

The Sin Of Sectarianism

*As viewed by prominent religious leaders
of national and international fame*

**A Collection of Quotations
Gathered and Arranged by
Jack W. Langford**

***“Then spake Jesus to the multitude,
and to His disciples, saying,
The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat:
all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe,
that observe and do; But do not ye
after their works; for they say,
and do not” (Matt. 23:1-3).***

***“And he said unto him,
‘Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee’”
(Luke 19:22).***

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

One uniform voice that comes from every sector of Christendom—whether Orthodox, Fundamentalist or Liberal—whether Baptist, Catholic or Pentecostal—is clear and articulate, "division in the 'Church' is sin of the most hideous nature."

When faced with the accusation that denominational sectarianism is by far the most serious sin in Christendom today, many complacent members and pious preachers will recoil with horrid shock, and attempt to disclaim this as being true. No one wants to be indicted—especially ministers who bear the greater responsibility. All kinds of responses have been made to excuse or evade the charge. Some will retort with a flippant, "Oh, that's ridiculous!" Some will even glorify denominationalism. Others will say it is a necessary evil which we must tolerate. To some, "interdenominationalism" has the appearance of being less obnoxious.

No matter how men respond, the facts remain bold and unflinching. Perhaps the notable Martin Lloyd-Jones of England summed it up most simply—

"Now we are all agreed, surely, that the Christian Church should be one, that she was meant by God to be one. And therefore, we must agree, further, that it is a tragedy that division ever entered into the life of the church. In addition we must all regard schism as a grievous sin. That is common ground."

As the author/editor of this book of quotations, I, along with other brethren, have stepped outside the framework of man-made sectarian denominational "Christendom." We have come to appreciate with increasing clarity the beauty and wholesomeness of walking in the Biblical blueprints of the truth about "the church which is Christ's body." We recognize that all true heart believers in Jesus Christ the world over, regardless of any other religious affiliation, are fellow members with us in this grand "temple"—"the church which is Christ's body" (Eph. 1:22,23 & 2:19-22). However, this Biblical Church is the only organization that Jesus Christ has established and is building; consequently we recognize it as SIN to be affiliated with any other kind of a church or man-made religious organization.

It has been our privilege not only to intellectually believe these Biblical truths about the real church of Jesus Christ, but also to put them into practice. As to our life and "profession" in this church of Jesus Christ every believer has been called to a walk of "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-5).

How delightful it is to find that the rich truths in the Word of God regarding the Church of Jesus Christ are workable and practical. Christians who have walked in them throughout the centuries and over the years have a deeper commitment to observe the living Word of God in every aspect of their lives rather than succumbing to the observation of mere human traditions which have accumulated during the ages. We have less concern for being popular and successful according to the world's standards and a greater joy in being faithful to God's standards.

We are publishing this material in the spirit of love—not that gushy, smiling, hypocritical love that is tolerant of treason and bubbles out of most theatrical religious performers—but the Divine love of God, “which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5), and is faithful in the administration of rebuke and discipline (Rev. 3:19; Heb. 12:5,6) upon those who trifle with the Word of God (Psalm 119:104).

CONCLUSION AND/OR SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

There are conclusions that we can outline as a result of reading the numerous statements from these respected ministers. These conclusions will also spell out the solution to the problem.

I. The factual existence of denominationalism and sectarianism within professing Christendom is a hideous mockery to the person and work of Jesus Christ in His design for the Church. It is satanically inspired and man-made. It is designed to destroy the beautiful order of God in creating the “church which is Christ's body.”

II. There is a radical difference between the man-made sectarian institutions and the real living church of Jesus Christ. The one is devilish and veneer, whereas the other is divine and real. The one is often heathenish and idolatrous, whereas the other worships God in spirit and truth. In these days of apostasy, the vast majority of the true church is carnally mixed within the counterfeit.

III. The creation of the gigantic conglomerates in the modern ecumenical movements leads to a unity with Rome, which is revealed in the Bible as “that great whore, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, whose end is destruction”—Revelation 17 & 18.

IV. The only real and Biblical solution for individual Christians is to walk by faith in the inspired blueprints as given in the Word of God;

1. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with the unbelievers...come out of her, My people...let us go forth, therefore, unto Him, without the camp bearing His reproach” (II Cor. 6:14; Rev. 18:4 & Heb. 13:13).

2. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching...when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Heb. 10:25 & I Cor. 5:4).
3. “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:3-6).

PREFACE

To The First Edition

“THE SIN OF SECTARIANISM” is a unique collection of quotations from some of the world’s most respected preachers about this great carnality of Christendom. This book is sincerely dedicated to those of you who, as professing Christians, have chosen to fellowship within the fraternity of man-made denominational sectarianism. We hope that you will appreciate what your very own preachers have so clearly, eloquently and forcibly stated to be the truth regarding this sinful condition of sectarian institutionalism.

When some of us, who have stepped outside the pale of sectarian fraternalism, have tried to help you see from the Bible just how serious is this sin of division, we have been chided as fanatics or accused of being ignorant. Now, however, when you are faced with these truthful quotations from some of your own highly respected preachers, you should be red with embarrassment. Thus the title of the book is in red.

