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At what Point Is One Saved ?

Most people will tell you that they were saved when they accepted the Lord as their personal saviour. Some will explain in greater detail that it was when they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and confessed their sins. Still others say that they received salvation when they called upon the Saviour to forgive them. All of these people, however, are certain that they are saved before baptism. To them baptism follows, eventually, and while it is a command that they must obey, still it has nothing to do with their immediate salvation. Rather, it is because of their salvation that they are baptized, and baptism only makes it possible for them to become a member of some church and to have the fellowship of its 'members in partaking of the Lord's Supper, etc.

It is because of such beliefs and practices that I always ask an individual at what point he was saved before I explain to him what the Bible teaches on the subject. I find that when I explain the truth on this matter at the beginning that they will confuse it with what they did, and because they were immersed in water, will conclude that they did what the word of God says, when in reality they did something quite different. So once they explain what they did to be saved, then I show them what the scriptures say and show them that what they did conflicts with what the Bible teaches. If they are honest and sincere and are truly concerned about their salvation, then they can see the difference and will therefore take steps to correct the matter. If they are not all that concerned, then they are content to leave it like it is, but that means that they remain lost in spite of the fact that they have supposedly been saved.

Before going on to see at what point one is actually saved, let us first of all establish the fact that one is not saved because he is a good man (Acts 10), because he believes (James 2 : 24), because he confesses his sins (Acts 8 : 36-38), or because he pays to the Lord for forgiveness. (John 9 : 31). Regardless of how good one may be, he is still a sinner and in need of salvation.

(Romans 3 : 23). If one really believes in the Lord, will he not obey his commands? Then what are his commands? Read Mark 16 : 16 for example. As for confession, the Lord knows that we are sinners and that we therefore have sins. Instead of confessing them to the Lord, he is more concerned with whether or not we believe in Him as being the Son of God. Therefore it is *Him* that we are to confess. (Matthew 10 : 32, 33). As for our sins, we must repent of them. (Acts 17 : 30). In Romans 10 : 9, 10 Paul says that this confession is made unto salvation, going in the direction of salvation—not that we are saved based on the confession only. The Apostle John declares in 1 John 1 : 9 that as Christians we are to confess our sins, and in so doing Christ will forgive us. Also read James 5 : 16. As for prayer, we do not read anywhere in the scriptures where alien sinners were asked to pray to God in order that they might be saved from their past sins. Rather, prayer is one of the privileges that comes with being a Christian. (Acts 2 : 42). Now which would you prefer? Man's teaching, or what the Bible says? Surely there is no salvation outside of the Lord's plan regardless of what man says.

Now what does the Bible say about being saved? How is one saved? When is one saved? At what point is one saved? Can one be saved without faith? Is it possible to be saved apart from baptism? Let us see. Christ says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16 : 16). Peter told the believers on the day of Pentecost to "Repent, and be baptised 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 2 : 38). On another occasion, he said, "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." (1 Peter 3 : 21). Saul was told, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22 : 16). From these scriptures, and many others that could be given, we conclude that in order for one

to be saved he must hear the truth, believe with all his heart that God is and that Christ is his Son, repent of his sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized for the remission of sins. One is not saved until he reaches this point. Faith only does not save, neither does baptism only save, but it is when one complies with all of the conditions of salvation that one comes in contact with the blood of Christ (Matthew 26 : 28 ; Acts 2 : 38), and is therefore saved from his past sins. Then after being saved from his past sins, one must be faithful to the Lord unto death to receive eternal life. (Revelation 2 : 10). There can be no salvation otherwise — now nor later.

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

Does It Make Any Difference ?

It is a fact that the religious world today is too much divided up, as far as Christianity is concerned. There are more than four hundred churches (Denominations) in existence all over the world. A great number of people are members of these man-made churches, and wear different names and titles to be distinctive from others.

Now, the question is, does it make a difference to be a member of just any church and to wear just any name ? The majority of people say that it does not make any difference. They argue that one church and one name is as good as another. But let us ask a question : Is one God one Lord, and one Holy Spirit as good as another ? Surely, all of us will say No, since there is but one God, one Lord, and one Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 4 : 4-6). Then why do the majority of people say that one church and one name is as good as another, since the Bible teaches that there is but one church (Matthew 16 : 18 ; Ephesians 1 : 21, 22 ; Ephesians 4 : 4), and one name (Isaiah 62 : 2 ; Acts 11 : 26 ; Acts 4 : 12).

