

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER NEEDS: **Health**, Revena, & David Lundy, Kenny & Linda Mitchell, Joann & John Johnson, Lisa Maxwell, Alan Johnson, Dennis & Jean Rhodes. **Other:** We need to pray that God will raise up men to aspire to serve as deacons. We need to pray for the leaders of our country, and for those serving in the military. Pray for those saints who are weak and those going through difficult times.

GONE HOME TO BE WITH THE LORD: Our beloved brother, Bill Treadway went home to be with the Lord October 8, 2010. Visitation was on October 9, and the funeral was on October 10. We will miss brother Bill, but we do not sorrow as those who have no hope. We look forward to being with him again and with all the redeemed when our sojourn here is over. Our deepest sympathies go out to the Maxwell family, in their loss.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: None known of at this time.

SINGING EVENING: This song service will be on Sunday evening November 14, at 5:00 pm.

EVANGELISM: For those of the Somerville family who would like to participate in the Bible correspondence course work, we will meet on Sunday November 7 & 21 at 6:00 pm

THE SOMERVILLE SOWER
Is published by the Somerville church of Christ to promote New Testament Christianity, and for the proclamation of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ as a part of its work.

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Schedule of Services
Sunday
Bible class 9:45 a.m.
Morning worship 10:45 a.m.
Evening worship 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday
Bible class 7.00 p.m.

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If you would be interested in a **free** Bible correspondence course, or if you would like a **free** Bible study in your home, or if you have a request for Bible information, please write to the above address or phone one of the above numbers for prompt service.

THE SOMERVILLE SOWER

"The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11)

Volume 7, Issue 11

Date: November 2010

The Names God has Given For His Church

Leroy Brownlow

I. IS THERE ANYTHING IN A NAME

The idea that there is nothing in a name is a prevalent and popular doctrine, in keeping with neither Scripture nor reason.

1. There is so much in a name that God named Adam and Eve. He *"called their name Adam, in the day when they were created"* (Gen. 5:2). There is something in a name or God would not have named them.

2. If there is nothing in a name, explain why God changed Abram's name to "Abraham" and Sarai's name to "Sarah" (Gen. 17:5,15). There is so much in a name that God changed their names.

3. Again, there is so much importance attached to a name that God changed Jacob's name to "Israel" (Gen. 32:27,28). To say that there is nothing in a name is but to reflect upon the wisdom of God and accuse Him of doing foolish and useless acts.

4. Paul condemned human and divisive names by asking, *"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized into the name of Paul?"* (1 Cor. 1:13). Then why take Paul's name or some other man's name? Paul said, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius"- not that he underestimated the importance of baptism - but, *"lest any man should say that you were baptized into my name"* (1 Cor. 1:14,15). If there is nothing in a name why did Paul condemn human names?

5. A name is so meaningful that men name their dogs "Fido" and "Satan," their donkeys, "Rebel" and "Lucifer," and their sons, "James" and "John." If there is nothing in a name, why not reverse the order and name the boys "Fido" and "Lucifer?"

6. If you still doubt that there is something in a name, suppose you call a good American "Judas," "traitor " or "arsonist," or call a truthful man a "liar," or call a

good citizen a "criminal," and it will not take you long to learn that, after all, there is something in a name.

II. WHAT THE CHURCH WAS CALLED

The church has no special name, but is spoken of in several significant appellations. It is called :

1. "**My church**" (Matt. 16:18). Jesus said that; therefore it is Christ's church.
2. "**The church**" (Acts 8:1). The word "church" comes from the Greek word "ekklesia," meaning a group of called-out people. The Lord has but one such group and it is called "the church."
3. "**Church of God**" (1 Cor. 1:2). This shows ownership. For example, the house of Mr. Brown is the house belonging to Mr. Brown.
4. "**Churches of Christ**" (Rom. 16:16). The writer is speaking of the various local churches or congregations. This designates them as belonging to Christ.
5. "**The body of Christ**" (Eph. 4:12). The body which belongs to Christ.
6. "**The church of the living God**" (1 Tim. 3:15). Indicates ownership.
7. "**Church of the firstborn**" (Heb. 12:23). The church of those who first received the gospel of Christ firstborn, or first-fruits.

The members of the churches of Christ speak of the church in scriptural terms. What about other groups? You may see for yourself by looking over the doors of the meeting houses. You will see names not to be found in the Bible. It is strange that people who claim to be religious will wear some name or designation that is foreign to the Bible. Is this not a dishonor to God, Christ and the Bible.

