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THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, OR CHRISTIANS.

The people known individually as Christians, or Disciples of the Lord, are congregationally called "The Church of Christ," "The Church of God," because these appellations are scriptural. "The Church of Christ" and "The Churches of Christ" are in the very Scripture. (See 1 Cor. i. 1, and Romans xvi. 16.)

These people discard all human names and unscriptural titles, because human names and titles promote and perpetuate divisions. They expect no divisions in heaven, and earnestly contend that there should be no divisions among the people of God in this world. (See John xvii. 20; 1 Cor. i. 3.) In order to Christian union, they urge, in all brotherly kindness, the adoption of scriptural words and phrases in their declaration of scriptural faith, believing this course would bring the Lord's people nearer together. If all religious teachers would adopt a strictly scriptural style of language, being careful not to avoid the quotation of those passages which would seem to be against them, and not partial in the use of other passages, those who were taught would all receive the same lessons and impressions, and would soon lose all human admixtures and schismatical opinions, which are at present the walls of separation between religious people, and would come together, and coming together, would greatly increase the strength and success of Christianity against the common foe.

"The Disciples of the Lord" refuse to adopt any human creed or confession of faith, because such creeds and confessions of faith have proved themselves to be schismatical, heretical, and subversive of Christian liberty, and an impediment to the conversion of the world to Christ, and because they are not necessary, as the scriptures are admitted to be infallibly right, and to contain all things necessary to salvation. (See 2 Tim. iii. 16.)

The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the basis on which they are striving to effect Christian Union, and they are trying to incite to unity in matters of faith, a liberty in matters of opinion, and charity in all things. They recognize the distinction between faith and opinions, and while they are one in faith, they never take opinions as a test of fellowship. (See Rom. xiv. 1.) It is their constant aim to speak when and where the Bible speaks, and to be silent when and where the Bible is silent, and in this way to obviate the difficulties in the way of such a union and the conversion of the world.

"In union there is strength" to repel every foe and to carry every conquest, and especially is this true when that union is based upon the eternal truth of God. "United we stand, divided we fall." It is a maxim as useful in the Church as in the world. Romanists are numerous and united, and their domination ever ready and powerful. In fidelity to its principles, and in its unity, it is uniting its strength against God's word, and its

ligion is growing bold and organizing its hateful elements of strength against the truth and righteousness of the Bible. Shall we be divided into sects and contending parties, and thus be wasting our strength in an intestine warfare for favorite and lifeless opinions, while our foes are uniting and besieging our works?

The Disciples have been very much misrepresented by unformed and prejudiced persons, who have condemned them without a hearing. The Disciples are most certainly orthodox in the true sense of that term, in their faith and general practice, and this is generally admitted, even by their opponents, who use, without prejudice, the proper means of informing themselves.

These people preach a purification of heart by faith in Jesus the Christ, a change of character by repentance toward God, and a change of state or condition by immersion into Christ's death and into His body. (See John iii. 5; Rom. vi. 1-6; Col. i. 12, and Heb. x. 22.)

They regard baptism as "for the remission of sins," only when it is preceded by faith and repentance. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." (Mark xvi. 16.) "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts ii. 38.) And as to infant baptism they do not practise it; 1st, because their Bible says nothing about it; 2d, because to the infant, it would be baptism alone, without faith, repentance, or volition, and can do them no good; and 3d, because infants need no such ordinance, for "of such is the kingdom of heaven" already.

No people in the world believe more firmly than they that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the only begotten of the Father, and none can exalt the Saviour of men any higher. To love God and keep His commandments they regard as the whole duty of man, and essential in order to "enter in through the gates into the city" of the living God. (See Romans xxii. 14.)

They place equal stress on the duties of faith, repentance, confession of Christ, baptism, calling on the name of the Lord, prayer, public and private worship, benevolence and every other command of the Christian dispensation, nor do they preach or admit that some are essential and others non-essential. But while they consider it indispensable ever to love God and keep His commandments, they do not expect salvation by their own acts of obedience or good qualities without Christ. They attribute their salvation to the love of God as the original moving cause, to the Lord Jesus Christ as the procuring and mediatorial cause, to the blood of Christ as the meritorious and cleansing cause, to the Spirit of God as the efficient cause, to the incorruptible Word or Gospel as the instrumental cause, and to faith and obedience as the concurring cause. They understand salvation to be ascribed to all these causes conjointly, and not any one alone.

