

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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ARE THERE CHRISTIANS IN DENOMINATIONS?

Roger D. Campbell

This is a question that deserves our attention. It is one that is frequently asked. Young people ask it. Some of those that have been members of the church for a long time also ask it. Those outside of the Lord's church ask it. We are convinced that when such an inquiry comes from a sincere heart that is searching for truth, then it deserves a Bible answer.

Are there Christians in denominations? The correct standard by which we should answer such a question is not our personal feelings, what we have always believed, what we hope is true, or what the majority of people believe on the matter. Like any other question that pertains to spiritual matters, we ought to *"speak as the oracles of God"* (I Peter 4:11) when answering it.

Fact: There were no Christians in denominations in the first century. There were no denominations that existed at that time, so it was impossible for Christians to be members of them. That means, of course, that there is no such thing in the Bible as "a denominational Christian." Humans may use such terminology, but those that do so need to realize they are not using Bible language when they do.

Fact: All saved people in the Christian era are in Christ. The Bible speaks of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24) and "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 2:10). Only those who have obeyed the Gospel by being baptized into the Christ have been set

free from sin and enjoy newness of life (Rom. 6:3,4,17,18). Yes, the saved are in the Christ.

Fact: All saved people are in the kingdom or church of our Lord. But, wait a minute. Did we not just show that saved people are in the Christ? If that be true, then how can it be that saved people are in the kingdom or church? First of all, the Bible says that after the establishment of the church, "...the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Make no mistake about it, God added saved people to His church, and nothing else. There is not a person alive that can prove from the Bible that the Lord under any circumstances ever added a saved person to a man-made denomination!

Second, the Bible teaches that Jesus "is the savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23). What is the body? Colossians 1:18 identifies it for us: "And he [Jesus, rdc] is the head of *the body, the church.*" Since the body is the same as the church, when the Bible declares that Jesus is the Savior of the body, that is the same as saying that Jesus is the Savior of the church. Thus, saved people are in His church.

Third, biblically speaking, to be in the Christ and to be in His kingdom/church are one and the same. We learn this from Colossians 1:13,14. Verse 13 speaks of the saints in Colosse having been translated into the kingdom of the Christ. The next verse speaks of them being in the Christ and enjoying the forgive-

ness of sins through Jesus' blood. Where were those Colossian Christians? According to verse 13, they were in the kingdom or church. According to verse 14, they were in the Son of God. Therefore, to be in the church is the same as being in the Christ. No one can be in the Christ without being in the church (and vice versa).

Fact: In the New Testament, the word "Christian" refers to one that is a member of the Lord's church. That word "Christian," which is used a total of three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16), literally means "a follower of Christ" [Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, page 672, word no. 5546]. When the word "Christian" appears in the Bible, the immediate and general contexts clearly show that those identified as "Christians" were members of the body of the Christ. Let us see.

Look closely at the message of I Peter 4:16—5:2 and notice the different words or expressions that refer to the same group of people (all emphasis is mine, rdc). "Yet if any man suffer as *a Christian*, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at *the house of God*: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of *them that obey not the gospel of God*? And if *the righteous* scarcely be saved, where shall

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Christians in Denominations?...



Editorial...

BAPTISM AND SALVATION #1

Garland M. Robinson

Water baptism is one of the most prominent doctrines of the New Testament. Yet at the same time, it is one of the most despised and rejected doctrines of the Bible. Men for centuries have gone to great lengths to circumvent, bypass, explain away, dismiss, contradict, and reject everything the Bible says about water baptism.

Man has tried his utmost to separate water baptism from salvation, but his efforts have proved fruitless. The God of heaven joined water baptism with salvation and as hard as man may try, he cannot separate them. His efforts will always fail! It remains a mystery why men fight it so. They have set their life-long endeavors to disprove the essentiality of water baptism, but to no avail. Man is powerless against the wisdom of God.