III. WHAT THE MEMBERS WERE CALLED

We find that the members wore several distinctive and significant names, namely:

1. "**Disciples**" (Acts 20:7). This means learners or followers. It is a common noun and needs to be qualified to make known whom they are following. We read of the disciples of John (Matt. 9:14), disciples of the Pharisees (Mk. 2:18), and the disciples of Moses (John 9:28), as well as the disciples of Christ.
2. "**Saints**" (1 Cor. 1:2). Were called this because they were saved from past sins, were holy in life, and were sanctified or set apart by the gospel of Christ.
3. "**Beloved of God**" (Rom. 1:7). The dearly loved of God.
4. "**Brethren**" (1 Cor. 15:6). Shows their relationship to each other. Men can be brethren in the flesh, in clubs, and in orders without being brethren in Christ; but they were brethren in Christ.
5. "**Sons of God**" (Rom. 8:14). They were called this in view of their relationship to God.

and other preachers as "Reverend So-and- So." This would be comical, if it were not so tragic. Even Jesus, while living in the flesh on the earth, refused the title of "Good" (Matt. 19:16,17). Paul began some of his letters in these words: *"Paul a servant of Jesus Christ."* Paul described himself simply as "a servant" or "a bond-servant." But many uninspired preachers of today affix the most sacred and highest terms possible to their names. What a contrast. The desire for high sounding titles grows out of the desire to be exalted. We are reminded of the pertinent words of Jesus: *"Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant."* (Matt. 20:26,27).

2. "Pastor." The minister or evangelist of the church is not a pastor unless he has been appointed to *"the office of a bishop,"* overseer or elder. The New Testament provides for a plurality of bishops, overseers, elders or pastors in each congregation (Acts 14:23). They are to exercise a pastor's or shepherd's watchfulness in protecting the flock. These words are not titles, but are nouns like "rancher," "teacher," "farmer" and "carpenter."

3. "Father." This word is often used as a religious title in direct opposition to the teaching of Christ: *"And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, even He who is in heaven"* (Matt. 23:9). This is speaking of a religious usage rather than a physical relationship, because the Holy Spirit often uses the word "father" in speaking of one's parents. Is it not strange that millions will use a title that is positively forbidden by Christ?

The church of Christ is scriptural in name and language. No man can deny it. It is the belief and practice of the church of Christ to call "Bible things by Bible names." Paul exhorted Timothy to do this, saying, *"Hold the pattern of sound words"* (2 Tim. 1:13). We should avoid the popular tendency to bestow flattering titles, but should rather follow this advice: *"Let me not, I pray you, respect any man's person: neither will I give flattering titles unto any man. For I know not to give flattering titles."* (Job 32 :21,22).

6. "**Children of God**" (1 John 3:1). Shows relationship to God.

7. "**Heirs of God**" (Rom. 8:17). This shows that they are to inherit from God.

8. "**Royal priesthood**" or "priests" (1 Pet. 2:9). Each Christian is a priest in that he can *"offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ,"* the High Priest (1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 8:1,2).

9. "**Christians**" (Acts 11:26). This is a proper noun and needs no qualifying words to make the distinction clear. The name expresses the saved person's relationship to Christ.

(1) Some have tried to minimize the importance of this name, saying that it was used only in derision. But this name was given by divine authority. Isaiah prophesied: *"And the nations [the Gentiles, KJV] shall see Your righteousness, and all kings Your glory ; and You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name"* (Isa. 62:2). They were not to be given this new name until after the Gentiles had been converted or had seen the righteousness of God. In Acts 10 we read of the conversion of the Gentiles: Cornelius and his household. In the next chapter (Acts 11:26) we read, *"the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."* This was a new name and it was given after the Gentiles had seen the righteousness of God. If this is not the new name that was to be given by Jehovah, then tell us what is, please.

(2) After Paul had preached to King Agrippa, the king exclaimed, *"With but little persuasion you would make me a Christian"* (Acts 26:28). This is what Paul tried to get every person to become and be. Reader, the Holy Spirit would not have you to be anything else.

(3) Peter says, *"If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed: but let him glorify God in this name"* (1 Pet. 4:16). We cannot glorify God in this name by wearing some other name. This is a positive command and those who disobey are guilty of sin.