I talked to one minister in his office who was attempting to justify the existence of his sect. When I carefully used the Word of God to show his error, he responded by accusing me of having an inferior mentality to think that I could use the Bible to disprove denominations. Finally, I squarely faced him with a lengthy quotation from the president of the very seminary from which he, himself, had graduated (Edward John Carnell of Fuller Theological Seminary—see the listing in this book). This minister was clearly embarrassed by Carnell’s scathing rebuke of the mentality of denominational sectarianism. This minister quickly recovered, however, and said, “So what?” and with a subtle smile added, “These preachers have remained in their denominations, have they not?”

Instead of apologizing to me, or admitting his error, this minister took carnal comfort and protection behind the inconsistent walk of respected clergymen and leaders in denominationalism. The sad fact that

these leaders will, on the one hand vigorously expose the sin of sectarianism, yet all the while remain in their respective sects, only gives the occasion for carnal Christians to continue in that sin. Edward John Carnell, himself, admitted as he continued:

“The difficulty, of course, is that though this is cheerfully acknowledged in the abstract, the denominations are all the while taking active steps to insure the finality and perpetuity of their own vested interests.”

Just here I would remind you of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ as He admonished His disciples concerning how they were to regard the religious leaders of their day. Jesus said,

“The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and DO; but do not ye after their WORKS: for they SAY, and DO NOT” (Matt. 23:1-3).

The one main difference, therefore, between the early Jewish Apostles and the well-trained clerical leaders of Judaism was that the Apostles would WALK in the life and reality of the truth and not just TALK it. Likewise, the real difference, between those of us who publish this material and the popular denominational and sectarian preachers of today, is that we are WALKING in those truths and not just TALKING them. We who publish this material do so in the hope that you, too, will see these truths and decide to walk in them.

We agree with the observations made by these famous preachers who say denominationalism and sectarianism are sin, who preach the one true church, and who advise young Christians to walk in that church only. We do not endorse the satanic “solution” of creating one big man-made “Church.”

The spiritual command to God’s people is given us in Hebrews 13:13, “Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” The walk with Jesus Christ outside the camp of man-made religion is thrilling indeed—yea, a spiritual romance without equal. It is a walk wherein we share Christ’s loneliness, His persecution, His being misunderstood, and yet above all we share His exuberant joy and affection. Are you willing to walk with Him today?

Jack W. Langford

Servant of Christ,

February 17, 1978

PREFACE

To The Second edition

The main difference in this new edition of “The Sin Of Sectarianism” is the fact that I have doubled the number of ministers quoted and nearly quadrupled the body of text. Consequently there are many more pages to this edition. There are some important reasons for this that I would like to share with you. Also, there are some clarifications that I would like to make due to several criticisms of this booklet by sectarians. Bear with me, therefore, as you read this larger Preface to the second edition. First of all, then, I want to reiterate the purpose for this collection of quotations from denominational ministers. I want to do that by using an incident in the story of Gideon as an example.

God prepared for Gideon many miraculous signs in order to give him confidence to execute His plans. There was the appearance of an angel, the spontaneous ignition of an offering by the touch of a staff, and the sign of the wool fleece performed two different ways. None of these was as convincing or motivating to Gideon as were God’s instructions for him to secretly approach the camp of the Midianites late at night, where he would be able to overhear a prophecy of truth from the very lips of his enemies. For the Midianites, themselves, to prophesy the truth of what God would do by Gideon was the final evidence to cause Gideon to confidently execute God’s plan of deliverance.

We might smugly ask the question, “Why was Gideon not convinced by all the other signs God gave him?” The answer is clear. Gideon, like all the rest of us, was exceedingly weak and faithless and still lacked full confidence. God knew the extra boost that Gideon needed. If hearing the truth from this source didn’t convince Gideon, nothing would. You can read about this in Judges chapters 6 & 7. Now, my purpose for quoting these preachers and teachers from denominational and interdenominational churchanity (and God knows, I believe many of them are my dear brothers in Christ who are just “walking like men” in their carnal divisions) is to finally convince true servants of Christ that there is just one course of action for us to choose. That is to obey God and execute judgment on sectarian carnality. If hearing the truth from their own mouths doesn’t convince you, nothing will.

The fact is very evident that the message we have been preaching about the sin of sectarianism and the reality of just walking in the simplicity of the truth that “there is one body” is known to all denominational circles and has been preached, in theory at least, for centuries. In other words, when the denominationalists, themselves, admit the truth—then there should be no more disputing the facts. It is only pride and fear that causes men to not act upon the truth when God speaks it very plainly.

Someone else is bound to ask me, “Are you, herein, saying that everybody in denominations is lost and unsaved?” I answer that I am not. I am referring here to many of my Christian brothers in denominations as “enemies” only in the sense in which the Scripture speaks that whenever, and to whatever extent, any true believer goes back and walks in the flesh instead of his new nature, he is acting as an “enemy” of God—read James 4:4, Romans 8:6-8 with I Corinthians 3:1-4 and Galatians 5:16,17. I am also relatively certain that some of these men I quote were not saved at all and are “enemies” of God in the truest sense (Acts 13:10 & II Thess. 3:15).

