

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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SINS OF DENOMINATIONALISM

Dan Goddard

In hope of helping some to see the matter more clearly, I am pointing out some of the things wrong with the Denominational System.

Denominationalism Fosters Confusion and Division. There was no more confusion at the plain of Shinar (Gen. 11) when God confounded the language of man than there is today in the realm of religion. The sincere seeker of the truth knows not whom to trust to guide him aright. Hundreds of religious groups propose to teach the truth of God and yet no two of them are in agreement. If one man were to teach all these conflicting doctrines, he would be judged inconsistent, perhaps dishonest. But if one hundred men teach one hundred conflicting doctrines, denominationalism endorses it and sees no wrong in it.

If you ask what to do to be saved, you will get about as many different and conflicting answers as there are religious bodies in the community. Certainly the Lord is not the author of such confusion (I Cor. 14:33). If you inquire as to the right way to worship and serve the Lord, no two denominations will answer your question alike. Has the Lord been so indefinite that people are justified in being confused about these matters? Or, may we do whatever we please to be saved and worship in whatever manner we choose? The Lord has clearly taught us His will on these matters and man has spread confusion and division and continues to do so by disregarding the will of God

and doing as he pleases. This confusion not only destroys those involved in it, but keeps many others from trying to serve the Lord because they are discouraged in their efforts to learn the truth.

Denominationalism Exalts Names and Human Wisdom. Being of human origin, we would expect denominationalism to exalt that which is human above that which is divine. God's ways are not man's ways. Jesus had difficulty getting his apostles to understand that human names and ambitions stood for nothing in His kingdom (Matt. 20:20-28). Names and titles signifying rank mean much in human systems. There are many high-sounding titles denoting the rank of various officials in the Roman Catholic Church before we reach the blasphemous title of pope or universal father, a title which Jesus positively forbids any to wear (Matt. 23:9). Denominationalism, springing out of Catholicism, has imitated Rome in the wearing of titles. The denominations exalt human names in many instances by wearing the name of men instead of the name of the Lord. Baptists wear the name of John, the forerunner of Jesus, rather than the name of Christ, the builder and Lord of the church. Lutherans wear the name of their founder in preference to the name of the Lord.

The wisdom of men is obvious in denominational systems. Men are not satisfied with the simple organization of the church as Jesus gave it

through the apostles, so they set about to perfect an organization which they say is essential in our present generation. When they are asked to give authority for something they teach or practice, they admit they have no scriptural authority, but they see nothing wrong with it and think that surely God will not object. Obviously they are not satisfied with the simplicity that is in Christ, and their love of "show" leads them to put on elaborate displays in the field of exhibitionism.

Some denominations actually think they have to compete with the theater in these matters to hold their crowds. Just now there is a great move on to hold the young people. Youth movements are being born every few weeks. Entertainment and recreation are the watchwords. Worldliness, lasciviousness, sobriety, self-control, hell-fire and damnation for the wicked and heaven for the faithful are rare and all but unknown terms in such movements. Paul's sermon to Felix (Acts 24:25) would scatter them like a hunter scatters a covey of quail. And brethren, bitten by this bug of human wisdom, have been advocating that it is the business of the church to furnish and follow these denominational footprints. Of course they do not have any scripture to quote in their defense, but they can tell you the church is going to lose all of its young people to the

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Sins of Denominationalism...



Editorial...

LESSONS FROM MALACHI #2

Garland M. Robinson

JEHOVAH IS FALSELY ACCUSED

2:17: *“Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?”*

3:14: *“Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?”*

The people argued that God blessed the wicked. Since He did not punish them according to man’s timetable, they ignorantly surmised “evil is good in the sight of the Lord.” They thought it was useless to serve God.

Man is so ignorant to accuse God of anything. What gives man the right to pass judgment upon God — to tell Him what is right and what is wrong? Job found this out in a very humbling way. Notice what we read in Job 38, *“the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.”* This continues throughout the next few chapters in Job. God is great. God is good. How dare man be so presumptuous to call God into question.