(4) There are many other names under heaven and among men, but read Acts 4 :12 *"And 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."* What an awful warning! Are you willing to heed it?

IV. HYPHENATED CHRISTIANS

I am sure that method and system should be used in the Lord's work, but I am not a Methodist; that we should have bishops (the Greek word being *episcopos*) to oversee the work in a congregation, but I am not an Episcopalian; that we should have elders (the Greek word being *presbuteros*) who are bishops to rule and oversee in the congregation, but I am not a Presbyterian; that each congregation is independ-

ent, but I am not a Congregationalist; that it takes immersion to constitute the act of baptism, but I am not a Baptist; that Christians should be holy but I am not a Holiness; that Christ will come again, but I am not an Adventist; that the church is universal or catholic, but I am not a Catholic. According to some good folk - since I believe in the above facts - I should call myself a Methodist - Episcopalian - Presbyterian - Congregationalist - Baptist - Holiness - Catholic - Christian. A monstrous hyphenation and a rather long name! It is unnecessary, too. We find in the Bible that the disciples were called Christians, but we never read of any person being called some hyphenated Christian. Regardless of what names others wear, I prefer to stick to the Bible and be a Christian only.

V. TESTIMONY OF SPURGEON AND LUTHER

1. Listen to the language of Charles Spurgeon, the most recognized and talented Baptist preacher that ever lived: "I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure, to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ's name endure forever."-Spurgeon Memorial Library, Vol. 1, p. 168.

2. Hear the words of Martin Luther, a man in whose name many people glory : "I pray you to leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. St. Paul would not let any call themselves after Paul, nor of Peter, but of Christ. How then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of God? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions: away with all; and let us call ourselves only Christians after Him from whom our doctrine comes." - The Life of Luther, by Stork, p. 289.

Thus we see that in wearing human names, men displease not only God but the men they attempt to glorify .

VI. SYLLOGISMS

Perhaps it will be plainer if we shall put down some thoughts in the form of premises and then draw the conclusions:

1 Syllogism one:

- (1) The Bible condemns human names (1 Cor. 1:12,13).
- (2) The name "Lutheran " is a human name.
- (3) Therefore, the name "Lutheran" is under condemnation.

2. Syllogism two:

- (1) The Bible teaches that party names are carnal (1 Cor. 3:3,4).
- (2) The name "Methodist" is a party name.

(3) Therefore, the name "Methodist" is carnal.

3. Syllogism three:

- (1) "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).
- (2) The name "Episcopal Church" is not in the word of God.
- (3) Therefore, the name "Episcopal Church " is not of faith.

4. Syllogism four:

- (1) Religious work is to be done in the name of the Lord (Col. 3:17).
- (2) Presbyterians do religious work in the name of Presbyterian.
- (3) Therefore, the Presbyterians are guilty of error.

5. Syllogism five:

- (1) Man is commanded to glorify God in the name Christian. (1 Pet. 4:16).
- (2) Catholics are trying to glorify God in the name "Catholic."
- (3) Therefore, Catholics are in disobedience to command of God.

6. Syllogism six:

- (1) There is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12).
- (2) The name "Baptist" is another name.
- (3) Therefore, there is no salvation in the name "Baptist."

The names in the minor premises are used as examples. Many other names could have been used and the conclusions would have been the same. If the major and minor premises are true - and they are true - the conclusions are true. We plead with the good people of the world to repudiate all human, divisive and unscriptural names. The plea is meeting with success: thousands are giving up the unscriptural for the scriptural.

VII. TITLES

In the long ago the Jews corrupted their speech by using "half the speech of Ashdod " (Neh. 13:23,24). Figuratively speaking, we have much of the language of Ashdod in the world today. Many self-exalting titles are now being used in opposition to the teachings of the Bible.

1. "Reverend." The word reverend is found only one time in the English translation of the Bible; however, it is found many times in the original language. But it is not used as a title for man. For a person to apply this as a title to himself when the Holy Spirit never used the word in this manner is but to be guilty of perverting the Word. There is no mention in the Scriptures of "Reverend Paul," "Right Reverend James" and "The Right Reverend Peter." They looked upon themselves as weak creatures, needing the help of God, and refused "*to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Gal. 6:14). Some preachers speak of Paul as plain Paul, James as just plain James, John as just plain John and Jesus as just Jesus, but speak of themselves