In the twelfth chapter of Exodus we read of the last plague coming upon the land of Egypt. On the night of the fourteenth

death was to come. Since the Israelites were in bondage in Egypt, thus subjected to the danger of destruction of their first born, God provided a way of escape for them. God commanded that each man should take a lamb on the tenth, kill it on the fourteenth, then they were to take the blood and put it on the door post of their houses. And they were to eat the flesh that night in a certain way. God said, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for the token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12 : 12, 13).

Please note, the Israelites were to be saved back there provided they were found in the house which had blood upon it. Just any house would not do, nor the house of their own choice. Had they been convinced that "one house is as good as another", as modern man reasons about the church, they would not have been safe, because God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you." (Verse 13).

Christ established his church. (Matthew 16 : 18 ; Acts 2). He purchased it with his own blood (Acts 20 : 28), thus his blood is upon his church. He loved it and gave himself for it, and he is the saviour of it. (Ephesians 5 : 23, 25). One day the Lord is coming back to receive his church, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5 : 27). He will receive unto himself the one he planted. But others shall be rooted up. (Matthew 13 : 15).

Be sure, Christ did not purchase the denominational churches with his own blood, nor did he die to establish them. His blood is not upon them. Can't you see the difference? Yes, it does make a difference.

Through His servant Isaiah, God said, "Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a

name better than of sons and of daughters : I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." (Isaiah 56 : 5). Once again note, God said, He would give A NAME, not many different names. And again, in Isaiah 62 : 2 He said, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory : and thou shalt be called by A NEW NAME, WHICH THE MOUTH OF THE LORD SHALL NAME." When the time was near for this name to be given, God chose Saul to bear his name. (Acts 9 : 15). In Acts 11 : 25, 26 we read of Barnabas going to seek Saul, and when he found him he brought him unto Antioch, and the record says : "The disciples were called CHRISTIANS first in Antioch." Now, what were the disciples called ? Christians, just Christians. This is the name God promised that he would give. Then some time later we find Paul preaching to king Agrippa, and upon hearing he said unto Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a CHRISTIAN." (Acts 26 : 28). Finally, Apostle Peter exhorted by saying, "If one suffers as a CHRISTIAN, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God." (1 Peter 4 : 16, R.S.V.).

Nowhere in the pages of God's word do we read of Methodists, Baptists, Adventists, etc., etc., or of Catholics and Protestants. The followers of Jesus Christ were Christians, Christians only. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4 : 12).

"I AM AFRAID OF YOU"

Hardeman Nichols

Paul feared that all the labour he had put into the brethren in Galatia was for nought ; for instead of abiding in the doctrine he had preached, they had turned to a perverted gospel. (Galatians 1:6-9).

In Galatians 4:10,11 is this charge against them : "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." All the pains he had taken to teach them was about to prove to be

labour lost, for they, like the Pharisees in Mark 7:6-13, were "laying aside the commandment of God" to "hold the tradition of men."

There are "day observers" and times observers" today in the religious world. Right now, some people of the protestant and catholic religions are observing a season known to them as lent, a period of some forty fasting days in preparation for another day of human tradition called Easter. There is no reference in the Bible either to Easter or to Lent, for neither was commanded by Jesus Christ, nor were they proclaimed as holy days by the apostles. In acts 12:3 where the King James Translation of the New Testament puts the word "Easter" as the name of a Jewish feast, other versions of the Bible show clearly the word is "pass-over" which should be used. The American Standard Version translates it "Passover" for that is the clear and unquestioned meaning of the word Luke used in his writing the verse.

Instead of the resurrection of Christ being observed once a year, the Bible teaches that the "first day of the week" the day on which Christ arose from the dead (Mark 16:9) became the weekly occasion of the disciples' coming together "to break bread" in memory of His death upon the cross. (Acts 20:7). With most fitting beauty, God has ordained that we remember His Son's death upon the first day of the week—His resurrection day—for we serve a living Christ.