I do not mean to assert that all the men whom I have quoted are not walking in any aspect of the truth about the church and the sin of sectarianism, because I am sure that some are, in varying degrees. It has been well understood that several of them had no intention whatsoever of starting a new denomination. At least one (William R. Newell) actually totally resigned himself from any denominational affiliation. A few began very simply and clearly in their Christian walk outside of any denominationalism. This was especially true in the case of Charles Chiniquy, as you read in his very moving testimony. It was also true in the case of John Bunyan. Yet, in later years these would succumb to the pressure of joining some denomination. Others functioned to a large extent with a consciousness of the total body of Christ. Still others were like John R. Rice, who in his later years tried desperately to shake loose from the taint of denominationalism. He tried to redefine the term “denomination” in his last book *Come In Or Stay Out*. The theme of his book is the ultimate doom of denominationalism. Yet, he maneuvered around his own denominational affiliation by semantics. First he concluded a scathing exposure of denominationalism with these words—

“I am saying that denominationalism tends to idolatry which controls the doctrine and methods and principles by which men live. It is a kind of idolatry, and that is a part of the reason for the downgrade perversion which almost inevitably, it seems, follows denominations.” (Page 161.)

Then, of necessity, he tries to explain why he is a Baptist—

“When I say I am a Baptist, I do not have reference to being a part of an iron-bound sect or denomination. I am a Baptist because I believe in the independence of a local church, in converted church membership, baptism of believers only and baptism by immersion. In other words, I am what Baptists have been historically in doctrine and convictions. When I say I am a Baptist, I do not mean that I am a member of a certain Lodge, or a certain sect, or certain fellowship.” (Page 236.)

Thinking he had satisfied any inconsistency, (he remained a “Baptist” to the day of his death) Mr. Rice returned to his original exposure of denominations—

“Jesus did not found the Baptist denomination, nor any other denomination. And the Lord Jesus is not specially holding the Baptist label sacred.” (Page 242.)

Had Gideon of old, after tearing down the idol of Baal that was in his father’s yard, tried to pacify the angry crowd of men who gathered the next day by telling them they should not be angry because he was still going to use the “Baal” label to describe his work for Jehovah, they would have thought he was a confused man, to say the least. Nevertheless, this is exactly what the above type of argument represents. Mr. Rice likened denominations to idolatry (which is perfectly true), and he was bold enough to include his own Baptist denomination as well. Then he turned around and declared that he was still going to use the idolatrous title, but mean something different by it. The end result is that it remains a confused “sacred label” after all.

Years ago I talked directly with Donald Grey Barnhouse, as to why he remained in the very liberal Presbyterian denomination, whereas J. Vernon McGee had publicly left that organization. Mr. Barnhouse gave a message at the “First Presbyterian Church” of Glendale, California, and explained his new theological position that the expression in the New Testament, such as in Ephesians, of “the body of Christ” or “the church which is Christ’s body” must be understood to mean ALL CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS. Therefore he argued that he was justified in staying in the Presbyterian Church and trying to clean it up because that organization was a part of the body of Christ. I and many others were absolutely flabbergasted. Donald Grey Barnhouse was one of the finest Bible teachers I ever heard in my life—yet, in his compromising walk, he exploded every line of spiritual logic and departed from most all Bible expositors on that subject. The body of Christ could only be made up of the saved people in the various organizations, including the Presbyterian, and not the denominations themselves.

One time I spoke with J. Vernon McGee out in front of the famous “Church of the Open Door” in downtown Los Angeles. He had just given an excellent and bold message from I Corinthians 3:1-4 & 1:10-13 on the subject of “What is the greatest carnality in Christendom?” Of course, in these passages it is evident that division among Christians is the greatest carnality, and so brother McGee did not spare in attacking the sin of sectarianism. Out in front of his Church I told him I appreciated his boldness. He thanked me and said that it is a much needed truth today. I then expressed my concern because I had also been present at an earlier meeting to hear him explain why he was withdrawing from the Presbyterian denomination. He justified his departure from that

organization because it had become liberal. A crowd began to gather around us. I said that I was also present when he openly joined a different denominational division called the Independent Fundamental Churches of America. McGee was clearly embarrassed because he obviously was walking in the very carnality he had condemned in his message.

McGee set his briefcase down and looked me in the eye and loudly demanded to know what Church I was a member of. I told him that I was glad to be a member of that church he was preaching about over his "High Noon" radio broadcast—"the church which is Christ's body." "Oh," McGee exclaimed, "that is the church in heaven," and pointing down to my feet he said, "I am asking about what church you are a member of down here!" I answered that the church that is "seated with Christ in heavenly places" is PRACTICAL DOWN HERE! And that is the one I am walking in down here.

