multitude, or large crowd; *synagogue* occurs frequently in the New Testament, and is only twice translated, but is anglicized into *synagogue*. It is composed of the Greek *sun* (together) and *ago* (to lead), hence means *led together*. It is the word which in the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, stands for the whole company of the tribes of Israel, and is rendered *congregation*, in the A. V. The word signifies a congrega-

tion that is mixed as to character and quality, all led together. Such were the tribes of Israel—fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, grand-sires, infants; wise, foolish, righteous and sons of Belial, all led together under one leadership, and all together called the people of God. The "led-together" served the purpose for which God led them out of Egypt and kept them. That was to prove that Jehovah alone is God, and there is none other.

When, in the fulness of time, the Redeemer came, He did not propose to reform and continue that system. Another work was to be done for which the led-together ones were not adapted, as a tool in the hands of God; so He laid them aside for the time being. He would form a new body of workmen for *The New Work*. The new work was, to teach the whole world, "every man that cometh into the world," the knowledge and fear and love of God, and to judge the world and govern it, under the perfect law of God.

This work the Father assigned to His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, but there were to be associated with Him, as joint heirs with Him to the glory of being "the light of the world," certain *chosen ones* from the human race. These having suffered in this life those things which shall work in them a character like that of Jesus, shall be glorified with Him. And having overcome as He overcame, shall sit with Him on His throne, Rev. 3:21; Rom. 8:17; Math. 5:14. And then the work begins for which in this present life, they have been prepared by service and sufferings.

The management of forming this new body, which in "the regeneration" (The living again) Math. 19:28, is to be associated with Him on the throne, was given by the Father to the Son, Himself, John 10:29; therefore, He said, as it is rendered in the A. V., "I will build My church." *Ecclesia*, the Greek word which is here substituted, is a compound of two Greek words, *eke* (out from), and *kales* (to call). It means, therefore, a body or assembly that has been called out; and is always composed only of those capable of performing the objects of the call; whether for good or evil. So a state legislature is an *ecclesia*, each member being called or chosen thereto. A political or religious, or commercial convention, or a council of robbers is an *ecclesia*; so is any assembly called for a purpose. The rioters of Ephesus were an *ecclesia*, being called together by Demetrius to consider and take means for protecting their trade in idolatrous shrines. As we have seen, all the Israelites, old and young, good and bad together, constituted a *synagogue*; but the elders of Israel, when called together for some purpose, were an *ecclesia*. Just so all "churches," being human organizations, composed of both the competent and the incompetent, are *synagogues*, and not in any sense, the *ecclesia* of Jesus Christ.

Jesus used words wittingly when he said, "I will build my called-out body" (literal translation of *ecclesia*). His purpose could not be served by a mixed company (*synagogue*). They were to be literally believers and followers. Neither infants nor idiots could either believe or follow.

It was a company "called and chosen and faithful." They were

to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, even as He overcame. Neither infants nor idiots could overcome.

This called-out body, *ecclesia*, during the time of its preparation (the gospel age), is called "The household of faith (Gal. 6:10); "The house of God" (I. Pet. 4:17); "A Spiritual house" (I. Pet. 2:5); "The temple of God" (I. Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:21); "God's husbandry," "God's building" (I. Cor. 3:9).

And now let us get the fact firmly fixed in our minds that man does not construct a building of God. Jesus said, "I will build my called-out body." On that living stone, the foundation, namely, "Christ, the Son of the living God," He would build together other "living stones" (I. Pet. 2:5); "Sons of God" (I. John 3:1, 2). And so it is written, "The Lord added together daily, the ones being saved" (Acts 2:47).—J. H. Gilruth, in "*Bible Searchlight*."

OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.

"No man can come to me except the Father draw him" (John 6:44). "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). When an unregenerate heart feels a desire for something better than the husks upon which it has been feeding, and longs for something higher and better, that heart may know that the Father has sent forth the Holy Spirit to "draw" it toward Christ. If the prompting is heeded, sins confessed, and that soul buried with Christ in baptism, it becomes a branch of the vine, and must henceforth receive *all* its nourishment from it. When we thoroughly understand this, we will see how "we live, and move, and have our being" in Christ; how our "body, soul and spirit" are entrusted to His keeping, our bodies become a "living sacrifice," and "our lives hid with Christ in God," isolating us from the world and the things of the world, for we are new creatures in Christ Jesus."

All that man can do in the transaction is to preach God's word, and immerse the repentant soul; after that his name is written in heaven, and he stands before his Maker as free as the air he breathes, to continue to "abide in Christ," and be guided by the Holy Spirit, or sin by yielding obedience to some human interloper, who presumptuously claims obedience to himself, or some snare of "the world, the flesh, or the devil."

No man can attach a branch to the vine, no man can detach it. It rests wholly with ourselves. All can see how absurd and preposterous it is for one man to talk about taking this one, or that one, into the church of God, or turning them out. That they have a right to do so in any organized church on earth is fully conceded, as they are man made, just as the different orders are, such as Masons, Odd Fellows, etc., simply differing in name; as they are not attached to Christ, but some human head. "His servants ye are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey" (Rom. 6:16). No authority was given to one member of the body over another. "Elders in Israel," those who were "of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14; I. Pet.

5:1, 2), were placed among those who had been gross idolaters, and were yet babes in Christ, as overseers "to strengthen the weak, comfort the feeble minded," and guide them as a shepherd, never as standing to them as lords, for then would they be usurping the place of their common Master (Math. 23:8-10). Elders were never appointed among the Jews, or those who knew the law.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." "Again I say unto you, That if *two of you* shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Math. 18:20, 19).

Blessed promise. Two of the "called-out ones" with Christ as a third, just as literally present as He was in the flesh, to "bless" them, and grant any request they may make. Those two are the "Church of the First Born" in that place, though they are surrounded with so-called churches full of worshipers "of they know not what."

They do not meet to hear a sermon from a graduate of some school of divinity (?) who has chosen the profession of preacher, as his brothers have chosen the law, farming, or the trade of a blacksmith, one having been called of God equally with the other, and all with an eye on the profits of their labor. Ah, no! They meet to worship the Father "in spirit and in truth." No collection is once named, not a cent of money is behind the gospel as given by Christ, just the power of the Holy Spirit; and here is a description of their meeting. "When *ye* come together, *every one of you* hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation" (I. Cor. 14:26). The Holy Spirit operating upon each member of the body, for "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to *every man* to profit withal. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others discriminate. (margin.) . . . For *ye* may *all* prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (I. Cor. 14:29-31; I. Cor. 12:5-21). The great Prophet in their midst, and the spirit of the prophets (I. Cor. 14:32; Rev. 19:10), to enlighten their minds to understand the "testimony of God" (I. Cor. 2:1), which that Prophet had given them (John 17:8), and which incites them to make a "covenant by sacrifice" with Him, and to lay all they have, and are, upon His altar.

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