The Bible also tells us what Christ taught about fasting ; but there is no word from Him which could by any stretch of the imagination authorize or condone what is being done by those keeping Lent. In Matthew 6:16-18, the Lord said, "Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance : for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face ; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret : and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Jesus here condemns telling people what you have given up or how hungry you are any time you fast. Yet that is the modern practice when keeping

Lent. And that brings up the point that what is now called the lenten fast is not even a genuine fast.

The only religious day the faithful observer of the New Testament keeps is the Lord's resurrection day. (Revelation 1:10 ; 1 Corinthians 16:2 ; Acts 2:42 ; Acts 20:7). We must not forsake it. (Hebrews 10:25). The unity for which Christ prayed will be achieved, and His grace offered to all men will not be in vain, as long as we abide in the doctrine which contains "all things that pertain to life and godliness." (2 Peter 1:3 ; 2 John 9).

By What Standard ?

Dean Brookshire

Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). Freedom was promised when they knew or had learned the truth. The truth was the standard for them to go by. "Thy word is truth." (John 17:17). All around us today men are in disagreement over how we obtain freedom. There is a sure way to settle the matter ; a way that we know is right. For example, two men may disagree over the weight of a sack of potatoes. There is a way to know the exact weight. The knowledge of the weight is found by weighing them on scales that meet the governmental standard. However, if both disregard the scales and insist upon their opinions, they will never know the exact weight of the sack of potatoes. One may insist, "I feel like they weigh so much and my kinsmen feel the same way ; therefore, I don't need the scales." The other may make the same statement, and the matter would be unsettled. There is but one way to settle that, and it is by reading the weight on the scales. One could never be sure by feeling the weight on the sack. The length of a board, or the size of a piece of land is obtained by applying the measuring rod to them. There is a standard to which man appeals.

The same thing is true in religion. We have a standard by which we are governed. That standard is the truth, or the Word. If one desires to know how to obtain remission of sins he appeals to this standard, the Bible. In this he finds that

“We walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7), and that “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10 : 17). The things that were written concerning Christ are that “we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing might have life in his name.” (John 20:30,31). One is not to reach the conclusion that he is saved by faith alone, because the Bible (the standard) nowhere says that. To the contrary, it states in James 2:24: “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

Throughout the book of Acts this same message is preached and these same conditions complied with. That record has become a standard to by as long as the world stands. The apostles were guided into all truth and there was none left off that was needed (2 Timothy 3:16,17) to tell and show us how to obtain remission of sins. Peter says, “According to his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” (2 Peter 1:3). When the same standard is recognized as the authority to settle questions today “that pertain to life and godliness”—they can be settled as easily as settling the weight of potatoes by scales, or the length of a board by a rule. When one reads in the Scriptures that we are saved by faith, he should believe it but not disregard other passages that say we should repent (Acts 17:30), confess Christ (Romans 10:9,10), and be baptized. (Mark 16:16). Faith does not exclude repentance or confession any more than repentance and confession would exclude faith. Faith embraces repentance and confession rather than excluding them.

Faith embraces baptism. It doesn't exclude it any more than baptism excludes faith. One may say, “I can find a verse where it says we are saved by faith.” That is true, but you can take the same partial standard and find where one is saved by baptism. (Peter 3:21). But we don't conclude that one is saved by baptism alone ! Our plea is to take all the book (Standard) says and not just a part. It is the truth that makes us free, and not just a part of the truth.

This same principle applies to anything else we may wish to read and learn about. It applies to worship, work, name, conduct, or anything that pertains to “life and godliness.” Will

you not use God's Standard? If you will, then we will all preach, believe and obey all the commandments of God. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14).

Infant Baptism

Johnny Ramsey

The Bible does not teach the doctrine of infant baptism. A person must go to the creeds and catechisms of men to find the basis for this error in religious circles. There is no commandment of God on the matter; there is neither apostolic example for necessary inferences in the Scriptures that justifies the practice of sprinkling some water over an eight day old infant. Notice what Jesus taught in regard to man-made doctrines. "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9).

Not until the third century was this teaching openly advocated. It met with much disapproval from the people of that day. Tertullian, a religious leader whose history we have on record today, violently disagreed. His argument was that "infant baptism" was an invention of men and not a mandate from God. We challenge any man today to prove otherwise.

