

# Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

## ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD

BRUCE STULTING

According to Paul, Christians are **“labourers together with God”** (1 Cor. 3:9). The Christian life ought to be filled with work for the Master. Based on the hope of the resurrection, Paul said: **Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord** (15:58). The work of the Lord involves the greatest privileges, responsibilities, and rewards of any area of work known to man.

It is interesting that this work involves each and every Christian. Notice that Paul addresses this admonition to **“my beloved brethren.”** It is not addressed to the elders only, although they must set the example (1 Pet. 5:3). Nor is it addressed to deacons only, although the word deacon means **“servant”** (Acts 6:1-3). As surprising as it may seem to many, it is not addressed to preachers only, although he has specific work to do (2 Tim. 2:15; 4:5).

**“I WILL WORK. I WILL PRAY.  
I WILL LABOR EVERY DAY.”**

The New Testament teaches that every Christian must be a worker for the Lord. This point is clearly set forth in the parable of the talents (Mat. 25:14-30). Every servant was given talents according to his ability. Even the one talent servant was expected to work. Each servant was required to give an account and was rewarded or punished accordingly.

The Scriptures often compare the church to a physical body (Rom. 12:5). As with a physical body, each member must do their part for the overall good of the spiritual body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-21).

Christians may differ in ability, but there is no exemption from doing the work of the Lord. There is no exemptions based on education, age, gender, nationality, etc. When the disciples in Jerusalem were scattered abroad because of persecution, Luke stated, **“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word”** (Acts 8:4). There will always be plenty of work in the Lord’s church for a Paul and a Timothy; a Eunice and a Dorcas; a Barnabas and a Mark.

**“Abounding in the work of the Lord”** means happiness here and heaven hereafter. Each Christian must examine their service and ask, “Am I abounding in the Lord’s work?” Remember, the question is not, “Am I occasionally doing the Lord’s work?” Rather, one must ask, “Am I abounding in it?” Let us all remember, **“the night cometh, when no man can work”** (John 9:4). To the Corinthians, Paul wrote: **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”** (1 Cor. 15:58). God has equipped each Christian, according to their various abilities, to labor in the Kingdom. Thus, the Christian life ought to be filled with work for the Master.

### COMMITMENT AND CONVICTION

The Christian needs the deepest commitment and the strongest conviction to develop the steadfastness and immovability that is necessary to accomplish the Lord’s work. The doubts and opinions that plagued the church at Corinth hindered the Lord’s work. They had problems resulting from

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**Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder**  
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*Editorial...*

## **ABOUNDING RUMORS**

The Bible teaches: “**He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter**” (Pro. 11:13). It also teaches: “**A whisperer separateth chief friends**” (Pro. 16:28). Moses wrote, “**Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people**” (Lev. 19:16). Again, from the book of Proverbs the warning: “**He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; Therefore company not with him that openeth wide his lips**” (Pro. 20:19). And, once again from Proverbs: “**A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue**” (Pro. 17:4).

A person may know that God exists, that Jesus Christ is Deity, and that the Bible is the Word of God. He may know the truth concerning the plan of salvation. He may understand the church: its organization, work, worship, and mission. Furthermore, he may be able to defend the truth against error regarding these fore mentioned matters. But, by living and dying a gossip and a tale bearer, he will exist forever in a devil’s hell.

Gossipy ears look for and encourage gossipy tongues and vice versa. Rumors are juicy morsels to talebearers. “Brother Add A Little More” is always an intimate companion of “Sister Don’t Breathe A Word Of This”; neither of these infamous friends are in fellowship with the “Right Honorable Brother and Sister Truth.”

Once a man found an object he did not recognize. He gave it a slight bump with the toe of his shoe and was startled to see the thing grow larger. His curiosity aroused, the man kicked the unidentified object harder. With the second more powerful kick the fellow was amazed to behold the strange object almost double in size. Hurriedly he picked up a stout pole and gave his newly found enigma a double-handed and resounding whack! In an instant the object more than tripled its original size. In a last act of desperation the poor man grabbed a large metal bar and with all his might he clubbed the monstrous object with a blow that would have killed an elephant. In abject horror the terrorized man stood transfixed as the monstrous thing swelled to a gigantic size. The panic-stricken fellow now fled the scene of battle. After some distance had been hastily put between the man and his newly created behemoth, he rushed breathlessly upon an old man who, from a safe distance, had been following the previous confrontation with much interest. Seeing the old man, the fleeing fellow gestured back toward his gigantic antagonist and gasped: “Do you know what that monster is?!” The old man calmly and deliberately answered his querist. “Yes,” he said: “It is called a rumor.”