May those who read this lesson learn what the Bible teaches about baptism and appreciate its significance in God's scheme of redemption. May those who are outside of Christ obey the Gospel and live a faithful Christian life that they might be saved.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM — IMMERSION

The denominations are many who substitute sprinkling and/or pouring for baptism. They claim that either of these modes is acceptable and often give the recipient a choice. Many years ago, an Episcopal priest became very upset with me saying that those who had water sprinkled or poured on them had never been baptized. More than a thousand years stands between what the apostles taught and practiced in the New Testament and the acceptance of sprinkling and pouring. It therefore did not come from God! It came from the mind of man. *“Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up”* (Matt. 15:3).

The mode, manner or method of baptism is clearly explained in the Scriptures. This is done both by the definition of the word itself and by observing the examples of those who were baptized. There should never be any confusion on this matter. But, when men inject their “think so” into religious matters, you can count on it always contradicting the Way of the Lord.

The word “baptism” (*baptisma*) or “baptize” (*baptidzo*) is defined as: “1) to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk), 2) to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one’s self, bathe, 3) to overwhelm” (Thayer’s). “Baptism, consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence, to dip, was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment, or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another, etc.” (Vine’s). Therefore, sprinkling and pouring ARE NOT baptism! Immersion is baptism!

Even if the definition of the word was unclear, there is ample evidence in the New Testament of its practice to show the manner in which it was and is to be done. Without exception, every time one was baptized in the New Testament, it was by immersion.

Notice these examples:

The baptism of the New Testament requires **WATER**. *“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized...”* (Acts 10:47). *“...They came unto a certain*

water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized” (Acts 8:36; cf. Mark 1:5).

The baptism of the New Testament requires **MUCH WATER**. *“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized”* (John 3:23).

The baptism of the New Testament requires **GOING INTO WATER**. *“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him”* (Acts 8:38).

The baptism of the New Testament requires a **BURIAL IN WATER**. *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”* (Rom. 6:4-5). *“Buried with him in baptism...”* (Col. 2:12).

The baptism of the New Testament requires **COMING UP OUT OF THE WATER**. *“And when they were come up out of the water...”* (Acts 8:39). *“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead”* (Col. 2:12). *“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water...”* (Matt. 3:16; cf. Mark 1:9-10).

The baptism of the New Testament requires **A BIRTH**. *“...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5).

Baptism is a likeness or form of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. There is no burial and resurrection in the practice of sprinkling or pouring. On the other hand, there is

One Baptism Requires:	Sprinkling	Pouring	Immersion
Water, Acts 8:36	✓	✓	✓
much water, John 3:23			✓
going into water, Acts 8:38			✓
a burial, Rom. 6:4			✓
coming up out of water, Acts 8:39			✓
a birth, John 3:5			✓

a burial and resurrection in immersion. Notice the chart on page 34 and in each verse, ask yourself, “does it take _____ to sprinkle, pour, immerse?”

Can a person actually be “sprinkled? Not unless he is first cremated and his ashes sprinkled!

Can a person be “poured? Not unless he is first liquefied and then poured!

Can a person be “immersed? YES! An individual can be submerged under water in the action of *baptidzo*. This is not true of sprinkling and pouring.

Sprinkling and pouring are never commanded. There are no examples of them. They are never implied. They were never practiced until hundreds of years after the first century. They were clearly added by man; and, being from man, will perish along with all the doctrines of man (Matt. 15:8-9,13).

Have you been baptized; or, have you been sprinkled or poured? Sprinkling or pouring is NOT baptism! Without baptism, there is no salvation. It is the point at which one turns from damnation to salvation. Read these verses that clearly show this is the case: John 3:3-5; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:21; Rom. 6:3-6,17-18; Col. 2:12. Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 22:16, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." I Peter 3:21, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Rom. 6:17-18, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Col. 2:12, John 3:3-5, Rom. 6:3-6.

(Part 1 of 3)

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Marlin Kilpatrick

In the beginning of time, everything God created was perfect. After each division of His creation, God "...saw that it was good" (cf. Gen. 1). Adam and Eve formed the first home, the oldest of God's divine institutions (Gen. 2:21-25). It wasn't long before there was trouble in paradise; sin entered into this world (Gen. 3:1-6). Mankind has suffered the consequences of sin ever since that tragic day in Eden. Solomon wrote, "*There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not*" (Eccl. 7:20).

