

## OUR NAME.

NEW readers in all parts of the country are constantly inquiring: By what *name* do you call yourselves? Are you 'Primitive Baptists'? Are you 'Missionary Baptists'? Are you 'Universalists'? Are you 'Adventists'? Are you 'Primitive Methodists'? etc., etc. We have several times tried to make clear our position, and now endeavour in a few words again to do so.

We belong to NO *earthly organisation*; hence, if you should name the entire list of sects, we should answer, No, to each and to all. We adhere only to that *heavenly organisation*—'whose names are written in heaven'. (Heb. 12:23; Luke 10:20.) All the *saints* now living, or that have lived during this age, belonged to OUR CHURCH ORGANISATION; such are all ONE church, and there is NO OTHER recognised by the Lord. Hence any earthly organisation which in the least interferes with this union of saints is contrary to the teachings of Scripture and opposed to the Lord's will—'that they may be ONE'. (Jno. 17:11.)

By what name may this Church be called? We answer, By the name of its *founder* and *instituter*—Christ. Hence it is the 'Church of Christ' or 'Church of God', for God founded it on the *Rock* Christ Jesus; or 'Christians', as they were known in early times. (Acts. 11:26; 26:28, and 1 Pet. 4:16.) But because Paul and the other disciples were not followers of Calvin's teachings, therefore they were not called Calvinists; because they were not followers of Luther's teachings and example, therefore they were not called Lutherans; but because they followed the ONE example and teachings of CHRIST only, therefore they gladly acknowledged it when they were called 'Christians'.

What think you, do we not occupy the *only ground of union*? Suppose that all man-made creeds, and forms, and prayer-books, and liturgies, and names were laid aside, or that all Christians met in the one name of Christ, and in earnest simplicity studied HIS words under the direction of God's Spirit and the explanations furnished in the Apostle's writings, would there long be serious differences even of opinion in the Church?

Was not that old saint, John Bunyan, who lay for years a prisoner in jail in Bedford, England, because he preached the doctrines of Jesus and the Apostles, in opposition to certain doctrines of the Episcopal Church, right when he said: 'Since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you I would be, and hope I am, a Christian; and choose if God should count me worthy, to be called a Christian, a believer, or other such name which is approved by the Holy Ghost. And as for those faction (or sect) titles of Anabaptist, Presbyterian, Independent, or the like, I conclude that they came neither from Antioch, nor from Jerusalem, but from Hell and Babylon, for they tend to divisions: you may know them by their fruit'.

But is it asked, Was not Bunyan a Baptist? We answer, yes, in the same manner that we are Baptist. He was a 'Christian' and because in God's Word he was taught immersion, or baptism, and not sprinkling, and because he practised with other humble saints his, faith, therefore by Episcopalians or the worldly such were, in *derision*, termed 'Baptists', &c. So some now say that we are Baptists because we believe in the doctrine of baptism. Some incline to call us Calvinists because we believe what we find taught in Scripture, that the Church is elect according to the foreknowledge of God *through* sanctification of spirit and belief of the truth. (1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Thes. 2:13.) Some call us Adventists because we find taught in the Scriptures, and therefore believe, that the heavens received Jesus, *only until* the restitution of all things'. And so, by whatsoever names men may *call us*, it matters not to us; we acknowledge none other name than 'the only name *given* under heaven and among men'—Jesus Christ. We call ourselves simply CHRISTIANS and we raise no fence to separate from us any who believe in the foundation stone of our building mentioned by Paul: 'That Christ died for *our sins* according to the Scriptures'; and those for whom this is not broad enough have no right to the name Christian.

—ZION'S WATCH TOWER, February, 1884.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

*Question.* Please let me know by what name you people call yourselves? What denomination?

*Answer.* We are strictly unsectarian, and consequently recognise no sectarian name, believing with Paul, (read 1 Cor. 3:1-4) that where one saith I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, or I am a Baptist, or I a Methodist, etc., it is an evidence of *carnality*, and consequently in opposition to the Spirit of Christ. Did Paul or Apollos die for us? If so, let us call ourselves theirs. Were we baptised into the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, or other denominational churches? If so, we *are* members of it, and should be properly recognised by those names. But if we were baptised into the one body or church of which Jesus is the one and only Head, then we are *members* in particular of his body, and the only name appropriate would be his; Scripturally called the 'Church of Christ', 'Christians', 'Church of the first born', and such like general names. Again we would remark that ours is the only Scriptural basis of Christian *union*, viz.: We have no creed (fence) to bind us together or to keep others out of our company. The Bible is our only *standard*, and its teachings our only *creed*, and recognising the progressive character of the unfolding of Scriptural truths, we are ready and prepared to add to or modify our *creed* (faith—belief) as we get increase of light from our *Standard*.