Man doesn’t know or see the larger picture. We don’t know God’s overall scheme or plan. All we know is what is revealed to us (cf. Deut. 29:29). We must act upon God’s written word for that is all we have to go on. We must understand *“the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (II Peter 3:9). We must allow God to do what pleases Him, not us. If, and when, God allows the wicked to live while the innocent and faithful die,

what is that to us? Why would we question that? God knows all. He can handle the affairs of the whole universe. Second Peter 3:15 says, *“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation....”* Every day God allows the world to stand and the wicked to survive, is another day they have to learn the truth and repent of their sins. This is an example of God’s love, His mercy, not His delight or joy of evil. We must do right and live right ourselves and allow God to take care of His own business.

Malachi revealed that God would send the one whom they seek. He would be preceded by a messenger (John the Baptist) who would prepare the way before Him (3:1; cf. Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4). This messenger would come *as* or *like* Elijah the prophet (Mal. 4:5-6). The Lord quotes this passage and makes clear to all that it foretells of John the Baptist (Matt. 11:10-14; Mark 9:11-13; Luke 1:5-17,76; 7:24-30; John 1:6-8).

When the Messiah comes, he will separate the chaff from the wheat (Matt. 3:12; Luke 3:17). He will be as a refiner and purifier of silver (Mal. 3:3). He will be a *“witness against the sorcerers, ...adulterers, ...false swearers, ...those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right...”* (Mal. 3:5). God would take care of dispensing punishment and judgment in His own good time.

GOD DEMANDS OBEDIENCE

3:7: *“Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?”*

God has always desired and demanded obedience to His Word. He has never changed in this regard. This is the way it has always been. Though God requires sacrifice, it must be in obedience — in accordance to His word.

This was true during the days of the prophet Samuel. *“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”* (I Sam. 15:22). The same thing is true today. Jesus said, *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Matt. 7:21-23).

Many hold with disdain and disgust the idea that obedience to commands (rules) has any merit with God. But, from the above, we clearly see they are wrong. One does not love God unless he OBEYS His rules. *“For **this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments:** and his commandments are not grievous”* (I John 5:3).

No one can claim he “knows” the Lord without obedience to His commands. *“And hereby we do **know** that we know him, **if we keep his commandments.** He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him”* (I John 2:3-5).

ROBBING GOD

3:8: *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.”*

It is unbelievable, unthinkable, but people rob God. They rob Him of money, time, service, faithfulness. God issues a challenge for them to give. *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it”* (Mal. 3:10).

I once had a good brother in the Lord reveal to me and lament the fact of the many years he wasted and robbed God before he became a Christian. He wished he had the time to go

back and correct it. He would have become a Christian years before he did. But that time is gone. It cannot be relived.

Remember how the rich man in hades lifted up his eyes in torment and desired relief of his suffering (Luke 16:23)? He learned it was too late for himself, so he sought desperately to warn his brothers because he knew they were headed to the same place. They could not be warned from beyond the grave. However, they were being warned, even then, by God's divine, inspired, Word. Every human being on the face of the earth is being warned today by God's living inspired Word. Why won't they listen? Why won't they take heed? Why do they continue to rob God of that which He is due?

The church is authorized to take up a collection every first day of the week. Therefore, Christians are commanded to give on this day as they have been prospered (I Cor. 16:1-2). Our giving is to be done purposefully, cheerfully and not grudgingly (II Cor. 9:6-7). We give unto the Lord, not man.

Will we rob God of that which He is due? Are you robbing Him?

PRECIOUS FELLOWSHIP

3:16: *"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."*

There was a remnant in Malachi's day that were faithful. They had not given up on the Lord. They continued to worship and serve Him as He directed. They were in the minority, but they were faithful, loyal, steadfast, dedicated, devoted. They maintained the proper respect and reverence for God. They took delight in their fellowship one with another. They often would speak about and think about His high and holy name.

The faithful in the first century enjoyed fellowship one with another. *"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. ... And all that believed were together, and had all things common; ... And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising*

God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:42,44,46,47).

Faithful servants of God today do the same thing. Though we live in this world, we do not become a part of the world in all its wickedness. We are like those in Ephesus to whom the Lord said, *"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted"* (Rev. 2:2-3).

What joy it is to be among those of "like precious faith" (cf. II Peter 1:1). You don't have to worry about what you will hear — no dirty jokes and foul mouths here! You don't have to worry about getting stabbed in the back — no cheating, lying, stealing among the faithful. We can relax, be ourselves, knowing we are among the best people in the whole wide world.