In the New Testament, Christ created another divine institution, His church (Acts 2:1-47). The book of Acts is a history of the establishment and growth (about 30 years) of the church of Christ. The church, as Christ planned it, is like "heaven on earth." She truly was a spiritual paradise until sin raised its ugly head, and the church became corrupted; consequently, again, there was trouble in paradise.

Many years ago, I was privileged to be a student in one of the late brother G. K. Wallace's Bible classes. In one class session, a student asked brother Wallace, "What does the church of Christ teach...," and before he could complete his question, brother Wallace replied, "Just about anything!" We all laughed! But, now, it's no laughing matter. The church, God's spiritual paradise is in deep trouble.

In the late 40s and throughout the 50s, the church faced the problem of brethren denying the right of the church to financially support, from her treasury, a home for orphans operated by brethren; along with congregations cooperating with each other in the field of evangelism. Our great brotherhood was torn asunder. Indeed, there was trouble in paradise.

In the 60s and 70s the church faced the problem of Pentecostalism. During the early 80s until now, there has been a steady drift into liberalism. The ultra-conservative brethren sought to bind upon the brotherhood what God had not bound. Now, our liberal brethren are seeking to loose

what God has bound. To do this, they have come up with a cry for a new hermeneutic in Biblical interpretation and a denial of any New Testament pattern for the church to follow. Who among us would have ever dreamed the beautiful bride of Christ would experience so many departures from the faith? The apostle Paul wrote of those who would give "...heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (I Tim. 4:1). These "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" are running rampant in the church, and it's later than most seem to think. What, then, has destroyed this paradise?

We have allowed at least two generations to "come up in the church" who have little, if any, concept of what is meant when we speak of scriptural authority. We have far too many preachers who either: 1) do not believe in the necessity of having scriptural authority for our beliefs and practices, or 2) they are afraid to preach sermons that teach the necessity of having scriptural authority for all we do (cf. Col. 3:17). Our pulpits, in many cases, have become weak and inefficient in preaching the Gospel of Christ. When the sermons we hear Sunday after Sunday could be preached in most any denominational church, without any disapproval, it's no wonder the church is in such serious trouble.

The old pioneer preachers often referred to the church as the "ship of Zion." Brethren, we can turn this "ship" around. How? By getting back to the basics by teaching God's word in its completeness. Let's return to demanding a "thus saith the Lord" for what we preach and practice. Let's let the denominational world know there is a vast difference between them and us. The true church of Christ is militant and distinctive in doctrine and practice. If we will "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11), the true church will be restored in all its pristine glory. Then, like Joshua of old, we will have good success (Josh. 1:8). Think about it.

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"MAJORING IN MINORS"

Bob Spurlin

Some years ago, a common phrase was heard with great regularity in the classroom and from the pulpit, "Majoring in Minors and Minor in Majors." The thrust of the statement seemed to imply that Christians and/or the local church were prioritizing those things that were less important, while the important things were being diminished. All too frequently Christians have a tendency to become distracted when it comes to the affairs of life, especially as it relates to God and His will.

From the shadows of paradise we see the first couple, Adam and Eve, "Majoring in Minors" as they partook of the forbidden fruit in violation of the divine mandate. A strict prohibition was given by the Creator not to eat, or even touch the tree in the midst of the garden (Gen. 2:16-17). Being cast out of the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had two sons named Cain and Abel. With the passing of time the sons of Adam and Eve were instructed to worship the Lord God. The Hebrew writer states, "*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous...*" (Heb. 11:4). Faith is produced when one hears the Word of God and subsequently yields in full obedience. Abel illustrates such when he offered "*of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering*" (Gen. 4:4). The Lord's respect for Abel was predicated upon his full compliance to God's will, by faith. Cain in sharp contrast "Major in Minors," and the Lord "had not respect" for his sacrifice (Gen. 4:5). Such disrespect was due to Cain's failure to major in the important things. Instead of following his brother's faithful example, Cain pursued the dictates of his own will. Calamity will most certainly follow those that fail to put a priority upon the important things, notwithstanding a compliance to God's holy will (Col. 3:17). Note the following things in which man should major to be pleasing to God:

1. Man must Major in a fun-

damental Belief in God's existence. The Bible does not set out to prove the existence of God. It is naturally assumed that the reader of the Sacred Oracles accepts that proposition. The very first verse affirms, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*" (Gen. 1:1).

