**What Is Wrong with Denominational Baptism?**

*by Cecil Willis*

The word "baptism" with its various inflections occurs 126 times in the New Testament. Hence, one has to say a good deal about baptism or neglect a large portion of the Bible.

So far as I know, all denominations except the Christian Scientists and the Quakers practice some rite that they call baptism. Most people, therefore, have submitted to some ordinance that was called baptism. When these people learn about the New Testament church, they often want to come into the church on their denominational baptism. But if something is wrong with denominational baptism, and I think there is, these people plainly need to be told about it. This I shall attempt to do in this short piece.

Note these things wrong with denominational baptism:

**(l) It has the wrong authority (*Matt. 28: 18; Col. 3:17*).** Denominational councils and creeds authorize denominational baptism. Jesus never authorized it, nor did He ever command anyone to be baptized into any denomination.

**(2) It usually has the wrong subject (*Matt. 28:19, 20; Mk. 16:15, 16; Acts 8:37; Acts 2:38*).** The Bible teaches, and everyone is agreed, that the penitent believer who confesses his faith is a proper subject of scriptural baptism. But denominations often sprinkle infants who cannot meet the above requirements. Denominations also baptize people who think they are saved rather than persons who desire to be saved.

**(3) It has the wrong confession (*Acts 8:37*).** Persons in the New Testament confessed their faith in Christ as the only confessional requisite for baptism. But persons desiring to undergo denominational baptism will be asked to confess agreement with the sectarian creed. One denomination that I know requires a confession consisting of twenty propositions. More common is the unscriptural confession wherein one states that he believes that God for Christ's sake has pardoned his sins. Many who now question their denominational baptism have not the faintest remembrance of what they confessed.

**(4) It often has the wrong action (*Acts 8:37; Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12*).** Scriptural baptism entails "much water" (John 3:23), and a coming "unto," a "going down into," and a "coming up out of the water." In scriptural baptism, one is "buried" (Rom. 6:3, 4). Neither sprinkling nor pouring meets these scriptural requirements. Hence, if you submitted to sprinkling or pouring, your "baptism" was not the baptism taught in the gospel of Christ.

**(5) It has the wrong purpose (*Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21*).** These passages teach baptism to be "for the remission of sins," to be "saved," to have one's sins "washed away." Denominations usually assert they are baptizing one **because** that person’s sins have already been forgiven and **into** that particular denomination, rather than **for *remission of sins***and **into *Christ Jesus*** (Gal. 3:26, 27; Rom. 6:3, 4). So even though one has been immersed, if he was not immersed for the scriptural purposes, then that person's baptism was wrong.

Most sectarians teach that one is baptized to show that he has been saved rather than in order to be saved. Were you so baptized? If you will remember .whether you confessed that you had been saved (which you very possibly may have done), you will be able to ascertain whether your immersion was "for the remission of sins" and into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).

(6) It has the wrong order (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:37). These verses establish the sequence of events in conversion to be hearing, faith, repentance, confession, immersion, forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Sectarians confuse this order. They state the sequence like this: Gift of the Holy Spirit, repentance, faith, salvation, and then baptism.

(7) It has the wrong allegiance. Sectarian baptism binds one to wear a human name, obey and endorse a human creed, belong to a human organization and to support a human program, while scriptural baptism binds one to wear a divine name, obey a divine message, belong to a divine body, and to engage in a divinely authorized program. Denominational baptism attracts people to a denominational body rather than to Christ and His Kingdom.

**Conclusion**

REMEMBER:

1) One cannot be taught wrong and baptized right (Rom. 10:17; 6:17).

2) One cannot be baptized wrong and worship right (Rom. 6:3, 4; Acts 2:42).

3) One cannot worship wrong and live right (John 4:23, 24).

4) One cannot live wrong and die right (Matt. 25:31-41).

5) Therefore, one cannot be baptized wrong and die right.

What about you, my friend? Have you submitted to scriptural baptism? Do not make the error of interpreting what you did years ago in the light of what you know now the Bible to teach. Many have made this mistake. One must understand what he is doing at the time he is doing it to obey the gospel scripturally from the heart.

***"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17, 18)***