In the Book of Acts in the New Testament, we find many examples of conversion but not even one mention of a baby being sprinkled. There are several pre-requisites to baptism that an infant just cannot fulfill. Notice the following:

1. Belief of the Gospel Message : Mark 16:16
2. Repentance of Past Sins : Acts 2:38
3. Confession of Christ : Acts 8:37 ; Romans 10:10

Before anyone can believe the gospel story he must be able to hear and understand. One must have committed sins before he can repent. And, in order to confess Christ, we must know who Christ is. Friends, an eight day old infant cannot fulfill any of these requirements. Therefore, something is wrong with the doctrine of "infant baptism." It will not stand the searching

view of the Bible, God's word.

Friends, as long as we hold to the teachings of our creed-books, we can never be united on the plain, simple truth of God's word (John 17:17; John 8:32). Until we can give a "thus saith the Lord" for all that we practice in religion we can be assured that chaos and sectarian strife will remain in "Christendom." Away with man's teaching! For Jesus said: "Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Did Jesus Save The Thief ?

STERL A. WATSON

The careful student of the Bible will soon learn that there are different kinds of salvation mentioned in it. There is a reference to "So Great Salvation" Heb. 2:3. This is sufficient to suggest that there may be other salvations to consider. Men err when they hastily conclude that such words as save, saved, and salvation, always refer to salvation from sin. There is no question but that the salvation referred to as "so great salvation" is salvation from sin. We are on mutual ground, if we are agreed that Christ is, in all instances, the author of whatever salvation man enjoys. He is declared, Heb. 5:9, to be "The author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." Since the Bible does teach that, as we shall fully demonstrate, Christ has wrought salvation other than that from sin, one should be very careful to determine, from the context, what is meant by the words save, saved, or salvation. Was it salvation from sin, from sickness, calamity, or physical destruction? When we read of a case of salvation in the Bible, we profit by raising the question..... "*Saved From What ?*" There are cases of men being saved from physical disease, handicaps, and even death itself whose souls were corrupt and even remained so.

"Examples Of Salvation"

The firstborn of Israel were saved from destruction in Egypt, by the proper application of the blood of the paschal lamb. This account is recorded in Exo. 12:23. This was a case of salvation

from physical death. Heb. 10:1-4 declares that "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." Animal blood would not remove the guilt of sins.

"ISRAEL'S SALVATION FROM BONDAGE"

Exo. 14:30-31

The salvation here recorded stood as a monument to the power of God for all time to come. This incident armed and anchored Israel for many of the eventualities which they faced as a nation. Before they crossed over the sea, Moses commanded them, Exo. 14:13, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Moses was unwilling to run ahead of the Lord. Since they had done all God required, they must wait upon the Lord to order their next move. The order came and was obeyed. Having crossed over dry shod, they sang the song of deliverance. Giving account of this great event v.30, it is said "*Thus the Lord "saved" Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians.*" Verse 31 shows that this great transaction caused Israel to fear the Lord and to believe God, and Moses. Dear reader, have you kept in mind the question as to what Israel was saved from? Referring to this incident in 1 Cor. 10:, Paul said "With many of them God was not well pleased and they were overthrown in the wilderness." Then he goes on to describe how sinful they were. God saved them from their enemies whom he left destroyed in the sea. Of course, Israel's salvation from bondage was a type of our salvation from sin. Their bondage in Egypt was a type of our bondage in sin. Their deliverance, a type of our salvation from sin, should serve to admonish us. However, they were literally saved from destruction in the sea by their enemies.

"A WICKED KING IS SAVED"

1 Kings 13:

Jeroboam was an idolater. He led Israel away from the true God. God sent a prophet to curse his altar. This infuriated the king. He stretched forth his arm to give order to his officers to arrest the prophet. His arm dried up, withered. He appealed to the prophet to entreat God to save him from being a cripple. The prophet prayed to God and God healed (saved) the king. Subsequent history indicates that the king remained

as wicked as ever. Friend, have you ever known the man that did not become alarmed when something went wrong with his body. Men will consult the best physicians when disease takes hold of their tents of clay. However, few appreciate the Lord's question, Matt. 16:26, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Some of the most wicked men seek the prayers of good people, if their doctor tells them he has done all he can.