When I was in the eighth grade, I obtained a compound fracture of my nose when the horse I was riding reared up

and fell backwards on me. After spending a few days in the hospital I returned to school to find that it was being rumored that both of my legs had also been severely broken in this “horse-wreck.” That poor little eighth grader never did feel compelled to verbally rebut the falsehood—before the whole school; he just kept right on walking!

Concerning stopping a rumor, the following pithy saying is very appropriate: “One can as well stop a rumor as he can un-ring a bell.” Many years ago, a broken-nosed eighth grader learned what the Roman, Cato, said: “We cannot control the evil tongues of others; but a good life enables us to disregard them.”

Yes, I know that all talking about people is not gossip. Faithful elders, parents, preachers, etc., must discuss character, personality, and qualifications of persons regarding their involvement in various activities. One of the chief reasons the church is in the mess it is in today is because not enough proper evaluation of persons has been done before placing them in key positions of influence and responsibility in the church. The same may be said of parents’ regarding their children. Hence, we may deduce that all talking about people does not constitute gossip.

One gossips when he or she routinely reveals personal facts to the detriment of the person talked about. Hence, there is a vile motive involved. Usually the gossip is not overly concerned with the accuracy of the information that he or she scatters from “Dan to Beersheba.”

Some time ago I was given an audio tape filled with all manner of wicked accusations against a certain person (as of *this date that person has been deceased for almost 20 years—Editor*) in another state. Some of the matters dealt with on the tape stretched back over forty years (*at this writing around 70 Years—Editor*). There was no way to verify whether the witnesses were credible or that the evidence was adequate. However, these things made no difference to the people spreading it around. Moreover, they did not care whether these matters were true or, if true, whether they had been scripturally corrected or not. They thought it served their purpose, so they did it.

Though the tape (*at that time—Editor*) has existed for around eight years, the subject of the gossip did not know the tape even existed until, in the presence of said person, it was played. The least these talebearers could have done was to have made the tape available to the subject of the gossip. Did they not know of the “Golden Rule?” Did they not desire to hear the other side? They sought one thing and one thing only—the destruction of a reputation. Such persons may not go to hell for a host of things, but their eternal destiny is as certain as the fornicator and idolater if they do not repent of their gossip.

This is not the first time I have received such trash from those who work overtime at being “spiritual idiots” while

thinking of themselves as stalwarts of the faith. I am sure, human nature being what it is, I will receive other such garbage (*And I have—Editor*). Over a third (*now over 50 years—Editor*) of a century of preaching have placed a number of such talebearing efforts in my hands. There is nothing Christian about any of them. By design they are malicious; their sole purpose is to vilify and defame.

The Bible teaches us how to expose false doctrine and wicked brethren. No precept regarding such efforts involve gossip and talebearing. The honest, sincere, faithful Christian will not engage in sin to expose sin.

*[I wrote the foregoing missive many years ago. But because people, even and especially certain brethren, thrive on things that support their cause(s) whether factual or not, this piece will always be up to date. Especially is this the case when it comes to attacking people personally to besmirch their character. Their thinking goes as the old trite adage says, “My mind is made up. Don’t confuse me with the facts.” And, not a few preachers, elders, and other church members are as guilty as anyone in jumping on the bandwagon whose guiding principle is anything but, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21). For some reason, they have convinced themselves that Paul’s directive is good for them to tell others to do, but it is not required of them in their conduct toward their fellowman or brethren in the Lord. Often, I hear or read comments from people that are nothing but conclusions about others not warranted by the facts. Thus, they are only assumptions and some constitute evil surmisings (1 Tim. 6:4). Sadly, such characters are quite content, not only to hold such conclusions, but to propagate them, thinking they do God service. However, they do this knowing that they have not done what they ought to have done to establish the certainty of their conclusion(s). That is the case because they know that their conclusion(s) about a certain matter(s) and/or person(s) is NOT based on adequate evidence, credible witnesses, and the facts bearing on the case(s). This they do because what they have heard and/or read serves their own prejudiced views they have gladly embraced. And, they are so blind they do not realize they have become dishonest in the handling of said matter(s). They have found their happy little playhouse in their erroneous conclusion(s) and cannot afford to have it torn up by the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth that is only determined by all the facts in a given case and reasoning correctly therefrom with an honest and good heart (Luke 8:15). Sadly, they have and will preach what I have written, but in given instances regarding certain topic and/or people they refuse to practise the same.]*