In utter frustration McGee looked at the audience around us and exclaimed, "He is super-spiritual! Yes, he is super-spiritual!" He then picked up his briefcase and walked away from me to cross the street. However, he stopped right in the middle of the street, turned around, sat his brief case down again and yelled "HE IS SUPER-SPIRITUAL!" Then he picked up his brief case again and turned and walked into a parking lot for his transportation. Everyone just stood for a moment and looked at him walking away in his frustration.

These are illustrations of the frustrations of some great men who have refused to make a clean break with man-made denominational sectarianism and who are left bound in their contradictions. This is the kind of struggling some of these men have gone through in trying to harmonize their denominational affiliation with the plain Biblical fact that Christ is building only ONE church and it is not the Baptist, Presbyterian or the Independent Bible Churches nor any other sect. I am sure that I have now quoted extensively enough from every source of sectarian affiliation to satisfy any honest objective believer that though these preachers know the truth, they nearly all failed to walk in it.

Now some who have received the earlier edition of this booklet have charged me with not accurately representing some of these ministers whom I have quoted. They said that I jerked many quotations out of their contexts. This is the second reason why we now have a larger booklet. I have tried to include a larger context, in several instances, in order for you to see that I am not misrepresenting anyone. Under this pretext one managing editor had angrily demanded that I destroy all remaining copies of this booklet. He was actually just offended by it. When he saw this was futile, he finally stated in writing, "Neither (he) nor (the minister) had any objection whatsoever to being quoted as long as their positions were quoted accurately and not misrepresented." This I have endeavored

to do. If anyone thinks I have failed or erred, I will be glad to entertain corrections.

I have spent many hours tracing down original sources and accurate renditions of certain very well-known statements on this issue. I did eliminate one or two statements that were not verifiable. In other cases, I had to smile because I either found additional material or else the original source material was even stronger than the commonly circulated rendition. Let me give you a bold illustration. The very popular quotation from Martin Luther is commonly rendered in this country in the following manner, as I quoted in the first edition—

“Do not call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther?...How then does it benefit me who am but miserable dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ?”

Now this English rendition is a rather dignified version of what Luther actually said. In this second edition, I decided it would be more accurate and appropriate to quote the literal translation of Luther’s remark from the official Lutheran Concordia Publishing House source. So here it is—

“I ask that men make no reference to my name and call themselves not Lutherans but Christians. What is Luther? ...How, then, should I, a poor evil-smelling maggot sack have men give to the children of Christ my worthless name?”

Anyone who is familiar with the old German culture knows their speech could sometimes really be crude by our standards. Nevertheless, this is what Luther actually said. Its bluntness should stop any honest person and cause him to see the evil of calling oneself after some other name than that of Christ. Today, if someone were to proudly tell me that he belongs to the “Lutheran Church,” I could very frankly respond—“Oh, you belong to that ‘evil-smelling maggot-sack’ religion!” They would no doubt be tempted to punch me in the nose, even though that is exactly how Luther himself actually thought of it as he spoke the truth of God.

In addition, the people down at the Concordia Lutheran Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. would not dare put a sign out in front of their dignified institution—“CONCORDIA MAGGOT-SACK SEMINARY”—would they? And yet that is exactly what every man-made sectarian institution amounts to in the light of God’s truth. When I was in an inter-denominational Bible school, some of the seminary professors openly joked about these seminaries being better described as “cemeteries.” The sad fact is that it is not a joke. It is the truth. Proud seminaries are the direct product of the spirit of sectarianism. In the main, they are the spiritual mortuaries designed to perpetuate the names of the “dead” institutions of rotting “flesh.” I’m glad that I am no longer in that

business. In fact, I personally left such an institution in order to study the Word of God without sectarian biases and “Church traditions.”

Had Luther not said some shocking words before the religious hierarchy of his day, we may never have had the continuance of the “Reformation” to a greater magnitude.

May there be some weak Gideons who will hear this book of “prophecy” and courageously attack the religious conglomerations that smother the life and rob the harvests of true Biblical Christianity.

Jack W. Langford

January 2nd, 1991

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JOHN BUNYAN, Author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Grace Abounding*, *The Holy War*, and numerous other books. He spent nearly 14 years of his life in prison because he would not cooperate with the religious establishment of England. *Pilgrim's Progress* was a landmark in English literature. Next to the Bible it was the most widely read book in the English language until the 19th century.

(From, *John Bunyan's Complete Works*, By Gulliver, page 818.)

“Since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you I would be and hope I am a Christian; and choose, if God should count me worthy, to be called a Christian, a believer, or other such name as should be approved by the Holy Ghost. And as for those factious titles of Ana-Baptist, Presbyterian, Independent or the like, I conclude that they come neither from Antioch nor from Jerusalem, but from hell and Babylon, for they tend to division. You know them by their fruits.”

MARTIN LUTHER, (From, *What Luther Says - an Anthology*, by Ewald M. Plass, Vol.11, page 856, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.-1959.)

“I ask that men make no reference to my name and call themselves, not Lutherans but Christians. What is Luther? After all, the doctrine is not mine, nor have I been crucified for anyone. St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 3 would not allow Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian. How, then, should I, a poor evil-smelling maggot sack have men give to the children of Christ my worthless name? Not so, dear friends. Let us cast out party names and be called Christians after Him whose doctrine we have.”

