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Churches of Christ: Some Information concerning them for the perusal of thoughtful people

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Churches of Christ

Some Information concerning
them for the perusal of
thoughtful people



It is always wise to investigate original sources and to get information first hand. It is not always wise to reach final conclusions regarding the position of a religious people till thorough investigation has been made. One religionist has difficulty in accurately stating the views of others, and, if not in sympathy with the people about whom he speaks, he may be guilty of unconscious misrepresentation. Influences of this kind sometimes result in prejudices and wrong conceptions of a good cause and a worthy people. This little folder is sent out for the consideration of thinking people who welcome the light from whatever source it may come. It will be noticed that the emphasis is placed rather upon the things which unite than upon the things which divide. God is leading his people on, and they are learning to say, "If thy heart be as my heart, give me thy hand." We are constrained to believe that the rank and file of the denominations would die for Jesus Christ; and we are led to ask, "Why not get together and work for him?" The sentiment for Christian Union is good, but it will amount to little unless a divided Christendom comes together upon the basis laid down in the New Testament. May this little folder make some small contribution to this much to be desired end.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST. SOME BELIEFS.

While the Churches of Christ have no human creed, no statement of faith drawn up by church council or conference, they have never hesitated to make known to the world what they believe; the Bible teaches on the great questions pertaining to the way of salvation.

1. *That a personal, living faith in Jesus Christ is the principle of justification, and that salvation is by grace through faith. (John 3: 14-16; 20: 30, 31; Rom. 5: 1; Eph. 2: 8, 9.)*

2. *That "conversion is begun, carried on and consummated by the operation of the Holy Spirit" through the Truth; that the gospel, wielded by the Spirit as its sword, is the power of God unto salvation. (John 16: 8-11; Rom. 1: 16, 17; 1 Cor. 1: 21; 4: 15; James 1: 18; Heb. 4: 12.)*

3. *That the Holy Spirit, having been sent according to the promise of Jesus, continues with the church, and dwells in the heart of every true Christian. (John 14: 15-17; Acts 2: 38; Gal. 4: 6.)*

4. *That the heart must be changed by faith in Christ, and the life by repentance before baptism, and that such persons demanding baptism may be baptised without delay on a simple confession of their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. (Acts 2: 41, 42; 8: 26-40; 16: 16-40.)*

5. *That the baptism of Jesus and the apostles is for penitent, confessing believers; that there is*

no foundation in Scripture for baptising infants, who can neither believe, repent, confess, nor obey. (Mark 16: 16; Matt. 28: 18-20; Acts 2: 38; 8: 12; 18: 8.)

6. *That baptism is immersion.* The Bible is very clear in its teaching, hence they stand for immersion only. (Matt. 3: 13-17; Acts 8: 36-39; Rom. 6: 3-5; Col. 2: 12; 3: 1-3.)

7. *That faith, repentance, confession, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, are for the remission of sins,* and since these conditions stand together in God's Word, they do not separate them. What Christ and the Holy Spirit have joined together, let no man put asunder. (Mark 1: 4; Acts 2: 38; 22: 16; Gal. 3: 27; Mark 16: 15, 16.)

8. *They do not believe in "baptismal regeneration," nor that all who have died without baptism are lost.* They believe, however, that since Christ has committed unto his disciples the preaching of the gospel, and since their commission is from him (Matt. 28: 18-20), they have no right to add anything to, or take anything from, that which is written. (Deut. 12: 32; Prov. 30: 5, 6; John 14: 15; 15: 14.)

9. *They do believe in a life of persistent right-doing,* and that an equal emphasis should be placed on both sides of the Great Commission. Not only do they endeavor to make disciples and baptise them, but they earnestly seek to teach them to observe all things that Jesus has commanded. (Matt. 28: 18-20; Rom. 2: 4-11; 2 Peter 1: 5-11.)

CHURCHES OF CHRIST. SOME WATCH-WORDS.

Churches of Christ plead for the Christianity of the New Testament. In their meetings the following watch-words are frequently heard: "No Creed But Christ," "No Name But the Divine," "No Book But the Bible." What do they mean?