Among the saints of God we have joy, peace, love, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self control (Gal. 5:22-23). We have the peace that passeth all understanding (Phil. 4:7). We are among brethren who are praying for us (Heb. 13:18), desiring that we abound more and more (Phil. 1:9; I Thess. 4:1). Here are people who are not looking to promote themselves, but that others might be blessed (Phil. 2:4).

Oh, how precious indeed! Wouldn't we love it to be so with the whole world? Wouldn't it be wonderful if those among the denominations would come to such knowledge and obedience? Don't we even desire our enemies to repent and receive forgiveness (Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:35)? If they only knew. If they would only soften their heart, learn the truth and obey it before it's too late.

CONCLUSION

Malachi was a great prophet of the Old Testament era. In fact, he was the last of the prophets before the coming of the Messiah. There would be a long dry spell of inspired prophets. It would be 400 years before John the baptizer would arise and fulfill the prophecy of Malachi 3:2 in preparing the way of the Lord.

One of the great lessons of Malachi

is that God's promises and blessings are conditional. That is, God does not indiscriminately bless his people when they totally disregard his commandments. Man must keep his end of the bargain. When he does so, God will keep His end.

In order to be saved from sins, one must meet the conditions laid out by God. One must OBEY God to be saved. This involves:

1) **HEARING.** Faith comes by hearing God's holy Word (Rom. 10:17). It's impossible to please God without faith (Heb. 11:6). Cornelius was told he had to HEAR the Word of God in order to be saved (Acts 11:14).

2) **BELIEVING.** The Word of God must be believed (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3). One must likewise have **FAITH** in Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior, and that he is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16; 8:24). One must believe that he died, was buried and rose again from the dead (I Cor. 15:1-4). Unless we believe in Jesus, we will die in our sins (John 8:24). Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

3) **REPENTANCE.** God commands all men everywhere to repent of their sins (Acts 17:30). Repentance involves a change of the mind, the will, and results in a change of life. Without repentance, there is no forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19; Luke 13:3,5).

4) **CONFESSION.** Confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God is essential to being saved (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33). The man from Ethiopia was told he could be baptized if he would first confess Christ (Acts 8:37). Confession is no good in any other name but Jesus (Acts 4:12).

5) **WATER BAPTISM.** Immersion into water puts one into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). Salvation is only found in Christ (II Tim. 2:10). One's sins are washed away at baptism (Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:6,17-18). Baptism saves us (I Peter 3:21). Baptism is the new birth, without which no one will enter heaven (John 3:3,5).

6) **FAITHFULNESS.** Continued faithfulness to God and His Word is essential. All of our past obedience will be to no avail if we forfeit it in rebellion to God. Only those who continue steadfast in the Lord will be saved (I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10; Matt. 24:13).

What about YOU? Are you a Christian? Are you faithful? Are you abounding in the work of the Lord?

THE NEW HERMENEUTIC

John D. Cotham

The source of this liberal concept has come from some among us of the higher academic community.

Most of the new doctrines of the liberal element in the Lord's church come from what they call the NEW hermeneutic. Hermeneutics is defined as "the science of interpretation." In a practical way it refers to the work of interpreting, understanding, and applying whatever is being interpreted. When one says he has a NEW HERMENEUTIC, he is saying he has arrived at a NEW WAY of interpreting, understanding, and applying the Bible. This becomes very crucial when we realize this subject directly affects what we will do in the name of religion.

The source of this liberal concept has come from some among us of the higher academic community. By this I mean particularly those who have achieved their masters and doctorate degrees from the very liberal denominational universities. Worse yet, many of these liberals are professors in some of our "Christian" colleges and universities. Here, they can undermine the sound doctrine and strong faith of our young people. These young people, in turn, settle in congregations around the country, and many immediately begin to influence the congregation with their liberal new hermeneutic.

Briefly stated, here are some of the arguments proposed by the New Hermeneutic.

These liberals argue there is NO "pattern" to be found in the Bible that Christians must follow. They reason that the Bible is a "love letter," not a "constitution" or "body of law." This approach allows them to drastically change their past views on many things.