Herbert Spencer in the nineteenth century stated that there were five components that make up the universe: time, force, energy, space and matter. Each of these principles may be found in the first verse of the Bible. "In the beginning" — time; "God" — force; "created" — energy; "the heaven" — space; and "the earth" — matter. How did Moses, the writer of Genesis, know these five components existed when it would not be discovered until the nineteenth century? It underscores the inspiration of the Bible as a "God-breathed" book.

The internal evidences of Scripture as well as the external evidences of nature and other corroborating data confirms a belief in an eternal God. The Hebrew writer sets forth the principle, "*For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God*" (Heb. 3:4). Who would deny the existence of a builder after seeing the object of his construction? This rhetorical question is self-evident to any reader. Paul writes, "*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse*" (Rom. 1:20). The Gentiles were without excuse when they refused to accept with their own eyes God's existence by rejecting the works of creation.

2. Man must Major in a fundamental Obedience to God's will. Humbling ourselves before almighty God in full compliance to His will is the ultimate and supreme duty we have to our Creator. This fundamental duty is clearly depicted on the pages of Holy Writ. The Hebrew writer affirmed of Jesus, "*...who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,*

crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). Jesus, the central character of the Bible, was given as a sacrifice for man's sin (Isa. 53:5; Acts 2:23). Little wonder the inspired writer declared, "*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*" (Heb. 5:8-9).

Appropriating the blood of Christ to the cleansing of our souls was highlighted by Peter when he wrote concerning, "*...the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*" and then he said, "*seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...*" (I Peter 1:19-22). This essential act of obedience is clearly illustrated with the response to the first Gospel sermon. Three thousand souls were added to the Lord's church when the penitent believers met the conditions of obedience and were immersed in water baptism (Acts 2:38,41,47).

If we Major in this fundamental matter of obedience we will live a happy and hopeful life (II Peter 1:4; Titus 3:7). Paul gives blessed assurance to all believers when he writes, "*For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*" (II Tim. 1:12).

3. Majoring in God's word requires Living a Faithful life. The natural fruit of accepting the existence of God is living faithfully for Him in our daily lives. From the very beginning of time the Creator has not only expected, but demanded our faithfulness (Rev. 2:10).

Solomon, the wise man, said, "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them*" (Eccl. 12:1). A faithful life to our eternal God should begin

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Majoring in Minors...

SOME THOUGHTS ON ROMANS 8:28

Wayne Coats

I know of no passage of scripture which is mishandled more than the text under consideration. There are many things which we cannot know. But there are things which we can and should know. Our serious problem which seems to be continually among us is to hear the guesswork — the opinions expressed by brethren when different texts are considered.

The passage of Romans 8:28 begins with, “*And we know...*” Such denotes a continuation of some things mentioned before! I cannot know what I should know about the “all things” unless I revert back and learn to know what I can and must know. After I learn these essentials mentioned prior to 8:28, then I am ready to consider a study of verse 28.

When I go all the way back to Romans 1:16, I learn a principle of truth which stands as the foundation of the entire book. The inspired apostle continues to point out that Jews and Gentiles were all under sin and were subject to the Gospel of Christ. Justification for all was through the blood of Christ. God is not just the God of the Jews alone, which false teachers were saying, but He was also the God of the Gentiles who loved the Lord. Paul would remind the Romans that all mankind was justified by the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:9). Man was/is reconciled unto God by the death of Christ (5:10).

The Jews had been subservient to the Law of Moses but the Law had been superceded by the New Testament will of Christ (7:4). We are delivered from the Law (v.6). Deliverance comes by and through Christ (7:24-25).

In view of all that the Holy Spirit has stated with respect to the good things provided by our blessed Lord, the Christian should be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for all the wonderful blessings which have been prepared by our loving Father.

Too much study cannot be made of the great Roman letter. The superficial glimpses made by some brethren does not make them great

experts in interpreting the letter. One can make a daily study of the book for a lifetime and still there will be more good lessons which need to be learned. Paul discusses the weakness and inadequacy of the old Law. Now, if men will walk by the Spirit, they will not be condemned (Rom. 8:1).