—David P. Brown, Editor



(Continued From Page 1)

eating meat offered to idols (chapter 8-10). Worship was corrupted as women chose to set aside the veil and the Lord's Supper was turned into a common meal (chapter 11). There was confusion over the importance and use of spiritual gifts (chapters 12-14). These and other problems caused division which further hindered the work. Similarly, the church at Philippi was admonished:

**Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel** (Phi. 1:27).

Paul's life is an example of the commitment that is necessary to **"abound"** in the work of the Lord. Consider Paul's view of life, **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"** (1:21).

At the close of his life, Paul said:

**I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing** (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Paul had this strong conviction because he recognized the reward that awaits those who labor for the Lord.

The proper zeal for the Lord is impossible without strong faith and conviction. **"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works"** (Jam. 2:18). A Christian's work will always be proportionate to one's faith, conviction, and hope. Each Christian must develop the faith, commitment, and conviction necessary to be constant in the work of the Lord.

### ALWAYS

*Always* implies constancy in the Christian's work. *Always* is a word that is repeatedly used in association with the Christian religion. It could be said that the religion of Christ is the religion of *always*. Through the New Testament, Christians are admonished: (1) *Always* let your speech be with grace (Col. 4:6), (2) *Always* rejoice in the Lord (Phi. 4:4), (3) *Always* obey (2:12), and (4) *Always* be ready to give an answer (1 Pet. 3:15). To work "always" means to **"be instant in season, out of season"** (2 Tim. 4:2). Spasmodic service is not acceptable to the Lord.

*Always* means six days a week plus Sunday (Sunday only is no good). *Always* means working when you are watched and praised and when your work goes unseen and without praise. *Always* means Sunday morning worship as well as Sunday evening worship and Wednesday Bible class. It means supporting special events like Gospel Meetings, VBS, etc. *Always* means never looking back or giving up. **"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand**

**to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"** (Luke 9:62). In short, *Always* means every day for the rest of your life. Those who lack constancy in Christian service are not dependable.

### ABOUNDING

*Abounding* implies the fervor of the Christian's work. The Greek word translated *abounding* is an interesting study. It comes from the word *perisseuo* meaning, "to be over and above; excel." It is used of exceeding others. Jesus said that one's righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees to enter heaven (Mat. 5:20). It is used of exceeding the minimum requirements. The prodigal son's father gave his servants more food to spare (Luke 15:17). It is used of exceeding what was done in the past. When questioned by Pilate, the foolish Jews **"cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him"** (Mark 15:14).

Christian service must be *abounding* service. Such service must be offered willingly. The eleventh hour men in the parable of the laborers illustrate this point (Mat. 20:1-16). *Abounding* service is not slothful, but fervent service (Rom. 12:11). The idea here is being heated to a boil. *Abounding* service is from the heart. There are too many men-pleasers. The Lord desires servants who do the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6:6). *Abounding* service demands that God and His Kingdom be placed first (Mat. 6:33). Those who are not constant in the Lord's work are taking a chance on their eternal salvation. Those who lack constancy may be hot, cold, or even lukewarm. Jesus rebuked the church at Laodicea: **"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth"** (Rev. 3:15-16).

Christians are **"created in Christ Jesus unto good works"** (Eph. 2:10). Jesus died **"that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"** (Tit. 2:14). Are you **"abounding in the work of the Lord"**?

### PAUL'S PRIMARY MOTIVE

Furthermore, the Christian needs the deepest commitment and the strongest conviction to develop the steadfastness and immovability that is necessary to accomplish the Lord's work. The primary motive given by Paul is the final resurrection. Paul introduces the command to work with "therefore" which connects this command with the preceding verses. The entire chapter is devoted to a discussion of the resurrection and immortality. Paul is encouraging his readers to **"always abound in the lord of the Lord"** in view of the fact that there will be a life beyond this one. In death, one will rest from their labors, knowing that their work will follow them even in death (Rev. 14:13).

The future life is reason for all to abound in the work of the Lord. This future life is tied to the final judgment. "For-

asmuch” introduces the day of reckoning. All must stand before God and give an account (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12). It will also be a day of punishment and reward (Mat. 25:46). Knowing that our labor for the Lord is not in vain is strong incentive to work. Our work outside of Christ is vain and will be consumed with fire at the end of time (2 Pet. 3:10). However, God’s Word gives the Christian the certainty of the reward for their labors for Christ.

