

Prayer List

Judy
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

www.pinolechurchofchrist.com

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This Week's Question:

What king's decree for extermination caused the Jews to weep?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Lystra - Acts 14:19

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The Unity in Christ

by Roy E. Cogdill

I was riding on a train across the country a few years ago, going somewhere to hold a meeting, and happened to sit down beside a man who was a traveling salesman. I soon found what he sold, and he soon found out what I preached. He asked me what kind of preacher I was. Resisting the temptation to give him Brother Srygley's classic answer that "I'm a plumb good one," I told him I was simply a gospel preacher. He looked rather puzzled, and then said, "What church do you preach for?" I told him that I was a member of the church of Christ. He was still puzzled, and said, "I know, but which church of Christ do you preach for?"

Then it was my turn to be puzzled. Which church of Christ? How is one going to answer that question? The Bible says there is "one body" (Eph. 4:4), and that "one body" is the church. (Col. 1:18, 24) The concept generally held by the religious world on this question is confusing indeed. Catholicism does declare there is one body, a universal church, but insists that that one body has two heads — one in heaven, Christ, and one on the earth, the pope. The Protestant churches insist there is but one head, Christ, but contend there are some three hundred bodies attached to that single head. Of course neither Catholicism nor Protestantism presents the New Testament picture of the church. The Bible says there is one body, and that Christ is the head. The church that Jesus built is the one body; the head of that body is Christ himself.

When my traveling salesman friend asked me "which church of Christ" I preached for, I recalled something I had read somewhere about that kind of question, so I asked him, "Do you believe in Christ?" He replied that he did. "Which Christ do you believe in?" I asked. "Oh," said he, "there is but one Christ." "How do you know?" I asked. "The Bible says so," he replied. I asked him where such a statement was found. He couldn't remember, but he knew it was there. I told him he ought to find the passage, for the very same passage that tells him of the one Christ will inform him also that there is but one body. Christ is not divided in body; he does not have three hundred bodies; neither does his single body have two heads — one in heaven, one on earth.

Christ is not divided in body; neither is he divided in message. Nor yet is he divided in name. Right here is one prolific source of division and discord among religious people. It is generally held that one name in religion is as good as another. That simply is not so. We all recognize that it is not so in business or in society. No man wants his children or his wife wearing some other man's name. Business concerns spend millions of dollars in advertising and emphasizing some particular "name," and even go to law to protect that name from infringement or misuse. The banks will honor a check bearing one name, but will pay not one red cent on the same check if it happens to have some other name on it. These things are so simple that we all just take them for granted.

The Bible says that the name of Christ is above every name. (Phil. 2:9) No name is as good as the name of Christ. That is what God himself declares about it. Whatever the Christian does, in word or in deed, is to be done in the name of Christ. (Col. 8:17) Again, it was Peter who declared that "in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) When the Corinthian brethren were calling themselves after Paul, Cephas, or Apollos, Paul wrote to them, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" (I Cor. 1:13) The point is that since Paul had not died for them, and since they had not been baptized in the name of Paul, they should not wear his name. Certainly that same teaching would apply to any other name of man. Why should men wear the

name of John the Baptist? Was John crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of John? Or what about Martin Luther? Was Luther crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Luther?

The name of Christ is the only name Christ's followers should wear. That is Paul's argument. There is no answer men can make to it. Every man who wears some name religiously other than the name of Christ is simply living in rebellion to the plain teaching of God's word. Christ is not divided in name, any more than he is in doctrine, in body, or in will. Christ's church was built after the divine pattern. He has but one church on the earth; he recognizes but one name for those who are members of that church. Peter wrote, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." (I Peter 4:16) That is the name Christ's followers wore in the days of the apostles. That is the name which was given them "by the mouth of the Lord," and by which they were known as God's people. "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." (Acts 11:26) The Lord had no institution for them save his body; he had no name for them save his own.

If men today would but follow the simple New Testament plan for unity in Christ, the divisions which are everywhere in evidence would soon disappear. It is by wearing human names, following human doctrines, belonging to man-made religious organizations that divisions are perpetuated. When men are content to wear the name of Christ, be satisfied with the church, his body, walk in his teaching, and be submissive to his will, there will be unity in all questions of a religious nature. Divisions are contrary to the will of God; they are a continuing affront to His authority. No man who loves the Lord will continue to give his sanction and his approval to such. - Gospel Guardian, 1955