Most teach that we must broaden the role of women, including leading prayer, leading singing, serving at the Lord's table, etc. Most are now teaching the Bible does not forbid the use of mechanical instruments in the worship service. Most are now teach-

ing we need to be in fellowship with members of denominations. In fact, some are teaching that the Lord's church as we know it is just another denomination. All of them are teaching that the Lord's church must change. This is why they term themselves as "change agents." Lynn Anderson wrote a book titled "Navigating the Winds of Change" or "How to Manage Change in the Church." In this book, Anderson teaches how to manipulate a church into changing. He even shows how to make changes in very subtle ways so the brethren either won't recognize the changes or so they won't get too up-set. He warns the "change agent" to be ready to "back off" when resistance comes; then, after things have settled down, to subtly go to work again. The surprising thing is that Anderson took these tactics from a book on how to convert people to communism.

The idea of a "pattern" is according to Bible instruction. Moses was instructed to follow a pattern, "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the **pattern** showed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5).

Those who are saved in Christ have obeyed a pattern, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that **form** ("pattern" ASV) of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17). Paul showed Himself a pattern, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a **pattern** to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (I Tim. 1:16).

Why are these "change agents" afraid of a "pattern?" Because a specific pattern (or way) of doing something will not allow them to make their additions or subtractions from

the word of God.

These same people argue that the "silence" of the scriptures allow whatever they choose to add because "the Bible doesn't forbid it." They use this argument to justify the use of the mechanical instrument in worship.

They will not admit that what proves a "little" proves too "much." For example, if "silence" does not forbid an action, then we can add incense to worship, we can use cornbread and milk on the Lord's table, our preachers can wear priestly garments, the list goes on and on.

When speaking of the priesthood under the Mosaic law, we find that ONLY those of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests, and ONLY those who descended from Aaron could hold the office of High Priest. The Hebrew writer uses the argument of "silence" to prove that Christ could not be a priest on earth since he was from the tribe of Judah. "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses **spake nothing** concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:14). The Bible's silence on forbidding those of other tribes serving as priests is shown powerfully in this verse. The silence of the Scriptures does not allow whatever we want to do. In Hebrews 7:12 it is argued that since the priesthood had changed from Levi to Judah, there had to also be a change of the law, because, by "silence," the Law of Moses forbade anyone outside the tribe of Levi to be a priest.

Just because God does not specifically forbid something does not mean that God allows any additions to what He has specifically ordered.

The New Hermeneutic is but another ploy of Satan to entice men to leave the word of God for a primrose path into apostasy.

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WHEN SODOM LIVED IN LOT'S FAMILY

Neal Pollard

No more awful picture of sin “gone to seed” is painted than that which the Holy Spirit unveils in Genesis 19. A reading of this chapter will leave one with a sick feeling about the potential evil that can consume men’s hearts. What a warning it is for man today.

There is a fierce battle being waged today between right and wrong. Every nation (Prov. 14:34), family (Deut. 4:40), church of Christ (Jude 3), and individual (James 4:7) on this earth is fighting it! The battle went poorly in Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot. Abraham stood before God, as recorded in Genesis 18, and pleaded with God to spare the city if he could find ten righteous souls. God said, *“I will not destroy it for ten’s sake”* (Gen. 18:32). Apparently, there were not even ten in the entire valley. Moses later recalls, *“The overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath”* (Deut. 29:23). The wickedness of that place and time is so notorious that it is remembered yet today (Jude 7).

Throughout the New Testament, Christ and others use Sodom figuratively to represent wickedness in this world. Truly, many valuable lessons are to be learned today about the consequences of letting this world get too great a hold upon the heart as Sodom did Lot’s family. Not only did Lot’s family live in Sodom, Sodom lived in Lot’s family. That was the problem. Notice what followed this tragic state.

When Sodom lived in Lot’s family, **respect for parents declined** (Gen. 19:14). After the angels told Lot that Sodom was about to be destroyed, Lot went to warn his daughters’ husbands. It is immediately apparent that they were neither spiritually-minded, nor did they hold righteous Lot in too high a regard! They did not take the elder Lot seriously. In a matter of hours, consequently, they were among those consumed with fire. If they had properly honored him, they might have been spared.