The work under consideration in our text is the Lord’s own work. The Christian is to take up the cause of Christ and continue the work that He started. In His own words, **“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost”** (Luke 19:10). This is the work that He has commanded us to do and for which He receives the glory and honor that is His due. To work for the Lord means to do God’s will (Mat. 7:21-23). Like Jesus, the Christian’s **“meat”** must be to do the will of God and finish the work that Jesus started (John 4:34). To work for the Lord means to honor and glorify Him (Phi. 1:20).

The work of the Lord includes evangelism (Mark 16:16; Rom. 1:16). The Christian must be about the work of pro-

claiming Christ and His salvation to the lost. Also, the work of the Lord includes benevolence. This means that, as opportunity and circumstances permit, the Christian is to share with those who are less fortunate. This benevolence is not limited to saints only, but to be extended to all men (Gal. 6:10). Finally, the work of the Lord involves edification. Each Christian has the obligation to encourage and build up their brothers and sisters in Christ. This is accomplished through study, worship, visitation, etc. (Eph. 4:12).

Paul encouraged Timothy, **“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”** (1 Tim. 4:16). **“Abounding in the work of the Lord”** means happiness here and heaven hereafter. In order to reap the reward, one must do the work. So, **“let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not”** (Gal. 6:9).

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# ACCEPTING CHRIST

G. K. Wallace

Words are signs of ideas. It is important then that we ask, “What is the idea conveyed by the words that are being used?” We constantly hear such expressions as “accepting Christ,” “total commitment,” “a full surrender,” and “receiving Christ as your personal Saviour.” What do men mean by these terms?

I have been listening to denominational preachers for 40 or 50 years and I think I know what they are saying. There was a time when sectarian preachers were constantly making fun of what Jesus said in Mark 16:16 and what Peter said in Acts 2:38. They would refer to my brethren as “water ducks” and “mossbacks.” They would laugh at John 3:5 and say, “only three things are born of water. They are mosquitoes, tadpoles, and Campbellites.” Of course, Jesus did not say be born of water. He said be born of **“water and the Spirit.”** I am neither a mosquito, tadpole, nor a Campbellite, and I was not born of water. I was born of **“water and the Spirit.”**

In generations past and present, denominational preachers have used special terms to deny that a person is to be born of water and the Spirit and that baptism is for the remission of sins. Their approach to this is by saying you must “accept Christ.” By this, they mean you are to skip baptism because they say baptism “is not part of the grace of God...”

When they talk about “preaching Christ,” they mean you are to disregard “the words of Christ.” When they talk about a “total commitment,” they skip the commandments of Jesus Christ and “let your conscience be your guide.” When sectarian preachers talk about “surrendering to Christ,” they mean “avoid” obedience to the gospel of Christ. When sectarian preachers talk about receiving a “personal Saviour,” they mean, “Christ comes into the life of the alien sinner separate and apart from obeying the gospel of Christ.”

When the evangelist Philip preached Christ, the eunuch asked to be baptized (Acts 8:35-36). How can one preach Christ and not tell a man to be baptized? How can one accept Christ and, at the same time, refuse to be baptized? Accepting Christ has always meant accepting what Christ taught. When Peter concluded his great sermon on Pentecost, the record says, **“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized”** (Acts 2:41). The people on Pentecost received Christ by receiving His word. All who rejected Peter’s words rejected Christ.

Only those who accepted the teachings of Christ while He was here in person accepted Christ. Likewise, all who come to Christ today must do so by the teachings and instructions by Him given. Christ draws all men through teach-

ing (John 6:44-45). When the apostles went out to preach the great commission they were thereby preaching Christ. This was the burden of all their discourses The prophet said, **“They shall all be taught of God”** (Isa. 54:13). Therefore, all who have been properly taught through the living oracles concerning Jesus of Nazareth and have obeyed those words have come to Him.

Christianity has never changed. Its laws and ordinances are still the same as they were in the first century. It is ridiculous, absurd, and sectarian to talk to people about coming to Christ and leave the impression that they can do so without doing what Jesus taught. To deny that baptism is a part of the grace of God is to deny the Bible. If baptism does not belong to the grace of God, it belongs to the grace of the devil. If you have been baptized, your baptism is either of the grace of God or the grace of the devil.