CHARLES H. SPURGEON, Purported by Baptists and many others to be one of the greatest pulpiteers of modern times.

(From, *The Spurgeon Memorial Library*, Vol.1, page 168.)

“I am not particularly anxious about my own name, whether that shall endure forever or not, provided it is recorded in my Master's book. George Whitfield, when asked whether he would found a denomination, said, ‘No; Brother John Wesley may do as he pleases, but let my name perish; but let Christ's name last forever.’ Amen to that! Let my name perish; but let Christ's name last forever... for I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone.”

JOHN WESLEY, (From, *The Works of John Wesley*, in 7 volumes, by John Emory, and published by the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1831, Vol.5, page 240.)

“I say to those who are called Methodists; for, let it be well observed that this is not a name which they take to themselves, but one fixed upon them by way of reproach, without their approbation or consent. I should rejoice (so little ambitious am I to be at the head of any sect or party) if the very name might never be mentioned more, but if it be buried in eternal oblivion...”

GEORGE WHITFIELD, Pioneer preacher of Methodism.
(From a famous message delivered on the balcony of the courthouse on Market St. in Philadelphia.)

As if in conversation with Abraham in heaven, Whitfield cried out, “Father Abraham! Whom have you in heaven? Any Episcopalians?” And the response came, “No!” Whitfield continued, “Any Presbyterians? ‘No!’ Have you any Independents or Secessionists? ‘No!’ Have you any Methodists? ‘No! No! No!’ Whom then do you have up there?” Whitfield asked. “We don’t know those names here,” was the reply. “All who are here are Christians, believers in Christ, men who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” “Oh! If that be true,” cried Whitfield, “then God help us all to forget party names and to become Christians in deed and in truth!”

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, Eminent evangelical expository preacher and prolific writer of England.
(From his book, *The True Essence of Life*, page 191.)

“Do you get any comfort out of the divisions in the church of God? I hope you don’t! I hope you have never said that it is part of the Divine plan that Christendom should be split into a thousand fragments. I tell you it isn’t! He who prayed the great intercessory prayer, which took hold of heaven in my behalf, and yours, for all time said, ‘Father I would that they may be ONE, that the world may know that Thou has sent me.’ We are not ONE and that is why the world doesn’t know that God sent Jesus!”

BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF TEXAS, George W. Truett; J. B. Gambrell; J. L. Gross, etc.
(From, "*Christian Union Statement*" 1913, Book by J. F. Love DD., *The Union Movement*, page 78)

“We deplore the divisions that obtain among the lovers of Jesus Christ, and the many evils resulting therefrom. We long for Christian union. We pray for it and will labor for it... We maintain that the spiritual union does not depend on organizations, or forms or rituals. It is deeper, higher, broader, and more stable than any and all organizations.”

WILLIAM R. NEWELL, Assistant Superintendent of Moody Bible Institute, Chicago. Author and noted teacher of the “Union Bible Classes.” Called by Lewis Sperry Chafer, “One of America's greatest Bible expositors.”

(From his tract, *Stirring up the nest – Is Denominationalism Doomed? An exposition of I Corinthians Chapter 1.*)

“—I say, after this glorious assurance to them, the apostle immediately turns to the deadly troubles which were manifested in the assembly at Corinth. Later in the epistle he speaks of the horrible fact that one of them, and that a man held in honor, had his own father's wife (ch. 5)! Then in chapter 6 they are going to law with one another, and that before the unrighteous! And later, you remember, in 1 Cor. 15, he reveals the heresies that were among them—that ‘there was no resurrection of the dead.’

But the apostle takes up none of these troubles at the beginning! He immediately opens his exhortation to them by taking up the deadliest of all their sins, that of sectarianism. For just as legalism destroys the grace of the Gospel, so does sectarianism destroy the consciousness in the believer of being both a member of Christ and a member of every other believer: and all exhortation loses its power; for it is as members of Christ and of one another that believers have their fellowship.

Hear the apostle's words in chapter one, verse ten ff.: ‘Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms (divisions) among you; but that ye be perfected together in the SAME mind, and in the SAME judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas and I of Christ.’

Now if Paul had been writing today, he might have gone on; and I of Calvin; and I of Luther; and I of Arminius and I a Plymouth Brother, and I a Baptist, and I of an ‘episcopal’ form of church government; and I of ‘presbyterian’ form; and I of a ‘congregational.’ Indeed, it has come in these days of decay and ruin, to be about as we read at the close of the book of Judges, ‘Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.’

Now, either Scripture means nothing in the way of authority, or it means everything. I am not seeking here to decide for you what particular path you should take in obedience to Scripture, *but I am*

claiming for Scripture the right over you and me to illuminate the whole situation in any or every age; and God will make our personal path plain.

Here, then, at Corinth, believers claimed the right to divide among themselves according to their preferences, *and this is sectarianism*. Paul immediately and with apostolic authority—though in love, *denies this right!* Paul's solemn answer to all this is, *'Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?'*

Sectarianism is, we sincerely believe, the most unjudged, and the most insidious and deadly sin of Christendom! Many reading these words are right now claiming the right to call themselves by some other name than the scripture gives them. Some will be highly offended at what we are saying, and that is the purpose of this article. It is time you were offended, that you might discover how far you are walking from the truth.