"A THIEF BEGS FOR LIFE"

Luke 23:

Satan uttered a true maxim when he said—Job 2:4 "All that a man hath will he give for his life." This principle applies equally to the good and the bad. Matt. 8:25 "Lord save us, we perish." These are the words of Christ's disciples in a tempest at sea. Their desire was to be saved from drowning. The Lord did save them. This salvation is not directly related to salvation from sin. When the dying thief on calvary said—"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," he was certainly asking for salvation. However, we need to revert to our question—"Salvation from what?"

In order to attain a working knowledge of what this thief had in mind, we must consider three crosses and their victims. Christ is the victim on the centre cross. Borne upon the other crosses are thieves dying for their crimes. In Mark's record, 15:32 it appears that, at first, both thieves reviled Christ. However, as matters develop, a change seems to come over one and he ceases to revile. Rather, he remonstrates with the other and avers that they (and Christ) were under the same condemnation. This is not the condemnation of sin that he refers to. He said of Christ in verse 41 "This man hath done nothing amiss." He then addressed Christ, V. 42— "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Question: Did that thief look for such a kingdom as Christ now reigns over from his throne in heaven? If he did he knew more about Christ, his teaching, his plans, and purposes than the chosen twelve whom Christ had taught for three years. It is a known fact that these twelve looked for an earthly kingdom. They argued among themselves about who would occupy the most honored position in his

kingdom, Matthew, chapters 18 and 20. Then, just before he ascended they asked him, Acts 1:6—"Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Certainly, the thief did not look for the spiritual reign of Christ. Since Christ's fame as a miracle worker had spread abroad, there is a likelihood that the dying thief, like the proverbial drowning man grabbing for the straw, thought Jesus may work the miracle of deliverance for himself and come down from the cross. If he does, he may take the reins of government as king. In this case, he would have either miraculous power, or the authority of king by which he could release the thief from death on the cross. When Jesus Answered—"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" that constituted a refusal to gratify the thief's request. Paradise here is not heaven. Three days after this conversation Christ said, Jno. 20:17—"Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my Father." Wherever paradise was, the thief was to be with Christ in it the day they were crucified. He said TODAY shalt thou be with me in paradise. It should be kept in mind that Christ made the statement to the thief personally, and that no one else was included. You and I are not embraced in Christ's words to the thief. If that thief went to heaven the day (today) he was crucified, he arrived there three days before Christ did according to Jno. 20.17.

It has been suggested that the thief went to heaven without being baptized, and, therefore, baptism is unnecessary. (?) It may also be suggested that the great commission was not given until more than fifty days after the thief died, and that he was not commanded to be baptized in the name of Christ. The only law that God had in force during the thief's lifetime was the one given by Moses, and it contained no command to be baptized. There is always the possibility that had he lived to hear the gospel he would have obeyed the command to be baptized, Acts 2:38. Had he not, he would have remained lost.

Paul tells us in Heb. 9:22—"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." At the time the conversation took place between Christ and the thief, Christ had not shed his blood. It was just before Christ ascended to heaven that he commissioned his apostles to "Go ye, into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, Mark 16:15." The apostles began to execute

this commission on the first Pentecost after Christ's death and resurrection. Acts 2: It was then that the command was first given "Repent ye, and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Christ, for the remissions of sins." Acts 2:38. If our study together has enriched your knowledge of divine truth, and contributed some little part to your fitness to face the good Lord in peace in that day, your scribe will be rewarded a thousand fold for his time and effort. May God deal kindly with you always.

Which Church did Christ Build ?

That there are several hundred religious bodies each claiming to be the church of Christ or a denomination of the church of Christ, is a fact too plain to be denied. That these religious bodies disagree with each other in doctrine and practice is also plain to any one that want to see. **Did Christ establish all these bodies ?** If so, why do they disagree, seeing they all have the same Bible ? **Did he establish any of them ?** If so, which one ? If more than one how many ? "It makes no difference which church you join," say many. If this be true, does it make any difference how many churches you join ? Men join lodges—Masons, Odd Fellows, etc. to get the benefit of all of them. If it makes no difference which church you join, what valid reason can you give for not joining several churches, so as to get the benefit of several ?

