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The Gods of "Christianity"

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THE GODS OF "CHRISTIANITY"

There is a great difference between "Christianity" and Christ. That portion of the world in which "Christianity" prevails, in distinction from heathen or Mohammedan lands, is called "Christendom" and "Christianity" is the term applied to the Christian religious system. Under this broad heading, anyone who believes, or professes or is assumed to believe, in Jesus Christ and the truth taught by Him, is called a Christian. The world at large looks upon Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Protestants, and all modern sectarians, and labels all of these "Christians." What these 600,000,000 people stand for and represent is known as "Christianity." Since such a variety of ideas, doctrines, and practices is presented by these various groups, can one intelligently, truthfully and scripturally affirm that they all worship the same God? This tract affirms that they do not honor the same God, but by contradictory teachings and practices they present a situation which is well described by the above title: "The Gods of Christianity."

The reader is urged to refer to a former tract on "Christian Unity," in which it was shown that religious divisions among the followers of Christ "violate the unity of the Godhead!" Then, the divine program for Christian unity was noted, as set forth in these words: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one

baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." (Ephesians 4:1-6). What a powerfully significant thought we have in these words! God's will is UNITY among those who serve Him. And, to impress this, the oneness of several things is mentioned. Why are we told that there is "ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL"? Do not Christians know this? Are we prone to be idolatrous? No, but it is just as reasonable, and scriptural, to say that there are "many Gods--many Fathers" as to say there are "many faiths, a number of baptisms, dozens of bodies," etc. That is exactly the point of the apostle Paul! And, because "Christianity" today presents over two hundred different denominations ("bodies"), as many different creeds ("faiths"), and several "baptisms" and "hopes," when the word of God affirms there is but "ONE" of each of these, we must sorrowfully admit that denominationalism presents MANY GODS!

Roman Catholicism presents the "Sacramental God" who is to be reached through observance of the seven sacraments: baptism, Lord's Supper, confirmation, ordination, penance, marriage, and extreme unction. The New Testament does not present any of these rites as sacraments, with the magical meaning of Catholicism. Not even baptism and the Lord's Supper are "sacraments," according to the New Testament, even though many Protestant denominations look upon them as such.

Many modern denominations have teachings based upon those of the reformer, John Calvin. The famous "five points" of Calvinism are: (1) absolute predestination (no freedom of the human will); (2) particular redemption (only the "elect" are saved); (3) total depravity (man's innate sinfulness); (4) irresistible grace (God cannot be resisted by one whom he has chosen); (5) the perseverance of the saints (if "elected," man is

sure of being saved). The God of Calvinism teaches that men are predestined to be saved, or lost, irrespective of what they are or do, because man is "totally depraved," and there is no freedom of the human will; but the God of the Bible teaches that men are not totally depraved, and urges sinners to "repent and be baptized.....for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), declaring that "whosoever believeth" (John 3:16), and "whosoever will" (Revelation 22:17) may be saved. See the difference? The God of some present-day denominations is supposed to teach that the sinner cannot do anything to effect his salvation, and when "once saved, always saved"; but the God of the New Testament affirms that men must obey the gospel to be saved (I Peter 4:17; 2 Thess. 1:7,8; Romans 6:17), and warns against falling "from grace" and returning to sin (Galatians 5:4; I Cor. 10:1-12; Hebrews 6:4-6; 2 Peter 2:20-22). There is a difference, isn't there?

What is the result of all of this confusion in Christendom? The price for a divided Christendom is an unbelieving world! The conflicting "Gods of Christianity" have produced atheism. The two following illustrations are true and to the point.

Robert G. Ingersoll, a strong athiest of the last century, was the son of a preacher who believed and taught the erroneous doctrine of predestination. Young Ingersoll could not believe the doctrine, and, since he supposed that the Bible taught it, he rejected the Bible and its God. What a tragedy! Can you imagine a preacher-father being responsible for the infidelity of his son? Yet, this was the case. And, there are other teachings in modern denominationalism which contradict those of the God of the Bible. It behooves every earnest, truth-seeker to "study" the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15).

Some years ago, while Clarence Darrow, the

great criminal lawyer, was yet living, there was an important religious meeting in San Antonio. A Catholic priest, a Jewish rabbi, a Protestant minister, and Mr. Darrow were on the program. The Catholic priest presented the case for Catholicism, the Jewish rabbi made a plea for Judaism, and the Protestant minister spoke for his denomination. Then, Darrow arose, commented about the divergent views of the previous speakers, pointed out their inconsistencies, and climaxed his speech with the ringing challenge: "And that's why I have never joined any of your churches, for fear that I would jine the wrong one!" Thus, religious division contributed to the cause of infidelity on that occasion, for Darrow was an avowed skeptic, and never missed an opportunity to strike at the cause of religion. Who can ever tell how many people were influenced then by Darrow's assertions to scorn the quest for religious truth, and put all religious groups into the category of religious racketeers?

Denominationalism suggests that there are many Gods, with the result that many persons today have lost all faith in any God! How much religious divisions will have to account for in the day of judgment!

There is "one God and Father of all"—and but one! Professed Christians are going to have to unite upon God's word and declare this truth to the world in word and in deed. Sectarianism is doomed.

(This is the second in a series of tracts on "Christian Unity." There are six more to follow. Make sure that you get all of them.)

Prayerfully Presented by
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