We need to consider so very carefully all that God has done for us through Christ and the Gospel. This must be our attitude of deep love and appreciation for all that God has done for us. All that God has done for us from all eternity has been for our good.

Paul would declare, “And we know that *all things* work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (8:28).

I can understand and appreciate the statement of the apostle when I study the verse within its context. One does not need to take the passage away from its context and relate it to some horrible tragedy which occurs in our time. Such is the manner of exegesis used by some of the brethren, which is as wrong as it can be.

The passage begins with the conjunction **and**, which of course is a coupling word and attaches the verse to something previously given. As a result of that which God has done for us, we can now *know* that all that has been done by Jehovah God, has been done for our good. Does this not make sense?

Paul uses what amounts to eight chapters in which he discusses the fulfillment of the great mystery of God which was unfolded in and through Christ. As I meditate upon the goodness of God (11:22), I can know the mind of God in the interest of His children who love Him and who accept His call.

I have heard, times without number, such exegetical and fanciful explanations that whatever horrible circumstances might occur in our lives, such things, horrible beyond explanation, work together for our good.

I do not know this and neither do you. How can the murder of a wife and children work for the good of a Christian? Someone asserts, “We know it does.” How do we know this? I worship with a few people who are desperately trying to rebuild a small congregation after some rabble-rousers and sowers of discord completely destroyed the church. I have not known that such was for my good or for the good of the cause of my Lord. Someone prattles, “you are supposed to know.” What I may be supposed to know according to the guessing of others, and what I know is totally different.

I know of no Bible verse which is taken completely away from its context as frequently and arbitrarily as Romans 8:28. Each time a tragic death occurred during the last thirty years I was serving as the Funeral Director, some ignorant preacher would officiate at the funeral and he had everything worked out perfectly. He could not know the circumstances but he had a good guessing technique. Ignorant preachers will blubber, “The good Lord, God, Almighty above reached down and took the beloved away and all things work for our good.” The idea is, if God did it, then why grieve?

I recently sustained the loss of a precious son who was killed in a tragic accident. I cannot conceive that the death of my precious son was good for anyone. We do not know that the departure of our loved one was for the good of the two precious children who were left without a daddy. But someone garbles, “we know!” I do not know, and I cannot know and no amount of babbling will cause me to know.

All the plans and purposes of God down through the ages from the eternal dawn, have been fulfilled in Christ and the church — except those final things which are kept in store.

Paul would write, “There is therefore now...” What does the “therefore” signify? The word is very strong and denotes a contrast, a difference in something which was a

rule or standard.

What is the significance of the word NOW? The word denotes a difference in conditions which existed THEN, contrasted with the past.

Under the law of Christ we are free from the law of sin and death (8:2). Under the old Law, no man could be justified (3:20). We are now justified by faith (5:1). We are justified by the death of Christ (5:8). We are freed from sin by obedience (6:17-18). We are delivered from the Law by the death of Christ (7:4,6). With such expressions of truth, Paul could

discuss that which obtains NOW (8:1).

It might help some of our exegetical and theological commentators to do a bit of study relative to the purposes of God (II Tim. 1:9; Eph. 3:10-11; Rom. 9:23-24).

There is so much that I do not know, but I do know that intense Bible study will be of great help in dispensing with the doctrines and commandments of men. We now live under the law of Christ. Under that marvelous law which was planned, purposed and perfected in the mind

of God, with the unfolding of that great scheme of redemption through Christ, we know that all the things God purposed for His children work together for our good. We know that the eternal purpose of God included the church which manifested the multi-faceted wisdom of God. We need to appreciate the purpose of God as demonstrated in giving the church.

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RESPECT THE BIBLE IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Franklin Camp, Deceased

A preacher that I know received a call one night about 1:00a.m. A lady said, "Would you mind coming over to my house to discuss the Bible?" The preacher dressed and drove over, not knowing just what to expect when he arrived. When he got there, he found the woman's "pastor" sitting in the living room.

