

WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

*A.C. Grider,
“Dead Yet Speaketh”*

I didn't join the church of Christ. I didn't select the church of Christ as “my choice” from among many churches. It never occurred to me that I had a choice nor that I desired to make a choice of churches.

I started thinking about my spiritual condition down in Tennessee some years ago—several years ago and made up my mind that I should do something about it. I began to consider what the Lord wanted me to do. I started to study my Bible.

I found that I was a sinner and that Christ was THE savior. I found that if I were ever saved it would only be by Christ. I considered His word relative to what to do to be saved. He said that I should **repent**, Luke 13:3. I did. He said I should **confess** Him, Matthew 10:32. I did. He said I should be **baptized**, Mark 16:16. I did. He said if I would do these things I would BE SAVED. I was. But the BIBLE taught that when I was saved the Lord added me to the church, Acts 2:47. He did.

Now, WHICH CHURCH did He add me to? HIS, Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16. Thus I am a member of the church of Christ

because I had NO CHOICE and wanted none. I just wanted to be saved. And I was!

UNDENIED PROPOSITIONS

Larry Ray Hafley

Christians are often placed on the defensive. When discussing and disputing with people about fundamental features and facts of the New Testament system, the child of God feels as though he is on trial. The simplest truth appears as the rank heresy. One who believes and practices “what is written” in the Bible is pictured and portrayed as the wild-eyed “nut.” A moment of reflection will prove it to you. For example, consider the last time you talked to your denominational friends about music in worship, the observance of the Lord's supper, baptism and giving. Did it not seem as though you were the one advocating and propagating some new thing? Were you not placed on the defensive?

In reality, this situation and circumstance should not occur. Why? Because the issues of music, the Lord's supper, baptism and giving are not denied, the disciple should not be viewed as the one who is

bound to explain himself. Here is why:

THE MUSIC QUESTION.

No one argues that Christians cannot congregate and sing. Everyone agrees that it is right and scriptural for saints to sing and make melody in their hearts to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Ask a Catholic, a Lutheran, a Baptist or any other denominational person if it is proper for the church to do what churches of Christ do, namely, to sing. What will they say? They will admit that it is according to the truth and pleasing to God. Now, if they want to contend for a different practice, the burden of proof is theirs. No one questions that what you believe is right.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

That Christians may partake of the communion of the body and blood of the Lord every first day of the week is not denied. Ask a Baptist if he believes that it is sinful for the church to break bread upon the first day of the week. He will not say that it is. So, it is conceded that the practice of the brethren is in harmony with the word of God. If they want to do something different, that is their problem. Let them find authority for what they do since they agree that what you stand for is right.

BAPTISM. There are numbers of churches that

believe, teach and practice sprinkling for baptism. However, none of them will say that it is contrary to the Bible to immerse. A Catholic priest will tell you, as will a Lutheran or a Presbyterian, that immersion is acceptable. New Testament Christians, therefore, engage in the action that no group denies. You see, your position and your practice, is unquestioned. Everyone agrees that it is of God. If they want to do something else, that is their responsibility. The ball is in their court.

The same thing is true with regard to the subject, the candidate, for baptism. Who would deny that a penitent, believing adult is suitable for baptism? Absolutely no one. Once again, the thing you defend is beyond controversy. Further, if they want to baptize others, well, they must submit the proof. It is their action that is at issue since they acknowledge that what you do is correct.

GIVING. Churches of Christ collect their contribution each Lord's day (1 Cor. 16:2). Ask a Pentecostal or a Methodist if he

thinks it is wrong to do so. Will anyone in any of the denominations speak against laying by in store upon the first day of the week? Of course not. They all know it is in accord with the doctrine of the Lord. But they want to have pie suppers, rummage sales and car washes to raise money. Sorry, but that is not my fault; that is not my baby. If they want to do other than what they agree is right, they will have to find book, chapter and verse for it.

See the point? Obviously, you do. So, relax. Most of the basic principles of New Testament work and worship are approved even of men. They who would do something else, something less, something different, are the defendants in this case. They are on trial. The truth has been vindicated. Prosecute their error and convict it.

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FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The great historian, Gibbons, who wrote The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, gave five reasons for the fall of the great dynasty.

First: Rapid increase of divorce, with the undermining of the sanctity of the home, which is the basis of society.

Second: Higher and higher taxes; the spending of money for bread and celebrations.

Third: The mad craze for pleasure, sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.

Fourth: The building of gigantic armaments, when the real enemy was within; the decadence of the people.

Fifth: The decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to guide it.

A review of these principal factors in the decline of the Roman Empire can easily be related to our own time, and may portend our own decline from the status of a prominent world empire. "*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people*" (Prov. 14:34). Again, "*Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah*" (Ps. 33:12).

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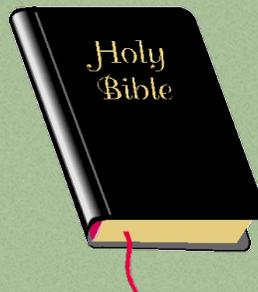
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