How many churches did Christ establish ? What does the Bible say ? Did Christ and his apostle mean what they said, or were they simply joking ? Christ said that whatsoever the apostles bound on earth should be bound in heaven. See Matt. 16:19 ; John 20:23. Paul says "There is one body." (Eph 4:4) "But now are they many members, yet one body" (I Cor. 12 : 20). What is this body ? It is the Church. "And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22,23) : "for his (Christ's) body's sake which is the church" (Col. 1:24) The body is the church Paul says "but one body" hence but one church. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." (Eph. 5:23). "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ" (v 24. See also

verses 25,27,29,32). Paul does not say "churches" but "the church" As Christ established but one church it makes a difference which one you become a member of ; if you wish to be united with Christ for he is head of the one church.

Can any one show that it is right for four different men to teach and practice different things religiously, and at the same time it be wrong for one man to teach and practice all of them ? To illustrate. Suppose it be right and pleasing to God for A to preach "once in grace always in grace." B to preach "you can fall from grace" C to preach that "immersion only is baptism", and D to preach that 'sprinkling and pouring will do as well.' Would it also be right for A to preach these doctrines ? If not, why not ? If four men preach four different doctrines, the people say God is pleased : if one man should preach them all, they would say the Preacher was insane. Consistency, did you say ? If four men preach these doctrines people say they are preaching the Bible ; if one man should preach them all, they would call him a simpleton. It is **no wonder we have infidels.**

Can two or more be right when they disagree ? If one school teacher says 2 and 2 are 4, another 2 and 2 are 5, another 2 and 2 are 6, another 2 and 2 are 7: Would you say all are right ? How long would it take the directors to dismiss three of them ? Are all of them correct ? One church says do one thing : another says do something else. Are they both right ? Not unless 2 and 2 are 4, 5,6 and 7. If God accepts all denomination. And they disagree on what to do to be saved, then God is as well pleased with falsehoods as with truth, for when one man positively denies the statement of another both cannot be right. The Bible says God cannot lie : Christ says the truth makes free. See, John 8:32.

Are denominations branches of the church ? Paul says God has set the members in, and tempered the body together "that there should be no schism in the body" (1 Cor. 12:18, 24,25).

Is there schism or division among denominations ? Certainly. Then they are not pleasing to God. "God set the members every one of them in the body as it has pleased him,"

(v,18). Did God set the various denominations in? If so, he failed to tell us about it. The Bible does not once name them. If God set in such churches, it is strange that he never said anything about them. If he did mention them, will someone tell where?

Can a man be saved and go to heaven out of Christ's church? If so, what is the church good for? Can a man be saved and go to heaven out of the various denominations? They say he can. Can he be saved and go to heaven without believing and obeying the Gospel? No, for it is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Then denominationalism is not the gospel or any part of, it for God's power (gospel) gives us all things that pertain to "life and godliness" in fact, they were never heard of for hundreds of years after the church was established and the gospel revealed.

But some one inquires if Christ did speak of the vine and its branches. Certainly he did, but who is the vine and who are the branches? Christ says; "I am the vine" (John 15:1). As Christ is the vine, who then can be the branches? Denominations? Let Christ answer; "I am the vine and ye are the branches" (v, 5). Ye, who? "He that abideth in me, and I in him", Do we speak of denominations as "he"? No, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch" (v.6). This is the key; men, individuals, are the branches, Denominations are not hinted at in the passage.

Which is the church Christ established and who compose it? It is called the "church of God" (Acts. 20:28). Christ says, "my church" (Matt. 16:18). Paul calls congregations "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). What about the expression, "Christian Church?" The Bible does not use it; the Bible speaks of God's church.

The church is composed of Christians, but it does not belong to them, they belong to it. Are men Christians outside of the church? No more than man are Masons outside of the Masonic Lodge. Reconciliation is in the one body which is the church (Eph. 2:16; 1:22,23).

In the apostolic church no preacher was ever called "Reverend" or "the pastor". Every scholar who has carefully investigated knows that the words "elders" "pastors" and "bishops" all refer to the same class—the overseers (elders of each congregation, Acts 20:17, 28)—and not to preachers as a class. "Rev, Paul" "Dr. James, the pastor of our church," is not the language of God's book. Peter says "Speake as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11). Why disobey him?"

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