They also accept the teaching of the Scriptures as to the new birth—John iii. 6-8; 1 Peter i. 23; James i. 18; 1 Cor. iv. 22; and that all the children of God have the spirit of Christ, whose meat and whose drink it was to do his Father's will.

The charge that this people deny the Holy Spirit is both untrue and unjust, nor do they advocate any word-alone system any more than they do a Spirit-alone system. "He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9.) They also preach future and everlasting rewards and punishments.

The impression has been made that the Disciples are insignificant in numbers and influence, but instead of this the inherent strength of their plea for Christian union, for the adoption of scriptural language of the divine creed, and for a return to the ancient order of things in the congregation of Christ may be seen in the remarkable fact that there are now about ten hundred thousand souls who have been gathered into union upon the Bible alone. During the last few years about fifty thousand conversions have been secured to their number each year.

There are about twenty colleges and institutions of learning of a high order, and no less than twenty religious current publications in the United States, besides those in England, Canada and Australia, under their control; and their influence is most rapidly extending in every direction.

These things are not mentioned as infallible evidence of the correctness of their principles, but rather as a response to those who say that this religious people amounts to nothing, and is not worthy of notice, and as an evidence that a religious people can live and prosper with no creed but the Bible. They are entitled to a fair and patient hearing, and those who read this are kindly requested to attend their meetings, without any influence by previous feelings or preferences for or against them. If they preach the truth as it is in Jesus and in the Bible, believe them; and if not, reject their teachings; but at all events give them a candid and impartial hearing, for they are urging matters upon this generation of vital importance, in which the temporal and eternal interests of our race are deeply concerned.

May God hasten the happy day when all His people will be "one as Christ and the Father are one," and when there will be no divisions among them, and when they will "all speak the same thing"—when they will adopt a scriptural name, a scriptural creed, a scriptural language, and a scriptural life, and when all in one fold, under one shepherd, will sit at the feet of Jesus and learn His will, imbibe His spirit, and transcribe His spotless life into their own, is the earnest prayer of the writer, in the love of God and hope of heaven.

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?

A TRACT BY E. L. A.

This is an important question to you, fellow-traveller to eternity. The answer unfolds to you your present condition, and on your condition depends the salvation of your soul. If you are a Christian you are safe from "the wrath to come"; but if you are not you will be involved in the world's ruin, and be one of those who will be finally banished from the presence of God (2 Thess. i. 8, 9.) Men are apt to put off, until a more convenient season, duties pertaining to their God and concerning their souls' safety. Procrastination is not only the thief of time but also the thief of eternity; of salvation. Satan receives more souls from the class that put off till to-morrow, what ought to be done to-day, than from any other. Then waste not away the day of God's goodness and grace, for "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," to-morrow or the more convenient season may never come.

To know whether you are a Christian or not you should know what it is to be a Christian. Many think themselves Christians when really they are not. It is not to be simply good. Mere goodness saves no one, yet if you are a Christian you can not help being good. Some think if they do not lie, cheat, nor swear, that if they walk uprightly, deal justly, do good to their neighbor who in need, they are very good Christians. But this is a misconception of what it is to be a Christian. They may be the very best of people, so far as these things are concerned, and not be Christians. So may infidels.

It is not to belong to any of the sects as some suppose, for Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and all in general, even Roman Catholics, admit a man may be a Christian without belonging to their particular party. It will not be asked of us in the day of judgment whether we are Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, etc., but whether we are Christians. We had better be here what we will have to be there to secure an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. But you may ask, "May not one be a Christian and also a Methodist or Presbyterian?" Admit it; but why be more than God requires us to be? Does it not appear to be leading to the things which are written in the Book? (Rev. 22: 18.) Besides, this spirit of division is clearly condemned in God's Word. "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. 3: 4.) "For to carnally minded is death." (1 Cor. 8: 6.)

But what it is to be a Christian? It is to be a follower of Christ. How a follower of Christ? By observing his precepts and keeping his commandments. With these he has instituted ordinances by which all who wish to be

Christians can become such. These ordinances, precepts and commandments (by the observing of which we may know that we have passed from death unto life, and that we love God, Christ, and the brethren, see John 14: 21-23; 1 John 3: 11; and 5: 2, 3) are clearly taught in the Word of God, which the Father has given to be "a lamp to our path," through a world of sorrow and sin.

