

SUMMARY: The Churches of Christ have had a generally negative assessment from other churches in the past. Today it more unknown by other churches.

THE OLD LOG HOUSE, A HISTORY & DEFENSE OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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THE CAMPBELLITES

This denomination calls itself the "Christian Church"; but it has no right to assume such a name. What would be thought of a political organization that would assume the name "Honest Party," or "Patriotic Party"? The world would laugh it to scorn. But such a thing would not be more ridiculous than for Campbellites to assume the name "Christian Church." If the name has any significance, the meaning is, this Church - the "Christian Church" - is the Church of Christ, and no other is! Who ever heard of such arrogance?

When the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized, there were no Campbellites; but if there had been, there is not the most remote probability that their claims would have been seriously considered. Alexander Campbell, of Virginia, was the founder of this sect; and for a number of years, was a minister in the Baptist Church. He, however, was excluded from the Church; after which he organized what is now known as the Campbellite Church.

As to the system of doctrines to which they adhere, it is exceedingly difficult, on many points, to tell; for they have no written Creed - no book which gives their doctrines in a systematic form. They boast that their "Creed" is the Bible; but if that be true, why is it that we have such a variety of teachings among the membership of that Church? If the Bible is their Creed, and they all understand it as well as they profess to, why is it that they are not a unit on doctrine and usage? Everyone, however, who has investigated the matter, knows that no such unity of sentiment exists. The remark is not made in an irreverent spirit,

but we could have very little respect for the Bible, if we thought that the vagaries and contradictions of Campbellism were taught in it. The truth is, that Church, upon the whole, is a singular affair. Every man preaches who wishes to do so; and, as the denomination has no "written Creed," everyone, it seems, makes his own theological system! Who, for instance, knows the sentiments of that Church, as a whole, in regard to the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, the sacred Scriptures, the Atonement, the sacrament of the Supper, Predestination, Repentance, Faith, Regeneration, Creation, Providence, Fall of Man, Depravity, etc.? No one on earth! They do not know themselves! The Bible is their Creed, yet no human being can tell what the Church, as a whole, understands the Bible to teach upon the great and vital points just mentioned. Even political parties are ashamed to go before the world without a declaration of principles - a written platform or Creed, upon which they as parties stand. What would be thought of a political organization that would say, "the Constitution is

our Creed?" Would not all other political parties say the same? Most assuredly they would. The party, therefore, that claims the Constitution as its platform, must tell the world what it understands the Constitution to teach. Then, when a Church says the Bible is its Creed, have we not a right to ask that Church what it understands the Bible to teach upon the great and fundamental doctrines of our religion? Away, then, with such a subterfuge as the Campbellites resort to upon the subject of Creeds!

On the mode and design of water baptism, there is, perhaps, greater unity in that Church than upon any other two subjects. They recognize no mode, judging from their practice, except immersion. Now, in a previous chapter, we examined all the cases of water baptism reported in detail in the New Testament, and we failed to find a single case where immersion was probable. In regard to the design of water baptism, the Campbellites teach, judging from their plan of "making disciples," that baptism is for the remission of sins; that is, there is no remission of sins without baptism - baptisms, too, by immersion! How can any one believe such a doctrine? Does any one really believe it, or is it a delusion? / It is the soul of man that is depraved; how, then, in the name of reason and common sense, can an external ordinance, cleanse and purify an internal nature - a nature which it cannot, by any possibility, reach? But, perhaps some one is ready to say, the water does not purify, it is the Holy Spirit operating through the water that does the cleansing, the purifying. Is that so? And is it impossible for sins to be pardoned, except through the agency of water baptism? Cannot the Holy Ghost reach the soul in conversion except through water? Who can believe such an absurdity? (Setting up the straw man - that baptism itself regenerates you and restricts God)

Were none saved during the Old Testament dispensation? If so, how? Not by the operation of the Holy Ghost through water baptism, for we all know that, until after the birth of Christ, water baptism had not been instituted. Let the reader examine with care what Paul says upon this subject in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. It is there said to be by faith. Faith, then, and not water baptism, was the medium through which the Holy Ghost purified the hearts of all who were saved before the birth of Christ. For about four thousand years, therefore, God saved sinners without water baptism. He is an unchangeable Being - the same yesterday, today, and forever (stock response - used to prove things must remain same). The method of saving sinners, therefore, has never been changed. How could it be changed? The relation between God and the sinner is the same today that it was from the hour the promise was made: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." In order, however, that the reader may see how absurd this doctrine of "salvation by water" is, we can bring attention to the following points:

1. It would make the salvation of the sinner depend upon man. If the sinner can have his sins pardoned only through the agency of water baptism, then he cannot be saved unless

some one will baptize. How can he? He cannot baptize himself; he is therefore dependent upon man for salvation. (Naaman did, II Kings 5:14)

2. It, according to the Campbellite Church, confines the Holy Ghost to a certain mode - to a particular method of administering baptism. That Church tells us that there is no baptism except immersion. This doctrine, then, not only confines the operations of the Holy Ghost in regeneration, to water, but to immersion in water. Now, to sustain their theory, they must prove two things: first, that the Holy Ghost does not renovate the heart except through water baptism; second, that the only mode of baptism authorized is by immersion. But they cannot, if it would save their souls, prove either one of these propositions. (Teaching Acts 2:38 is not wrong, his logic is)

3. If this doctrine be true, then salvation is by works. If the heart can be regenerated only through the ordinance of baptism, then how can the sinner be saved without works - works performed by the minister and by himself. But Paul says, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." Again, says he, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Also, the same apostle says: Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." (His verse is Gal. 3:16, See James 2:14-26, exp. 17, 24, 26, signing a million-dollar check).

