

The Church Of Christ Is Different

Quite often, when people observe that churches of Christ do not participate in interdenominational activities, they exclaim, "The church of Christ is just different." Let us see how the Lord's church differs from the segments of the religious world.

1. The church is different from paganism — by its faith in one true God. Paganism hardly presents a problem to us, but it was a problem in the first century. The answer to paganism is the "unknown God" whom Paul preached, the God who made the world and whose offspring we are (Acts 17:23).
2. The church is different from Judaism — by its faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son. When Jesus came into the world, "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not" (John 1:11). Why did Jesus' own people reject Him? The Jews rejected Him because they misunderstood the purpose and prophecies of their own religion. Their religion was a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ, and the prophecies of the Old Testament foretold the coming of the Messiah in great detail (Galatians 3:24-25). Jesus told the Jews, "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me" (John 5:39). Misunderstanding their own religion, the Jews crucified the very one for whom they had prayed for centuries.
3. The church is different from Roman Catholicism — by its faith in the sufficiency of Christ. He is sufficient as the head of the church. God gave Christ "to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). The office of Pope is completely unknown to the New Testament. Also, the scriptures of Christ are sufficient as the only rule of faith and practice for the church. Yet, the Roman Catholic Church emphatically denies this. Cardinal Gibbons states that the scriptures alone are not sufficient, "because they do not contain all the truths necessary for salvation" (Faith of our Fathers, p. 90). What a contrast with the declaration of Paul that the inspired scriptures made the man of God complete: "Furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17).
4. The church is different from Protestant denominationalism by its faith in the authority of Christ. When Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," is it authoritative? Must we obey exactly what Jesus commands to be saved? Protestantism is now so dominated by

modernism that it replies, "NO" (contrast the teachings of Matthew 7:21 and Hebrews 5:8-9).

5. The church is different from the irreligious by its faith in the life of Christ. There is virtue and reward in righteous living! Christ left "you an example, that ye should follow His steps; who did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22). Jesus was kind, sympathetic, godly, devoted to God's work, and interested in the lost. Follow His example and you will find that the happiest life is the holiest life!

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