We are in fellowship with all Christians in whom we can recognise the Spirit of Christ, and especially with those who recognise the Bible as the only standard. We do not require, therefore, that all shall see, just as we do in order to be called Christians; realising that growth in both grace and knowledge is a gradual process. Nor do we see reason to expect that any but the *watchmen* of Zion will 'see eye to eye' (Isa. 52:8) until that which is perfect is come, when that which is in part shall be done away. (1 Cor. 13:10.)

If all Christians were to thus free themselves of prescribed creeds, and study the Word of God without denominational bias, truth and knowledge and *real* Christian fellowship and unity, would result. The Spirit of the Head would pervade the

unfettered members of the body, and sectarian pride would vanish. Thus we believe, thus we practice, and thus we teach. It becomes our duty to denounce sectarianism and the God-dishonouring creeds of men which, while contradicting each other, unite in misrepresenting God's Word and character. Because these are *bonds* which hinder God's children from rendering him the homage due unto his name, hinder their *knowing* him, hinder their worshipping in *spirit* and in *truth*, and also hinder them from enjoying that joy and peace which their Father designed they should have. We 'cry aloud and spare not'.

Because we believe sectarianism to be a snare of the devil, and in opposition both to God and his saints, therefore we labour to set them free, and bring them into the liberty of Christ. That this has been so accounted before the present day by holy men of God, we quote you from the words of JOHN BUNYAN, whose name is a household word, and one of whose books has been more read than any other ever written except the Bible—'Pilgrim's Progress.' He wrote:—

'Since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you I would be, and hope I am, a Christian; and choose, if God should count me worthy, to be called a Christian, a believer, or other such name which is approved by the Holy Ghost. And as for those factious (or sect) titles of Anabaptist, Presbyterian, Independent, or the like, I conclude that they came neither from Antioch nor from Jerusalem, but from Hell and Babylon, for they tend to divisions: you may know them by their fruits'.

JOHN BUNYAN.

John Bunyan was a Christian whose creed was the Bible (He was commonly *called* a 'Baptist', though, then, and in a few Baptist churches now, the Bible is the only written confession of faith). He was imprisoned in Bedford Jail by the English Church in 1660, because he thus believed. It was while there imprisoned that he wrote of 'Pilgrim'.

—ZION'S WATCH TOWER, April, 1882; [R344: page 8].

**Question.** You say that you are not a sect—that you claim no name but that of Christ, and object not to be called Christians, though not of the denomination so called. But are you not as much of a sect as any of the others, only without a name and without a limited and written creed?

**Answer.** No, the word *sect* means a *division*, or a separation.\* Every *sect* separates itself from all other Christians by a doctrinal fence or creed. Any who would be of them must go inside *their pen*, believe what they believe, deny what they deny, and be called by their sectarian name. This practice has become so common that many suppose it to be God's arrangement; and any one found outside all of these numerous pens, is supposed an *enemy* of God and of truth.

We are opposed to these *pens*, but love the many children of God, whose growth in grace, and *knowledge*, and love, is hindered by these restraints. We are opposed to these sectarian pens, because they are not of Jesus, nor of the apostles, but of Satan and Anti-Christ. They prevent the Lord's sheep from feeding in the green pastures of truth which the true shepherd has provided.

We stand outside of all these fences and recognise the Lord's sheep, whether in or out of the nominal churches, as our brethren and sisters; and we urge all in the name of our Master to come out—jump the fence or break it down, and come out into the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled with any yoke of bondage. Thus free, we find his yoke easy and our burden light. If all denominational lines and fences and names were obliterated, all Christians would stand just where we stand now, each taught of God through his Word, and each one a *brother* who exhibits the Spirit of the Head.

All of these sects are condemned to destruction, and the hour of their downfall has come. It will cause pain and distress to all who are worshipping and serving these systems of men, instead of God;<sup>†</sup> but it

will be a blessing in disguise, for thus they will be liberated and brought to a refreshing knowledge of God. 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins', and that ye receive not of her plagues'.—Rev. 18:4.