4. This doctrine positively contradicts the Bible. In the gospel by John, chapter 3., verse 18, we have the following: "He that believeth on him (Christ) is not condemned." Now, every sinner in his natural state is condemned; but, according to this scripture, when he "believes on Christ," he is not condemned"; that is, his sins are pardoned - pardoned, too, because he believes. Here we have the declaration of Christ himself that he bestows pardon because of faith - does not even mention baptism. Again, verse 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." The Savior does not say, he that believeth may or shall have everlasting life if he will be baptized by immersion; not a word of it, but "he that believeth" HATH everlasting life - has it as soon as he believes. In chapter 6, verses 35, 40, of the same gospel, we have these words: And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. Could language be stronger? "Everlasting life"; and yet not one word about baptism! (aggregate should be considered, great commission on Matthew 28:18-20 requires baptism and obedience, but not belief. Belief assumes following thru.)

Again, when the convicted, trembling jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Remember, Paul did not say, "Be baptized, and thou shalt be saved," not a word of it; but, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Now, if water baptism was necessary to the jailer's salvation, then Paul misled him - did not tell him the truth. But who will dare accuse Paul of such a deed? (aggregate)

The case of Cornelius is, if possible, still stronger against the doctrine of salvation by water. Turn to Acts, chapter 10, and read it with care. It will there be seen that Peter did not baptize any one until after "the Holy Ghost fell upon all them which heard the word"; until, in other words, their sins had been pardoned. The exact language is, "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Scores of just such passages could be produced, but these are sufficient. (Does receiving the Holy Ghost say that they were already saved, or was it a sign?)

Our Campbellite friends, however, will say that we have omitted some of their strong texts. One of them is as follows (John 3:5): "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. In this verse, the Savior is endeavoring to explain to Nicodemus how the "new birth" is brought about. The "water" spoken of could not possibly refer to Christian baptism; even Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Campbellite Church, admits that at the time this language was used. Christian baptism was not in existence. (John's baptism was and Jesus was baptized)! The Savior, therefore, could not have intended to try to explain a matter to Nicodemus by referring to something which Nicodemus did not understand. (Nicodemus did not understand John 3:9) But he did expect Nicodemus to understand him; for he says to him, "Art thou a master (teacher) of Israel, and knowest not these things? He thought it strange that Nicodemus should be a teacher of the Old Testament, and yet be ignorant of the matter which he was trying to explain to him. It is therefore evident that the doctrine taught by the Savior, is taught in the Old Testament, else he would not have reprov'd Nicodemus for not understanding it. Now, no one will say that water baptism, for the remission of sins, is taught in the Old Testament. Hence, such could not have been the meaning of the Savior. But the doctrine of a change of heart (regeneration) is taught in the Old Testament. In Ezekiel, we read (chapter 36:26: new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart ~our flesh," etc. Again, David prayed (Psa. 51: 10); "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. The Savior was then simply teaching the necessity of a "new heart" by the purifying power of the Holy Ghost. We, then, are not to understand by the water and the Spirit, in the verse referred to, two different things; for it is evidently a form of expression signifying the cleansing or purifying power of the Holy Spirit under the similitude of water. In Matt. 3: 11, it is said: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Here the Holy Ghost and fire do not mean two things, but one, viz.: the Holy Ghost under the similitude of fire, refining and purifying the whole. There is, therefore, nothing in this verse to sustain the doctrine of "water baptism for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:3-4 indicated they were "rested on" by fire

and received the Holy Spirit similarly as Jesus taught the water and spirit) (Is teaching that we teach water saves)

Let us next examine another passage upon which our Campbellite friends so confidently rely. It reads as follows (Acts 2:38): "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. These words were spoken by Peter. They constitute a part, too, of that ever memorable sermon preached by him on the day of Pentecost. In that discourse, he was exceedingly severe upon the Jews, because they had not only rejected Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, but "had by wicked hands" crucified him. Peter's words were so pointed and so true, that the Jews were "pricked in the heart." In their deep sorrow and anguish, they asked, "What shall we do?" Peter then used the language which has been quoted.