1.—*No Creed But Christ.*

"*Thou art the Christ; the Son of the living God.*"—Matt. 16: 16.

This truth was *the creed* of primitive Christianity and the foundation of the first church. Churches of Christ recognise the divinity of Jesus as the one morally significant article of faith, involving as it does a complete commitment to him as Teacher, Saviour, and Lord. Accordingly they accept the apostolic confession, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, as sufficient.

2.—*No Name But the Divine.*

"*If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.*"—1 Peter 4: 16.

"*All the churches of Christ salute you.*"—Rom. 16: 16.

Members of Churches of Christ advocate the adoption of *Scriptural names* for the people of God, as Christian or Disciple of Christ for the individual—Acts 11: 26, and Church of Christ or

Church of God for the assembly—Rom. 16: 16. Believing that party names are contrary to the Word of God, they refuse to wear them. They seek to be simply Christians or disciples of Christ. They do not claim to be the only Christians, but to be Christians only.

3.—*No Book But the Bible.*

“Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.

Churches of Christ take *the Bible* as the revealed will of God, and their all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. The Bible is their book of discipline. In relation to human creeds, they hold their utter inutility on the following grounds:—Firstly, if a creed contains more than is in the Bible, it contains too much. Secondly, if it contains less than is in the Bible, it contains too little. Thirdly, if it contains the same, then its inutility is at once apparent. And, fourthly, if it is intended to render the Bible more explicit as to what is to be believed in order to salvation, it reflects upon the wisdom and judgment of the Holy Spirit himself.

Make these Watch-Words Yours!

No Creed But Christ.

No Name But the Divine.

No Book But the Bible.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST. THEIR AIM.

1. To exalt Jesus as both Lord and Christ and as Head of his body the church, that he may "in all things have the pre-eminence."
2. To obey the Word of God as the only authoritative rule of faith and practice.
3. To turn alien sinners to Christ according to New Testament teaching and example.
4. To build up Christian believers in faith, hope and love.
5. To contend for New Testament Christianity in its spirit, doctrine, and life.
6. To commend Christianity to all by earnest endeavors to follow closely the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. To pray and work for the union of all God's people—that Christ's prayer may be answered, "That they all may be one."
8. To exhibit and enforce the social as well as the spiritual aspect of Christianity; to demonstrate that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to the spirit first, and then to the body, to the individual first, and then to society; and hence to apply the gospel as the only effective instrument of moral and social reform.
9. To co-operate with all Christian believers in all good works for the salvation of men and the glory of God.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST.

DOCTRINAL BASIS OF UNION.

"One Body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one Hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father over all."—Eph. 4: 4-6.

1. The One Body.—"For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free."—1 Cor. 12: 13.

2. The One Spirit.—"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"—1 Cor. 3: 16.

3. The One Hope.—"That being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."—Titus 3: 7.

4. The One Lord.—"To us there is one God, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him."—1 Cor. 8: 6.

5. The One Faith.—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."—Rom. 10: 9.

6. The One Baptism.—"Then answered Peter, can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptised?"—Acts 10: 47.

7. The One God and Father.—"We know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one."—1 Cor. 8: 4.

"And they shall become one flock, one Shepherd."—Jesus.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST. THEIR PLEA.

1. An unqualified restoration of primitive Christianity.—Jude 3.

2. Adoption of Bible names as individuals and churches.—Acts 11: 26; Rom. 16: 16; 1 Cor. 1, 2.

3. Acceptance of no creed but Christ; no guide but the Bible.—Matt. 16: 16; 2 Tim. 3: 16.

4. Adherence to the divinely appointed way of salvation.—John 3: 16; Luke 13: 3; Rom. 10: 9, 10; Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38.

5. The simple weekly fraternal gathering of the disciples of Christ to break bread in remembrance of him.—Acts 2: 41, 42; Acts 20: 7.

6. The union of the followers of Christ on the basis laid down in the New Testament.—John 17: 20, 21; Eph. 4: 3-6.

ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

Five Inevitable Issues.

A divine Christ or no Saviour.

An inspired Bible or no Scriptures.

A Scriptural baptism or no baptism.

A religion of service or no religion.

A united church or no world-conquest.

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