The lady said, "I have been listening to you on the radio and your preaching has me disturbed. I invited my preacher over and we have been discussing the Bible all night. He has agreed for me to invite you over. Here is what I want to do. I will ask the questions and then each of you can answer."

The gospel preacher said, "That is fine with me." Here is the way it went.

Lady: "What is baptism for?"

The Methodist preacher: "I think, I feel, talk, talk, talk."

Lady: "Are you through?"

Methodist preacher: "Yes."

Lady: "All right, now it is your turn."

Gospel preacher: "You have your Bible. Please turn and read Acts 2:38." The lady reads. Then there is silence.

Lady: "Is that all you have to say?"

Gospel preacher: "Is that not enough? Does that not answer your question?"

Lady to her preacher: "That is just what I told you. I asked you a question and you talked ten minutes without one verse of scripture. I asked him and he made no comment. He just had me to read what the Bible said."

The outcome of the study led to the lady being baptized. The reason was that a Bible answer was given to a Bible question. The moral of this is **RESPECT THE BIBLE WHEN ANSWERING QUESTIONS.**

A doctor that gave answers to medical questions out of a math book would not be considered much of a doctor and most patients would be looking for another doctor. What kind of a preacher is it that gives answers to spiritual questions out of the newspapers or his own wisdom? The type of answers that is being given today indicates too many preachers are looking in the wrong books and coming up with the wrong answers.

*[Old Truths in New Robes,
Vol. II, pp. 133,134]*

Christians in Denominations?...

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the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. The elders ... Feed *the flock of God* which is among you....”

In this passage, we see that “a Christian” is one that is in “the house of God.” The “house of God” is the church of the living God (I Tim. 3:15). Our text in I Peter also shows that Christians are those that have obeyed the Gospel, are righteous, and constitute “the flock of God,” which is His church (Acts 20:28). Clearly, in the Bible “Christian” was applied to those that were in the family of God, meaning that they were members of the Lord’s church.

Look further at Acts 11:26, where it is written, “...And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with *the church*, and taught much people. And *the disciples* were called *Christians* first in Antioch” (emphasis mine, rdc). Which people were called Christians? The disciples. But the word “disciples” in this passage refers to the church. Consider also the fact that Saul of Tarsus had “made havoc of the church” (Acts 8:3). Acts 9:1,2 shows that Saul was persecuting “the disciples of the Lord.” Thus, since Saul was only persecuting one group of people, then “the disciples of the Lord” and “the church” are one and the same. It follows then, because the disciples were in the church, and disciples are called Christians, that Christians were members of the church. Put another way, “disciples of the Lord” were the same ones that were calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 9:1,13,14). Those that call on the name of the Lord are saved (Acts 2:21). So, disciples are saved. But, again, to what does the Lord add the saved? Answer: to His church (Acts 2:47; Col. 1:13,14). Since disciples are those that have been saved by calling on the name of the Lord, and since disciples are also called Christians, then it follows that Christians are those that have been saved by calling on the Lord’s name. God adds them to His church. Yes, biblically speak-

ing, “Christian” applies to a member of the Lord’s church and no one else.

Fact: If it is possible for a person to be pleasing to God while being a member of any man-made group, i.e., a denomination, then devastating consequences follow:

1. A denomination would be just as good in God’s sight as the church which Jesus bought with His blood. There is no way that any man-made group can be as precious as the church for which the Master shed His blood! (Acts 20:28)

2. It is acceptable to the Almighty to be a part of something that He has not authorized. Denominations are unauthorized by the God of heaven (Matt. 21:25), and thus “shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13). How could it be acceptable in the Lord’s sight to be a part of, endorse, financially support, and work to build up, something that the Lord Himself will eventually root up?

3. It is acceptable to God to be a part of something that is in competition with the Lord’s church. Mark it down. Whether they realize it or not, and whether they intentionally do it or not, denominations are in competition with the Lord’s church. They would love to see every “non-believer” join them, and they would love to have our members join them as well. Those that oppose the Lord’s church are, in actuality, opposing the Lord (Acts 9:4,5).