I say, this is the great, unjudged sin among believers. For with perfectly unabashed, yea, self-righteous faces, they will name themselves by the name of some sect, and will actually regard those who reprove them for this sin with astonishment and indignation. Yea, these denominationalists are so utterly ignorant of the sin in which they are walking, that they will despise those who reprove them as 'not belonging to a received and respected denomination!' They will even affect to pity such as are outside the pale of what they regard as 'respectable Christianity.'

Now, we expect further to open out, from this Epistle to the Corinthians and elsewhere, the roots of this wickedness of sectarianism. For the astonishing things that we will be compelled to see will include the fact, that the great leaders and witnesses upon whom sectarians build, were not themselves sectarians! But, being taught of God, they broke away from what in their day was regarded as 'respectable Christianity,' testifying to and suffering for the truth of God.

Calvin was not a 'Calvinist', Luther was not a 'Lutheran.' Wesley was a thousand leagues from being a modern day 'Methodist'! John Bunyan would not allow himself to be included with the Baptist sects of today. Spurgeon indeed broke away from that of his day. John Darby was not a 'Plymouth Brother.' He was a witness, like these other men of God, for the truth, and really suffered for it! Wesley was not a fanatic; he was formally a Church of England man to the day of his death, although the Church of England was excluding him from her pulpits, and her adherents were stoning his preachers, for they could not bear the truth to which he witnessed! But the 'Methodists' of this day—for what truth do they suffer?

You say, 'You are stirring up our nest.' That is what we desire to do. Job said, 'I shall die in my nest.' But God stirred him out of it. If you should see an eagle tearing its nest to pieces, away up on the crag, and pushing its young over the rock, you would say, 'It is cruel.' No, it is

kind. It's outside the nest that eagles learn to fly! And it is outside your sectarian nest in which you were born and trained that you will learn to rely on God. Otherwise, you will say to the day of your death, 'I am a Presbyterian,' 'I am a Methodist,' 'I am a Baptist.'

And pray, pray, what are these things? I know from Scripture what a sinner is, and that you and I are both sinners. I know from Scripture that believers are saints. But when you retreat into your 'Presbyterian' nest or into your 'Episcopal' nest, you are not conscious any longer that you are just a common sinner, you have a religious consciousness. That is NOT of the Spirit of God; and you are a sectarian. You have a consciousness that is exactly as traditional as that of the Jews who killed the Lord. You think yourself better than the Romanist: but you are just like him.

What right have you to hold any other consciousness than that of a common 'no difference' slum sinner—now, by God's pure grace, given the gift of saving faith, and placed in the same glorious acceptance as His dear Son—a saint-by-calling, a new creation in Christ?"

W. B. RILEY, 40 years pastor of the 1st Baptist Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Called by Billy Graham to replace him as President of Northwestern Bible School of Minneapolis.

(From his message at the 9th Annual Convention of the World Christian Fundamentalist Association held in Atlanta, Georgia.)

"The Bible is not a book for difficult understanding and to separate Christians into factions. The trouble is they have come to their prejudicial opinions with their fixed philosophies and they have tried to find in these sacred pages the differences inherited hereto, and denominationalism has been the result. Is it any wonder that this modern 'Diana' is now being discredited, and shall it be a marvel if she suffers the same fate that befell Diana of the Ephesians? Or will we be surprised to find that the ecclesiastical officials who have financially profited at their false fine altars and despairing of their livelihood, say, 'Sirs, we know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover, we see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but to the end of the world these fundamentalists are turning away much people saying that denominationalism is divisive. So that not only our craft is in danger to be set at naught, but even the great Denomination itself may come to be despised and her magnificence destroyed.' Some of us have seen enough. Our hearts are sick at the sight. We know that our denominationalism means nothing to us but a defection. It seems to bind into a brotherhood men that have nothing in common but a brand of the same name. We should come out!"

DONALD GREY BARNHOUSE, Presbyterian Pastor, outstanding Bible teacher and Editor in Chief, *Eternity Magazine*.

(From his booklet, *We Are One Body In Christ—A Vital Statement on a Biblical Doctrine Neglected by Too Many Believers*.)

“The Unsolved Problem—

Now, in the light of this passage (1 Cor. 12:12-27), we face one of the most serious questions of our century—the problem of the Church... I am convinced that we can find the answers only by ascertaining what the Bible has to say, and submitting to its teaching. Brunner says, ‘This Ecclesia (the early church) is so different from what is today called the Church in both the Roman and Protestant camps. It is, however, a well known fact that dogmatics and church leaders often pay but small attention to the results of New Testament research, and are only too ready to bridge the gulf between then and now by a handy formula such as that of development, or by appealing to the distinction between the visible and invisible Church, and thus to give a false solution to this grave and distressing problem.’ But while many theologians and Church leaders are able to quieten their consciences by such formulae, others are so much the more painfully aware of the disparity between the Christian fellowship of the apostolic age and our own ‘churches’ and cannot escape the impression that there may perhaps be something wrong with what we now call ‘the Church’...

