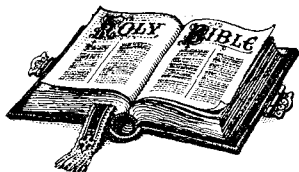


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16.

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IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST A DENOMINATION?

With unrelenting frequency, it is asserted that the church of Christ is a denomination. It is often phrased in this way. "They say they are not a denomination, but they are, anyway." Because of these unfounded assertions we would like to ask: If the church of Christ is a denomination, why is it?

We are not using the expression, "church of Christ," in a denominational sense to refer to the Church of Christ denomination, but to refer to the church belonging to Christ—the church Christ founded (Matthew 16:18), purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28), and of which He is the head. (Eph. 1:22-23). We are referring to Christ's spiritual body, which is also called "the church of God," (1 Cor. 1:2), and the church of the firstborn. (Heb 12:23).

We are referring to that church which had its beginning at Jerusalem on the Pentecost of Acts 2. Was that church a denomination? If so, what was its denominational name? Since all will admit that it was not a denomination (none of the denominations were started that early), if a church today is just like that one in name, doctrine, organization, worship, and practice, would it be a denomination? If so, why? Remember, Christ established this church through His inspired apostles, and they were members of it. Were the apostles members of denominational bodies? If so, to what denomination did Peter, Paul, James, John, the 3,000 of Acts 2, Cornelius, The Eunuch, Lydia, the jailor and the Corinthians belong? Were they members of the body of Christ? If they were not

members of any demonination, why cannot we be the same?

What did the 3,000, the Eunuch, Saul, Cornelius, Lydia, and others do to become members? They all believed, repented, and were baptized. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-41; 8:36-39; 9:1-17; 10:1-48; 16:30-34; Romans 6:1-7; Gal. 3:26-27). If we do the same things they did of what church would we be members? Would we not be exactly what they were? After these New Testament examples believed, repented and were baptized in water for the remission of their sins, the Lord added them to the church, (Acts 2:47), not to a denomination, but to His church. If several today would become what they were, would it be possible for them to continue to meet and worship according to the New Testament without joining any denomination? If they did, what denomination would they constitute? Would not they be simple Christians and members of the body of Christ? That is exactly what the church of Christ is—a group of baptized, penitent believers who have refused to join any denomination because the New Testament condemns division, and denominationalism is division. (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10-13).

WHAT MAKES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST A DENOMINATION, AS MANY ASSERT IT IS? **Does it. have a denominational name?** Will anyone be so bold as to say the designations, "church of Christ," "church of God," etc., are denominational names? These are used in the Scriptures. (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:22; Romans 16:16).

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EDITORIAL———

"And When He Had Given Thanks"

Jesus Christ instituted "the Lord's supper" during his personal ministry on earth. It was instituted the night in which he was betrayed.

Bread (no doubt, it was unleavened bread) and **the cup** (i.e., "the fruit of the vine") were the elements the Lord used when he instituted the supper.

Disciples of Christ were told to "eat" and "drink" in "remembrance" of Christ. In eating and drinking (in the supper) one shows "the Lord's death till he comes." In observing the supper in "a worthy manner," one "discerns the Lord's body."

There are some brethren who insist on others saying a formula ("a set form of words for use in any ceremony"—WEBSTER), when offering thanks for the bread and fruit of the vine. Usually these brethren insist that the one who is leading in the giving of thanks **must say** with reference to the bread, "This is the body of Christ" or "Christ said, take, eat, this is my body" or some similar statement. They object if one says, "This bread represents (or symbolizes or typifies) the body of Christ." With reference to "the cup," these brethren insist that while giving thanks that one **must say**, "This cup is the blood of Christ" or "Christ said, This is the blood of the New Testament" or some similar statement. They object if one says, "This cup represents (or symbolizes or typifies) the blood of Christ."

With these brethren their "view" seems to be a matter of faith. If one does not say their "formula," he has sinned, in their judgment. They insist that "we should say what Jesus said when he gave thanks."

Without doubt, the brethren described in the preceding paragraphs who insist on others saying "a formula" are either ignorant of God's Word on the matter under consideration or they are willfully perverting the truth and are making laws where God has not done so.

PLEASE READ THESE SCRIPTURES

1. MATTHEW 26:26-29 SAYS: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, AND BLESSED IT, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, And he took the cup, and GAVE THANKS, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

2. MARK 14:22-25 SAYS: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, AND BLESSED, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

3. LUKE 22:17-20 SAYS: "And he took the cup, AND GAVE THANKS, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, AND GAVE THANKS, and brake it, and gave unto them saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

4. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:24-25 SAYS: "AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, WHEN HE HAD SUPPED, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

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ABUSE OF SCRIPTURE

The Apostle Peter speaks of those “who wrest Scriptures unto their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:16). To wrest something from the hands of another is to take hold of it violently and by twisting and turning it to take it from him. To wrest the Scripture is to violently lift a passage from its legitimate context and apply it in a sense never intended by Inspiration. Another way of wresting the Scripture is by pressing an obvious figure of speech beyond its legitimate bounds. No figurative expression is intended but to illustrate a single principle, fact, or lesson. To extend the figure beyond this limit is a misuse and abuse of Sacred Revelation. Only such likenesses as have materiality relative to the point of emphasis may legitimately be regarded as being a part of the revelation of truth. It is interesting to observe also that no fact of Divine Revelation is dependent wholly on a figure of speech. Figures of speech but illustrate facts of the revealed will of God that are elsewhere expressed in plain, unfigurative language. Yet, whole systems of doctrines in the religious world are based on arbitrary extensions of figures of speech beyond their legitimate bounds. John 3:5 has been accorded this treatment by millions. Rev. 20:1-6 has been dealt with

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THE HILL-SUTTON DEBATE

A new year has gotten well under way and we are still waiting for the “elders” of the West Hobbs St. church and **Albert Hill** to **honor** their agreement to re-schedule the HILL- SUTTON DEBATE. It has been more than **22 months** since they made the agreement.

In December, 1975 we **challenged Albert Hill** to get some other “elders” to take West Hobbs Street’s place if they are the reason the HILL-SUTTON DEBATE has not been re-scheduled. However, as of now, we have **not** received any response whatsoever from **Albert Hill**—except **silence!** It is still hard for me to accept the idea that **Albert Hill** will not re-schedule the debate. Yes, we are still waiting.

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after the same fashion. Let us understand figurative passages in the light of plain, unfigurative passages. **Let us not interpret plain passages in the light of figurative passages!** Mr. Fuller once wrote, “Grant that I may never rack a Scripture simile beyond the true intent thereof, lest, instead of sucking milk, I squeeze blood out of it.” (**The New Dictionary of Thoughts.**)

---James W. Adams in GOSPEL VISITOR
January 30, 1964

Sentence Sermons

If you stretch the truth, don't be surprised if it snaps.

The end never justifies meanness.

He that lieth down with dogs shall rise up with fleas —Benjamin Franklin

No amount of riches can atone for poverty of character.

The man who is rowing the boat, has no time to rock it.

Truth loses some battles, but it never loses a war.

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