It is time for some closing thoughts. First, is it possible that there are members of the church in denominations? Yes. It is possible that some have truly obeyed the Gospel and been added by the Lord to His church, then at a later time, either through ignorance or weakness, joined a denomination. They were members of Christ’s church before ever becoming members of a denomination, or, it may be the case that one was a member of a denomination, came out of it when learning the truth, obeyed the Gospel, but later returned to that same denomination or a different one. It is not possible, however, for one to remain in a denomination and be pleasing in the Lord’s sight.

Some say, “But denominational members have been baptized. Doesn’t that make them Christians?” According to the Bible, when a per-

son obeys the Gospel, which includes being baptized for the remission of sins, the Lord adds that person to His church. Afterwards, if a person becomes a member of a man-made denomination, the Lord has nothing to do with it! Biblically speaking, there is no way one can be baptized and have that baptism make him both a member of a denomination and the Lord’s church at the same time.

If I ask a person the question, “When you were baptized, what church did that make you a member of?” If the answer is “Brand X denomination,” then it is obvious their baptism was not a scriptural baptism. Scriptural baptism makes one a member of God’s church and no other!

Let me emphasize one final truth. One does not become a member of Jesus’ church by being baptized into a denominational body, then at some later point praying into the Lord’s church. People do not enter the Lord’s church via prayer: never have, and never will.

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Majoring in Minors...

(Continued from page 36)

early in life so the most possible good may be accomplished.

Peaks and valleys are the norm for all of us as we travel the difficult road of life, yet a faithful life anchored to the solid rock is mandatory (I Cor. 10:4).

Historically, Jesus was the most significant personality who ever lived. His greatness was illustrated not only by his teaching, but how He lived what He taught. Luke writes, “*The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach*” (Acts 1:1). Seeing the perfect harmony of His life and what He taught is clearly seen in the Gospel record of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Christians must likewise practice pure and undefiled religion by how we conduct our daily lives (cf. James 1:27).

If we would please the God of all creation, let us Major in these three fundamental things.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"I would like to be added to receive STOP. I have read the paper and enjoy the honesty of your writing according to the scriptures" ...**Joe Powell, Fort Pierce, FL.** "Thank you very much" ...**Mrs. C. B. Elam, Jr., Bracey, VA.** "I enjoy reading the STOP publication" ...**Wilda Burner, Philippi, WV.** "I eagerly await STOP each time. I devour it!"