Let us briefly look at the facts in the case. The Jews believed in the Father and in the Holy Ghost; but had rejected Christ as the Savior. Their great sin, therefore, was in refusing to receive Christ as the promised Messiah. Peter, however, knew that there was no possible way to be saved except by receiving and relying upon Christ for salvation. (Did God change?) The burden of his sermon was on this point. The Jews, as he knew, needed light upon this subject. He, therefore, said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, etc., which was equivalent to saying, "You cannot be saved without Christ; he is your only hope for salvation; and you must publicly acknowledge him in your baptism by having his name in the baptismal formula, thereby showing that you now receive him and trust him, though you once rejected him. (He says must! Is he now teaching Acts: 2:38?).

There are, therefore, only two points in the case - a repentance and a baptism looking to Christ alone for their efficacy. Without these, Peter tells them that the whole thing will amount to nothing - can be no remission of sins - no receiving of the Holy Ghost. Now, if Peter had intended to teach that water baptism was to save them, he would certainly have insisted that it should be administered in the regular form - would have said "Repent, and be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"; but he said no such thing, for the simple reason that he was not discussing the efficacy of water baptism. All that he meant, therefore, was, "repent of your sins," relying on Christ for salvation; and, in receiving the ordinance of baptism, see to it that the name of Christ, as well as the name of the Father and the Holy Ghost is in it, else the whole thing - your repentance and baptism - will be worthless; will secure no "remission of sin," or "gift of the Holy Ghost." Then where, in this passage, do we find the doctrine taught by the Campbellite Church? In the same way, we could prove that the other passages, on which they rely, utterly fail, when properly understood, to teach the doctrine which that Church advocates. (Note he says receive the ordinance of baptism or the whole thing is worthless. He is affirming what the Bible says while beating up the straw man he set up for us)

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Moreover, if this doctrine be true, why did Paul place the estimate which he did upon water baptism? In the first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 1:14-17, he says: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

Now, if sins can be forgiven only by or through water baptism, why did Paul utter the words which have just been quoted? Would he have thanked God that he had baptized such a small number? No, never! What! Thank God that he had instrumentally saved only a few sinners? Yet he certainly did thus rejoice, if there is no remission of sins without baptism! But who can believe such an absurdity? The reason for his comparative indifference upon the subject is fully explained in the seventeenth verse: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Ah! That is it! The great object of his mission was to preach; to induce sinners to become Christians by believing, not by being baptized with water, not in water either, for neither mode could save them, as Paul very well knew. Away, then, with the dogma of baptismal regeneration! (A name for our straw man, I Cor. 3:4-9, Paul didn't save sinners, God did.)

One more brief item will close our criticism upon this denomination. From its origin, it has been a proselytizing Church. Its ministers have gone into other ecclesiastical communions - other Churches - and have done all in their power to unsettle the faith of those belonging thereto. Of a truth may it be said, "They compass land and sea to make one proselyte." (Matt 23:15) To some extent they have succeeded, but whether they have done any good thereby is the question. That they have produced discord, jargons, and "contentions without a cause," there is no doubt. The truth is, like Ishmael of old, "their hand is against every man" - against all who do not agree with them! Such a Church, even if it had been in existence at the time, could not have satisfied the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. (The apostle Paul would have been complimented by this criticism)

JOE GETS TO HEAVEN

Author unknown

When Joe got to Heaven, St. Peter was giving the tour. He passed several groups and asked St. Peter who they were. The first group were having a great time partying and dancing, and St. Peter said that they were the Methodists. He passed a second group who were clapping and singing. When asked who they were, St. Peter said that they were the Baptists. They approached another group who were rather quiet and somber and St. Peter said "shhhh". When Joe asked why, St. Peter replied that those were the members of the church of Christ, and they think that they are the only ones in Heaven.

LIGHT BULB CHANGING BY DENOMINATION

Author unknown

How many Southern Baptists does it take to change a light bulb?

15,738,286 (last count), but they can't agree if it really needs to be changed.

How many televangelists does it take to change a light bulb?

Only 1, but for the message of change to continue to go forth, send in your check today.

How many Mormon missionaries does it take to change a light bulb?

Two. One to bike over to the hardware store and one to do it.

How many Episcopalians does it take to change a light bulb?

Three. One to do it, one to bless the element, and one to pour the sherry.

How many Nazarenes does it take to change a light bulb?

Eleven. One to change and ten to organize the fellowship supper that follows.

How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb?

They're not sure but there is a committee studying the issue.

How many Amish does it take to change a light bulb?

What's a light bulb.

How many Catholics does it take to change a light bulb?

Nine. One to change it and eight to sell raffle tickets on the old one.

How many Jehovah's Witnesses does it take to change a light bulb?

It doesn't matter because you won't let them change it anyway.

How many Methodists does it take to change a light bulb?

Only one, but first they want to make sure no one is offended by the change.

How many members of the church of Christ does it take to change a light bulb?

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Only, one, but if anyone else tries to do it, the light won't work.

Six men washed up on a desert island. Two were Southern Baptist and immediately started a Bible Class and set a goal of 8 in attendance. Two were Catholics and set out to build the Cathedral to the Virgin Mary. Two were from the church of Christ and one established the East End Church of Christ and one established the West End Church of Christ.