When the world lives in one’s heart today, respect for parents declines. They cannot tell that one anything. Their advice is perceived as a “joke.” So often, by the time one believes his parents’ counsel, it is too late and a life has been wrecked by folly. God warns against such disrespect for one’s parents. Under Moses’ Law there was a provision for the death penalty where such behavior by children occurred (Lev. 20:9). Even under Christ’s Law there is a warning for children to honor their parents (Eph. 6:1-3). It is apparent when the world is in one’s family, because the children hold the parents in contempt rather than with respect.

When Sodom lived in Lot’s family, **there was a reluctance to flee evil** (Gen. 19:15,16). The angels literally had to lead Lot and his family out of Sodom by the hand (v.16). Do not forget that what they left back there was wanton homosexuality, sadistic behavior, and total unrighteousness. Despite that, they could not bring themselves to leave.

Today, Christians are told to flee the evil of this world, to flee fornication (I Cor. 6:18), idolatry (I Cor. 10:14), the love of money (I Tim. 6:10-11), and youthful lusts (II Tim. 2:2). In summation, he is to flee worldliness (James 4:4). This concept is one that Christians might think only those in the world need. Yet, New Testament writers are telling Christians to get the world out of them.

Too many are reluctant to distance themselves from activities and associations clearly evil! When one leaves the world and gets on the safe ground of salvation, he should never forget what it is he is leaving behind — condemnation (Rom. 8:1), the road to everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46), and the misery and consequences of sin (Gal. 6:7). One is not thinking in his right mind who keeps the world in his heart, longing for the harmful things he has left behind. One day this world will be destroyed (II Peter 3:10,11). All those in and out of the church reluctant to leave evil will suffer!

When Sodom lived in Lot’s family, **fear reigned in the place of faith** (Gen. 19:17-22). The angel specifically told Lot that he would be safe up in the mountains, but he was, incredibly, too afraid! He was so influenced by the sinful society of Sodom that he was conditioned to be afraid. That is the effect the world can have on the backsliding Christian. It offers no solace or peace of mind. The world encourages and breeds fear. Contrast that with what God offers. Through Paul, he admonishes, *“Be strong in the Lord...”* (Eph. 6:10).

The faithful Christian has no reason to fear any threat of this world (Matt. 10:28). Jesus told His disciples not to let their hearts be troubled (John 14:1). The faithful Christian also has no reason to fear the Judgment (II Thess. 1:7). How perfectly clear John makes this in First John 4:17,18, that the faithful *“May have boldness in the day of Judgment...”*

If one is not living right, his fears are justified. If he does not repent, his worst fears will one day be realized. But that fear should be used as a motivation to repent. It should not be allowed to conquer and defeat the wayward.

When Sodom lived in Lot’s family, **a deadly yearning for the earthly was stronger than the will to obey God** (Gen. 19:26). This powerful lesson was learned by Lot’s wife in a most graphic way. God told Lot’s family not to look back at the wicked city, but Lot’s wife was too enamored with it. Her glance backward was fatal. A study of Genesis 13:9-11 shows that it was the pursuit of worldliness that got them in trouble in the first place. Through the eye of sight rather than faith, Lot chose what “looked better” (cf. II Cor. 5:7). And through the eye of lust, Lot’s wife wanted just one more look. It was one look too many.

With grim recall, Jesus simply says, *“remember Lot’s wife”* (Luke 17:32). Likewise, today, when true worship loses its excitement and appeal, remember Lot’s wife. When

sinful activity seems too good to be true, remember Lot's wife. When the lure of the world becomes a temptation to quit the church, remember Lot's wife. When envy strikes because of a neighbor who has it all but the Lord, remember Lot's wife. If and when one's desire for the things of this earth are stronger than one's will to obey God, be careful (cf. I John 2:15-17).

When Sodom lived in Lot's family, **Sodom's immorality had taken root in their actions** (Gen. 19:30-38). Unfortunately, the problems of Sodom were not completely removed even after its destruction. Sodom was still very much in the hearts of Lot's daughters. They had regular contact with the citizens of Sodom, and its influence rubbed off on them (cf. I Cor. 15:33). In such a spiritual condition, they did the unthinkable with their own father. They were blind to

the common sense and wisdom later recorded by Solomon, who wrote, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned" (Prov. 6:27,28)? They had played with the fire of Sodom and it seared their hearts.