Suppose you are sick and nigh unto death. Your beloved doctor calls to see you, diagnoses your case, and tells you that he is positive he can be of assistance and effect a cure. You rejoice at hearing his words and then he picks up his pen and begins to write. You turn to him and ask, “What is that you’re doing, doctor?” The physician replies, “I’m writing a prescription suited to your case which you should carefully take according to my instructions.”

Then suppose you say, “Doctor, I can have nothing to do with your pills and powders. I believe in you! I want you

personally, but your pills and powders can have no place in my life and cannot be a part nor a means of healing. My confidence is in you.

The physician would likely reply, “He that rejects my remedy, rejects me, and he that has no confidence in what I prescribe as a means of healing, has no confidence in me.” (cf. John 12:48).

The book of Acts was written to illustrate the laws of the kingdom of God and particularly those that relate to primary obedience. Such examples as the conversion of Saul and of the eunuch (Acts 22:16; 8:35-37) make the way of obedience so plain that no one but the most prejudiced can fail to understand what to do to be saved.

It should be our custom today to preach with the same vigor and force that was characteristic of pioneer preachers of previous generations. Human nature has not changed and it will ever remain the same. The needs of man are the same and the answer to those needs were revealed in the Word of God 2,000 years ago.

As it did for the eunuch and Paul, the blood of Christ still cleanses men today who believe in Christ, (John. 8:24), repent of their sins, (Luke 13:3), confess that faith, (Mat. 10:32; Rom. 10:10), and are baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

—Deceased



## THE MELODEON AT MIDWAY

One of the most divisive events in the Restoration Movement was when churches began using musical instruments in their worship services. Early in the 1800s, instrumental music used in worship assemblies were virtually unknown among evangelical churches. Unity in all churches where it was introduced struggled even to the point of division. Churches of the Restoration Movement were no exception.

As early as 1851, there were scattered reports of congregations among Restoration churches adding instruments of music to their worship services. Alexander Campbell, in an article in the *Millennial Harbinger*, October, 1851 said, “I presume, to all spiritually-minded Christians such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert.” Benjamin Franklin wrote against it in 1860 by saying that it would be only permissible if a church or preacher had lost the Spirit of Christ and were trying to become a fashionable society rather than the church of the Bible.

However, in 1860, Lewis L. Pinkerton of Midway, Kentucky responded that as far as he was aware, the church at

Midway where he preached, was the only one of his knowledge where the instrument had been successfully introduced.

The instrument was added amidst much controversy at Midway. What initially caused the problem was that the singing was deplorable. Pinkerton said that the singing would, “scare even the rats from worship.” At first, members met in the home of some brethren on Saturday night for practice. To get the right pitch, they used a little melodeon. Before long one of the sisters was accompanying the singing with the playing of the little instrument. The group noted how the accompaniment helped the singing, and so they decided the use of it would greatly enhance their worship assemblies. They asked L.L. Pinkerton, their preacher, what he thought of bringing it into the assembly. His response was that he saw no problem with it. So, the next Sunday, a melodeon was brought in for worship. Thompson Parrish played the instrument at the Sunday services.

The entrance of this little instrument did not take place smoothly, however. The friction was so stern by some that

trouble was a-brew. One who was strongly against the instrument was Adam Hibler, one of the elders. Late one night he, along with his slave Reuben, went to the church building. While Hibler held a window open, Reuben entered the building and passed the small instrument through to Hibler. It was put on a wagon and taken to be stored in his barn. Another melodian, amidst much complaint, was purchased and placed in the building. Around the turn of the 20th century, the Midway Church building was destroyed by fire. Along with it was the destruction of the second melodeon. Some years later, Hibler's barn was being cleaned out when the first melodeon was found. (Incidentally, also found in his barn was the upper chamber of the Cane Ridge Meetinghouse that had been removed for many years. The upper-chamber/balcony was returned to the meetinghouse, and is now on display inside the old meetinghouse.) The melodeon was taken to the premises of Midway College and has now been placed in the college library. The college has a new library on campus, and the old melodeon is still on display. The school proudly displays it because of all the controversy it brought so many years prior. Many people aware of the controversial nature

of it, travel long distances to see the "little instrument that split a church." (From *Restoration History*, Scott Harp, Editor, <https://www.therestorationmovement.com/index.htm>).