Here in America we are so rich in numbers of Protestants that perhaps we can afford to divide and still be strong. But the minute one goes out over the world—onto the so-called ‘mission fields,’ such as Japan—the issue stands out in glaring light... But, when we realize that these one thousand Christians are divided into six denominations, we begin to comprehend the magnitude of the sin of dividing the body of Christ... How the horror of divisiveness comes into clearer focus... It was considered wrong for a Christian to say, ‘I am of Paul,’ while another said, ‘I am of Peter;’ and a third, ‘I am of Apollos.’ Hear the anguished cry of Paul: ‘Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?’ (I Cor. 1:13).

During the past few years, it has been positive pain to me that Christ is divided in the midst of the churches today. It ought not so to be...

The problem of the lack of oneness among believers is the greatest problem in Christendom today. Beyond any question, the Church is divided; and, in the clear light of Scripture, such a condition is scandalous. In the hymn ‘Onward Christian Soldiers,’ we sing a lie: - ‘We are not divided, all one body we; One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.’ Even while we sing it, we know that it is not true. That untruth is a sin, but the fact of our division is itself sin. We are divided."

A. C. GAEBELEIN, Expository preacher, editor and writer of fame.
(From his message at a Los Angeles Bible Institute Conference and put
into tract form—*The Apostasy Sweeping Over the Churches.*)

“And now let me come to the most solemn part. What is God's call? I will give it to you as it is written in this book (Bible). Moses comes down from the mountain. He sees the altar and the golden calf, the naked multitude, drinking of wine, the words of blasphemy, and the first words he speaks are (Exodus 32:26): ‘Who is on the Lord's side—let him come unto me.’ The next words he speaks are (v.29): ‘consecrate yourselves today to the Lord,’ and then the third, ‘Take the sword and cut them off.’...

Listen again—Aholiab and two hundred and fifty princes had revolted against Aaron. They reject Aaron as priest and said, ‘We also are holy, we don't need Aaron.’ This is the same thing Christendom says today. ‘We don't need Christ, we have good things in ourselves, we don't need His priesthood.’ What did Moses say? ‘And he spake unto the congregation saying, “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men and touch nothing of theirs lest ye be consumed.”’ He says, ‘Depart; do not touch a thing; get out of their tents; out of their villages, even if it is a brother or sister; get away from them.’ But you say, ‘That is the command of the law. Whoever says that is harsh and that is unchristian.’ Is it? Listen to what the beloved disciple says. ‘Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ knoweth not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ (the cross and all that goes with it), he hath the Father and the Son. If there are any that come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.’

That is the same thing Moses said, and whether it is the law or in the Gospel, God does not change his demands when it comes to believing on Himself and His Word.

That is God's call, ‘Depart; get away from them; do not touch their books; do not buy their literature; do not support their institutions; do not pay the preacher's salary, if he does not preach the truth. If you do, the Lord is going to hold you responsible for them.’

Again Paul says, ‘From such turn away;’ Purge yourself from the vessels which are dishonored, that ye might be vessels for the Master's use.

Some Christians have told me that they are to remain in Laodicea until the Lord gives them a call to leave. He has given the call. It is here and what is happening and will happen is the separation of God's true church from the church of the world, the church of the apostasy and of Laodicea. But you say, ‘Where am I going?’ Well, go first to the Lord and then you will have fellowship with the true saints of God. When you get into the fellowship of the true saints of God you get power, you get blessing, you have the reality of the Lord and He is going to use you.”

(From his book, *The Church in the House*, pages 6 & 7.)

“*The Church in the House!* In the middle of the first century there existed no great, world-famous buildings in which so-called ‘Christian worship’ was carried on. They did not build cathedrals with lofty spires, with stained glass windows, with artistic carvings of apostles and saints, with altars patterned after the Jewish worship in the temple. They did not know anything about a priesthood officiating in robes of royal splendor, swinging incense, chanting, crossing themselves, celebrating the high mass with candle light.. .nor did they use an elaborate ritual, but all praise, all worship was under the direction of the indweller of the true Church, the Holy Spirit. Nor did they know anything of different sects and parties, the present day unfortunate divisions in Christendom.

The original Church in the House met around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ for simple worship and praise, for the reading of the Word of God, the declaration of the Gospel, and the feeding of the flock of God through the gifts the risen Christ has given to His Body.

There should be a revival of ‘the Church in the house’ in our times. Ritualism is increasing everywhere; it is the worship in the flesh and not the worship in the Spirit. No true believer can find the food there he needs, and on account of the perversions of the Gospel he rejects it completely.”

CHARLES CHINIQUEY, For 25 years a Roman Catholic Priest of high honors. Receiving great notoriety from the Canadian Parliament, and the Apostolic Benediction from Pope Pius the 9th, as the “Apostle of Temperance of Canada.” He had the unique experience of being defended successfully in court by Abraham Lincoln. He authored the book “*Fifty Years In The Church Of Rome.*”

(From his sequel, *Forty Years In The Church Of Christ*, pages 120-125.)