May no one think that such cannot happen to him today. One cannot drink from the waters of religious error and not be effected. One cannot feed his mind on the garbage of this world without consequence. One cannot go where Satan is and escape his influence. It is the old adage, "Sit down with dogs; rise up with fleas."

One may think he can surround himself with evil and not be effected. But look at Lot's daughters, and what the Sodom in them produced. It was with them as with God's people centuries later, of whom Hosea bleakly commented, "For they have

sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7). Lot's descendants would become a plague on the descendants of Abraham. What a warning that is to Christians today!

It was not a sin for Lot and his family to live in Sodom. But look at the devastation that occurred because Sodom was in them. Jesus said something interesting in his prayer to the Father in John 17:15 when He pled, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

Do not think it necessary, or good, to pack up, move to the mountains, and live like a hermit. As long as Christians live, they have to be in the world! But they must never let this world get in them!

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TRUTH FOR THE WORLD

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Sins of Denominationalism...

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denominations where they can be entertained.

Denominationalism Puts One Beyond The Reach Of The Blood Of Christ.

It is a serious charge to say that denominationalism puts one beyond the reach of the blood of Christ, but such is a necessary conclusion from the Scriptures. It is the claim of denominationalism that one becomes a child of God and then may join the denomination of his choice. If we grant that a child of God joins a denomination, I am ready to prove that that child of God has taken a step in the dark and has placed him beyond the reach of the blood of Christ to purify and save him. The Scriptures teach, *“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sins”* (I John 1:7). From this we learn that the blood of Jesus cleanses us only if we walk in the light. If we walk in the dark, his blood will not cleanse us. The light in which we walk is the teaching of Christ, God’s word through Christ — see Psalm 119:105; Prov. 6:23. Paul speaks of the unsaved whom Satan has blinded that the light of the Gospel of Christ should not shine upon them (II Cor. 4:3-6). To walk in the light of the Gospel of Christ is to do what the Gospel teaches. When one does something the Gospel does not teach, that one is walking in darkness, and the blood of Christ will not reach him as long as he chooses to walk in darkness.

Becoming a member of a denomination is something the Gospel of Christ does not teach. No apostle was ever a member of any denomination. No apostle ever taught men to become members of any denomination. One cannot become a member of a denomination by doing what the Lord teaches. One must do something not taught in the Bible to become a member of any denomination. When one takes a step in the dark, he places himself beyond the reach of the blood of Christ. Denominational preachers talk much about salvation through the blood of Christ, yet there is not a drop of blood in any denomination. The blood of the

Passover lamb did not cover all of Egypt. The blood of Christ does not cover denominationalism; it covers only those who walk in the light of God’s word. When people go beyond the light to walk in the darkness of human wisdom, they forfeit their right to the saving power of the blood of Christ.

Denominationalism Robs One Of God’s Fellowship.

II John 1:9, *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”* Since Christ does not teach us to become members of some denomination, it follows that one must go beyond his teaching in order to become a member of one. John says when we go beyond the teaching of Christ, we have not God, that is, we forfeit the fellowship of God. God will not be the one who walks in darkness. I John 1:5-6, *“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”* Remember that in becoming a member of a denomination, one must take a step in the darkness, for he is going beyond the light of God’s word. But when one steps into the darkness, he leaves God. For God will not, cannot, take a step in the darkness. John makes a serious charge here in saying that those who walk in darkness, but still claim to have fellowship with God, tell a lie. Walking, living, in denominationalism is walking in darkness because such a course of action is not taught in God’s word which is the light in which we must walk. Therefore, all who live in denominationalism are walking in darkness. If they claim to have fellowship with God, and certainly they do make such a claim, John says they “lie, and do not the truth.” These truths should rock denominationalism to its very foundation, and I believe they would if Gospel preachers would press them unrelentingly, and if church members would back them up in such preaching. It is no uncommon thing for church members to apologize to their denominational friends for such preaching from the pulpit. Denominationalism is an enemy, a deadly enemy, and

there should not be, must not be, any compromise. The people involved are not our enemies, but the system in which they are entangled is an enemy. We should love people, but hate the denominational system. We should save the people, but hate the system. We should love the people, but destroy the system. In fact, the only way we can save the people is to destroy the denominational system.

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