...**Patsy V. Cox, El Paso, TX.** "Thank you for sending STOP to the Land Between the Lakes church. We are thankful for the good work you do through this publication" ...**Earl B. Claud, Dover, TN.** "My name is Ryan Leatherman. I am currently incarcerated in Hondo, Texas. I have a nine year sentence and I have done 2 1/2 so far. I am a member of the church. I was raised church of Christ and I obeyed the Gospel at the age of 13. I had fallen off there for a while, but since then I have rededicated myself. I go to the church of Christ service here at the unit. I am at every service and I plan to keep living a life in Christ. I have a Christian brother here on this unit who has let me read your monthly subscription and I have learned a lot from them. I would like to be put on your mailing list so that I can receive your monthly subscription called *Seek The Old Paths*. Thanks for your time and may God richly bless you" ...**Ryan Leatherman #1199021, Torres Unit, 125 Private Rd. #4303, Hondo, TX 78861.** "Thank you very much for *Seek The Old Paths*. I look forward to each publication and have shared them with others. Thank you again for a wonderful publication" ...**Richard E. Harris, Anderson, AL.** "Just a note to thank you for the fine work you are doing with STOP. The current articles always come at a time when most needed. I find great use in the archives on the web — www.seektheoldpaths.com/search/search.pl. May the blessing of Heaven be with you in your service for the Lord" ...**Harland Cline, Mesa, AZ.** "Keep up the good work. It's needed by everyone in the Lord's church" ...**Dorothy Gilley, Livonia, MI.** "Thank you for the old paths. May God bless you for your efforts to keep brethren informed of the false teaching going on in God's kingdom" ...**Terry Morris, Adrian, MI.** "As I read through the entries of the February STOP, I read with great sadness another example of what is happening to our Lord's church in so many places. It is clearly an example of what our Lord warned against in Matt. 7:15-16 and again in I Peter chapter 2. The very words that Mr. Dennis uses in his entry describe the root of the problem. When he calls the church 'our' church and states that it has undergone 'changes' over the past three years and no longer agrees with the majority of the views of the paper, as if it were just your opinion, it becomes evident that he is serving himself rather than the risen Saviour. He further clarifies his departure by admitting to changing the name of the congregation. (Although I must say it should not wear the name of Christ if it does not reflect His will). He is ashamed of the very one who purchased it with His lifeblood...for him! I am amazed at the lack of recognition on the part of those who continually choose to ignore the Inspired, God breathed Word. I, along with you, pray that God will grant him time enough to repent for both his own soul's salvation and all of those who will follow him into eternity ...lost, forever. Thank you for your steadfast, unyielding dedication to serving Christ and those in the brotherhood who want to hear the Truth, and only the Truth, so that they can one day hear the precious words of Jesus, 'enter in thou good and faithful servant.' Because of Calvary" ...**Tammy Hudson.** [EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks for your words of encouragement. It is amazing how so many do not love the truth. It is even so much more sad when they think they love the truth, when in fact, they do not — they serve themselves by their own doctrines and opinions. All we can do it teach and pray. And, that, Lord willing, is what we will continue to do.] "A wonderful paper" ...**Darrell & Judy McAfee, Lynchburg, TN.** "Thank you" ...**Oliver Schreiner, Royal Oak, MI.** "Please send a bundle of 10. The sound articles will be of great benefit to us here" ...**Bill Doyle, Whiteville Church of Christ, Whiteville TN.** "I enjoy reading the articles each month. Keep up the good work" ...**Roger King, Bogue Chitto, MS.** "Would you please add me to your mailing list? I have been reading a copy received by a church member here and enjoy it very much. Thank you" ...**Gary Labeth, Burneyville, OK.** "*Seek The Old Paths* is a great publication which I enjoy very much" ...**Name withheld, Trenton, GA.** "I appreciate you sending your paper to my sister. Thanks" ...**Steve Wright, Newbern, TN.** "I am receiving STOP and enjoying it immensely. Thank you. It is truly a wonderful pub-

lication" ...**Richard E. Harris, Anderson, AL.** "We have been receiving STOP since 1996 and have thoroughly enjoyed it. Could you add some names to your mailing list? We are trying to get good reading material in the hands of all our members" ...**Waldon Blake, Fish Hatchery Rd. Church of Christ, Huntsville, TX.** "Thank you for 'God Ordained Worship' in the November 2005 issue. We will use your fine article and profit from it" ...**Al Sowins, Clearlake, CA.** "Just wanted to thank you for your continued good work with STOP. Seems more and more people are turning their ears away from the truth and are embracing error. Please keep up the good work" ...**Jack Lawyer, Conway, AR.** "Thank you for allowing me the blessing of receiving STOP since 1999. I look forward to every issue. Stand fast brothers" ...**Victor Harper -632130, P-05-B, Sanders Estes Correctional Center, 1100 Highway 1807, Venus, TX 76084.** [EDITOR'S NOTE: I invite our readers to write those who are in prison. It would be a great encouragement to them to know there are brethren who care and are praying for them. —gmr] "Thanks for sending us STOP. We wanted to help your work to further the truth so needed today. Keep up the good work" ...**Glenis & Mary Mayo, Watertown, TN.** "Greetings to the East End church. We really enjoy the bulletins we receive from you — such great lessons from it. Of course reading STOP gives you hope and encouragement that the Lord's church is still strong in so many places. It is sad that there are some that will not accept these truths. Keep up the good work. God bless" ...**Ron & Ruth Shandor, Death Valley, CA.** "Enclosed, find a check to use as you see fit. I really enjoy and appreciate your paper. Thank you" ...**Name withheld, Elkins, WV.** "I wish there was some way to stop the digression of the Lord's church. I just finished reading about the life of J. D. Tant and what went on then is coming very much to the forefront again. Some of the churches in Jackson, Tennessee, I hear, will be introducing the piano. What will it take for people in the Lord's church to wake up? Keep up the good work you do there" ...**Frankie Lou Bailey, Middleton, TN.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed FREE upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

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