Thus you see we are not a sect, and that if all Christians would do as we do in this matter, all sects (divisions) would disappear, and we would be all one in Christ. Soon under the lead of one Master and Teacher, Jesus, we should all come to see things from his standpoint.

—ZION'S WATCH TOWER, October, 1882; [R412: page 8].

**Question.** 'Would not an earnest, aggressive organisation (or sect), built upon scriptural lines, be the best means of spreading and publishing the real Good Tidings? We must have fellowship and sympathy. Union is strength. It is not the skirmishers that win the battle, but the disciplined and solid battalions'.

**Answer.** We believe that a visible organisation, and the adopting of some particular name, would tend to increase our numbers and make us appear more respectable in the estimation of the world. The natural man can see that a visibly organised body, with a definite purpose, is a thing of more or less power; therefore, *they esteem* the various organisations, from which we have come out, in obedience to the Master's call. But the natural man cannot understand how a company of people, with no organisation which they can see, is ever going to accomplish anything. As they look upon us, they regard us simply as a few scattered skirmishers—a 'peculiar people'—with very peculiar ideas and hopes, but not worthy of special notice.

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wrong with Pastor Russell and his advice, and he is a revered servant (that "faithful and wise servant"), but the dead Pastor Russell could be revived, as it were, and used instead of God's Word. There is this possibility among Bible Students in the Harvest period. The danger is that we could say, "Thus saith Pastor Russell this" and "Thus saith Pastor Russell that." Now we have nothing against Pastor Russell at all. He himself said to "*prove* all things," and his counsel has always been consistent along this line. However, the Adversary would like us to get away from *God's Word*, which is the very *foundation of our faith*. Any servant of the Lord is merely an index finger pointing to God's Word, helping to clarify what it says. The Bible is the real authority. We have studied the Pastor's writings and have as much respect for him as many others, but we speak bluntly here because the worship of man is a technique of the Devil.'—[www.revelation-research.org](http://www.revelation-research.org)

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\* See article: 'OUR SECT', in ZION'S WATCH TOWER, October, 1883; [R537: page 3].

<sup>†</sup> Bro. Frank Shallieu's *New Testament Studies* [Jude 9], states the following, in part: '...verse 9 gives insight into the character of Satan and how he thinks. The Adversary very much wanted the body of Moses to make it an object of veneration... What was wrong was that the Adversary would have used him as a fetish or as an object of veneration and thus have taken the people's minds away from what the prophets (God's Word) had to say. Even today a danger exists along this line. There is nothing

But, though it is impossible for the natural man to see our organisation, because he cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God, we trust that you can see that the true Church is most effectually organised, and in the best possible working order. (See the plan of our organisation, as stated in October [1882] issue, under the caption 'The Ekklesia'.<sup>+</sup> The Apostle Paul urges all to unity of faith and purpose (Phil. 3:15, 16—*Diaglott.*) All led by the *same Spirit* may and do come to a knowledge of the *same truth*. Under our Captain, all the truly sanctified, however few or far separated in person, are closely united by the Spirit of Christ, in faith, hope and love; and, in following the Master's command, are moving in solid battalions for the accomplishment of his purposes. But, bear in mind, God is not dependent upon numbers (See Judges 7, as an illustration).

Recognising this organisation, which is of the Spirit, and desiring no assimilation whatever with the worldly, who cannot see or understand it, we are quite willing to bear the reproach of a peculiar people. We always refuse to be called by any other name than that of our Head—Christians—continually claiming that there can be no division among those continually led by his Spirit and example as made known through his Word.

We disown none of our Lord's dear children. The weakest child of the household of faith (in Christ, our Redeemer) we gladly recognise as our brother. Some, in ignorance of their privilege of the communion of saints, are mixed with the various worldly organisations, to their great detriment. Though we cannot follow them there, we gladly welcome them when they come among us. Wherever we have hope of finding any such, in the various nominal Churches, etc., we tell them the 'good tidings of great joy', and, by word and example, say, 'Come out from among them (the worldly, though professing Christians) and be ye separate'. How could we deliver this message if we were not obeying it? We have unbounded faith in our Captain; and this perfect organisation, invisible to the world, marches on to certain and glorious victory.

'From victory unto victory,  
His army he shall lead;  
'Till every foe is vanquished,  
And Christ is Lord indeed'.

—ZION'S WATCH TOWER, March, 1883; [R458: page 6].

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<sup>+</sup> [R295: page 8]