*[The late G. K. Wallace used to tell the story of when he with a group went into the Midway College library to see the little melodeon. He said that upon viewing the mechanical instrument, the man from the college who was conducting the group to where the mechanical instrument was displayed remarked to them, "Now, isn't that a little thing over which to divide the church." Brother Wallace said he answered the man's comment with, "It is as big as the golden calf." And, indeed it was and is, for the people who introduced it thought more of it than the did the unity of the church and the authority of the New Testament that produces scriptural fellowship (Col. 3:17). It was and is an idol in the hearts of many from which they then and now will not be separated when it comes to worshipping God in song (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).—Editor*



## “WHAT IS WRONG WITH DENOMINATIONALISM?”

Pervie Nichols

Hardly a day passes without someone asking this writer, “Of what denomination are you a member?,” to which he replies that he is not a member of any denomination, and would not belong to such an organization. Then the person will usually ask: “What’s wrong with denominationalism?”

There are many things wrong with denominations, any of which things make membership in any of them impossible as long as one abides “**in the doctrine of Christ**” (2 John. 9-10). Let us thoughtfully consider a few things wrong with them.

### NOT AUTHORIZED BY CHRIST

Jesus promised to build His church (Mat. 16:18), and consequently did build it in A. D. 33 (Acts 2). More than 500 years after the Lord established His church the first denomination, the Catholic Church, came into existence in A. D. 606 with Boniface III as the first pope. Crystallizing into its present form at that time, it exists today as the mother of all denominations. Jesus did not build denominations; He built His church. Denominations were started by teaching and practicing things not found in the gospel of Christ. Therefore, denominations are neither authorized nor sanctioned by the Lord. They are plants which the “**Heavenly Father hath not planted,**” and “**shall be rooted up**” (Mat. 15:13).

### FOSTERS RELIGIOUS DIVISION

The religious world is divided into sects and parties with at least 260 different denominations (*Far more today than that—Editor*) in America alone, each claiming to be the church of Christ or a denomination of the church of Christ. Yet, they contradict themselves as well as each other in much of their teaching (2 John 9-11; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 3:9-10). God is opposed to such discord (Pro. 6:16-19; 1 Cor. 14:33). Jesus prayed for unity among believers (John 17:19-22). The apostle Paul pleaded for unity and condemned division (1 Cor. 1:10-12; Eph. 4:3-5). But denominations say that unity is impossible and thank God for division, “for the many different ways to heaven” (See Mat. 7:13-14; John 14:6; Acts 16:17; Heb. 10:19-20). Such division is a prolific cause of unbelief (John 17). After observing the divided state of religion some have concluded that if the Bible is responsible for such condition they want no part of it. To be a member of a denomination is to help promote such sinful conditions.

### UNSCRIPTURAL TEACHING AND PRACTICE

Denominations teach and practice many things not authorized in the Will of Christ, and exclude many things commanded in the New Testament. (Deu. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19).

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(1) They reject God’s plan of salvation, and teach “salvation by faith only” (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21). (2) They refuse to follow the apostolic example to eat the Lord’s Supper every first day of the week. (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:33). (3) Mechanical music has been added to their worship without divine authority. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). (4) Their organization and government are without divine authority, being ruled by majority vote and/or unscriptural officers (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). (5) They encourage people to join the church of their choice whereas the Lord adds all the saved to the church of His choice (Acts 2:41-47). (6) Each sect has its own man-made creed or rules of faith and practice, when in fact the Bible is an all-sufficient guide in religion (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3).

### **ANOTHER RELIGION**

The church of Christ, as spoken of in the universal sense, embraces all children of God everywhere (Mat. 16:18; 1 Tim. 3:15). When it is referred to in the local sense it is applied to a congregation in a local community. (See 1 Cor. 1:1-2; Gal. 1 ; Rev. 1). In the plural sense it refers to a group of churches in a certain area (Rom. 16:16). These were not denominations; they were a part of the church or body of Christ, and were all alike in doctrine, name, faith, worship

and practice.

A denomination is a religious body larger than a local New Testament church, yet smaller than the body or church of Christ. Hence, no denomination is a part of the church built by Christ. No one can become a member of a denomination while following the Bible; he must either do more or less than the Lord requires of him in becoming a Christian and a member of His church.

Membership in a denomination is not necessary in order to be a Christian and go to heaven. This fact is admitted by denominational authorities. However, in order to practice the religion—the system of faith and worship set forth in the New Testament—one must be a member of the church of the Lord. Therefore, denominations are not part of the church of Christ; they are not Christianity, but another religion. Since denominationalism began and exists today without divine authority, it is contrary to and in competition with Christianity, and is an enemy of the church Jesus purchased with his own blood (Acts 20 :28)

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