Now, what are the commandments and ordinances by which you became a Christian? Let us see: You are first to believe with all the heart that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 16: 16; John 20: 30, 31; Heb. 11: 16; Acts 8: 37; Rom. 10: 9). If you will consult these passages, dear dying reader, you will perceive that belief, or its equivalent, faith in Christ, is indispensably necessary to constitute a Christian. This you must exercise and this you can exercise; for where would be the propriety in telling one to do what he could not, as in the case of Paul and the Jailer (Acts 16: 31). But this is not enough; you may have "all faith" so that you could "remove mountains" and it will profit you nothing (1 Cor. 13: 2). You must put your faith or belief in practice, and when you comprehend this, you will wish to know what more you are required to do. You should be told what was told others who were once in a similar condition: "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 38). Now, repentance is simply a change of mind in reference to sin, wrought and produced by godly sorrow for sin, (2 Cor. 7: 10). Whereas you once sought it you now shun it, you once loved it you now hate it, and are resolved, with the help of God, to live in it no more. When you have got thus far, why should you tarry? (Acts 22: 16). "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

"But," says one, "there is so much controversy about what baptism is, that I am bewildered." Well, dear reader, if you should read faith and repentance in the light of the speculations and controversies of the day, you will be as much perplexed to know what faith and repentance are, as you are to know what is baptism. But let me say right here, that all the controversy and debating are not whether immersion is baptism. This all admit, but it is whether or not sprinkling or pouring is baptism? Read baptism in the light of the Lamp of Truth, the Word of God, and you will have no trouble to decide what baptism is:

1st. There is a "going down into" and a coming up out of "water in baptism" (Matt. 3: 16; Mark 1: 9, 10; Acts 8: 38).

2d. There is an overwhelming baptism (Matt. 20: 22, 23; Luke 12: 50). A person may be overwhelmed in holy grief, suffering, ill, sand, water, or any other element or influence, whereby he can be overwhelmed or immersed (not sprinkled) in suffering and grief.

3d. Water is the element of Christian baptism (Acts 8: 36, 38; 10: 47).

4th. Baptism requires much water (John 3: 23).

5th. There is a burial in baptism (Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2: 12).

Now, if sprinkling is baptism it will accord with the above facts. Let us see: 1st In sprinkling there is no "going down into" nor "coming up out of" water. 2nd. There is no overwhelming. 3rd. There is, however, water. Keep this in mind when you read Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2: 12; Eph. 4: 5 ("one baptism"). 4th. There is need of "much water." 5th. There is no burial.

Now, try immersion; if it is baptism it will accord with the facts. 1st. There is a "going down into" and a "coming up out of" water. 2d. There is an overwhelming. 3d. There is water. 4th. There is need of much water. 5th. There is a burial.

Now, you can no more become a Christian than you can become a Mason without complying with the ceremonies or ordinances of initiation. These ordinances, as I have already shown, are: 1st. Faith in Christ. 2d. Repentance of your sins. 3d. Baptism for the remission of them. As baptism is the last inductive act by which you are brought into the "one body" (Eph. 4: 4), or Church, see 1 Cor. 12: 13; Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1: 18, 24; some say it is in this act that you receive the "remission of sins," or pass out of a state of condemnation into a state of justification. Like a criminal who, upon complying with certain conditions is pardoned and let go free; but not until he has complied with the last condition does he receive pardon and liberty. Thus you become a Christian.

Now, let us consider your work as a Christian. You must not think that in becoming a Christian you have done all that is necessary. You are to diligently follow in the footsteps of Jesus—doing good unto all men as God gives you an opportunity; striving to save some. You must frequent the House of God, and the place of prayer; laboring to show forth at all times and in every place, the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2: 9). You are to "visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and keep yourself unpolluted from the world" (James 1: 27).

But thus would fall me were I to enter into all the particulars of your work as a Christian; but you will find the Sermon on the Mount, which includes the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew; also the 12th of Romans; the 13th of 1st Corinthians, and the 5th of 1st Thessalonians, as short compendiums on Christian duties pertaining to practical life. But let me exhort you to make the entire New Testament, nay, the whole Bible, your careful and profitable study throughout your life. God in His loving kindness, bless you, and permit us to remain in the land where we are.