The following account took place at a union meeting of the ministers of Philadelphia in 1859.

“At the invitation of Mr. Stuart, the ministers came to the front. After a fervent prayer from one of them, the assembly was organized into a new one under the presidency of George H. Stuart, in order to put to me the questions they desired about our colony and myself. One of the leading ministers then asked me if I had joined any denomination.

I answered, ‘No, sir, not yet. After we had accepted Christ for our only Saviour and the Gospel for our only rule of faith, we publicly gave up our allegiance to the Church of Rome and we called ourselves Christian Catholics.’ ‘Why did you not connect yourselves with one of our great Christian denominations?’ asked that reverend gentlemen. ‘That denomination would have taken you by the hand, and they would have helped you through your present difficulties.’

I answered, 'The joining of one of your denominations is a more difficult thing than you suspect. You have no idea how your unfortunate divisions look to the eyes of a new convert from Rome. As you want me to speak plainly, I will tell you the truth on that subject. Your divisions are a frightful scandal to us: they make us unspeakably sad. There we see the grand Episcopal Church so much opposed to what she calls the dissenters, that she will not allow a single one of their ministers to speak in her pulpits, or receive the communion at her altars. Here we find the Presbyterians divided into several camps fiercely fighting against each other. Every one of you knows how the United States are just now filled with the deplorable scandals of the war between the two grand sections of the Presbyterians under the names of Old School and New School. A little further we find the Lutherans with their crucifixes and so many other ways of Romanism, assuring us that they are the best branch of the Church of Christ. But at a little distance further we see and hear the fiery and pious Methodists telling us a very different story. I have many reliable volumes in my library showing me that there are more than 100 different denominations of Protestants, many of them fighting each other like wildcats! How can we find which is the best, the most evangelical, the most really Christian among that multitude of denominations, when they, more or less, condemn each other? Have you ever thought of the amount of study required to know which is the surest, the shortest way to heaven among so many roads which lead into such different, not to say opposite, directions? Do you not see that this is a most intricate, difficult, not to say impossible thing, for a man just coming out from the dark dungeons of Popery? Oh! dear Christian friends, why are you not one? Your divisions, your animosities, your quarrels are a terrible stumbling-block to us. When will come the happy day when the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Methodists and the Congregationalists, etc., will embrace each other and forget their differences at the dear Saviour's feet! Then the world will be saved. Then and then only this world will be brought by an irresistible, a Divine power, to the feet of the Lamb who will make the people pure with His blood, and free with His Word!'

'You advise me, my dear and venerable brethren, to join one of your denominations! It is my prayerful desire since the happy day I found my dear Saviour Jesus Christ, Who washed my soul in His blood. But the more I study your different books of explanations about your peculiar articles of faith, the more I find it difficult, not to say impossible, to make a choice. And the more I think that we, the new converts of Rome, do well to accept for the only rule of faith the answer of our Saviour to the young lawyer who asked Him "Good Master, what must I do to have everlasting Life?" "Love God, My Father, Who has so much loved you, that He has sent Me to save you. Love your neighbour as yourself, repent, believe, invoke My name, and you will be saved." Is that not the very platform brought from heaven by the Son of God to save the

world? My heart is sad when you invite me to join one of your denominations. For I want to join them all.. I want to embrace them all and press them all to my heart as equally being the children of God. Beloved of Christ, I do not want to reject a single one of you, so long as you love our Saviour Jesus Christ and believe in His atoning blood to save us. But if I unite with the grand Episcopal Church for instance, will I not then be deprived of proclaiming my Saviour's love in the other churches? Will it not be a sad necessity to consider myself above the rest of my Methodist, Baptist, or Congregationalist brethren? If I unite with the Baptists, after being immersed, will I not be forbidden to sit at the Lord's table, as a brother, with the Presbyterians and the rest of the Christians? Will not the rest of the disciples of Christ be as excommunicated, profane men, and stranger to me?'

'Are you prepared to tell me that that platform built by the hands of Christ Himself, "Love God and thy neighbour, repent, believe in Me, invoke My name" is not large enough to keep us all: or that it is not holy enough to save us all?'

'But I do not come here to teach you, my beloved and venerable brethren, I come to be taught by you. It is my desire to follow your advice and if possible join with one of your Christian denominations. For I feel that if we do not, our newly converted congregations will soon form, as a new division, a new denomination, under the name of Chiniquy's church—a thing which we must avoid at any cost. That appellation of Chiniquy's church has already been given us, to my great distress, by the Roman Catholics. But this choice of the denomination with which we will unite requires a great deal of attention, study and prayer. Please tell us how much time you give us to make that choice?'

The reverend gentleman who had been selected to address me, said, 'As you have already read and thought much about that matter, we think that you could give us your choice tomorrow. We answer, I pledge my word of honour, that the denomination you will join will take you and your converts by the hand, and help you to go through the difficulties by which your faith is so much tried.'

And turning his face towards the ministers surrounding him, he said: 'Do you not sanction what I have said, and do you not promise Father Chiniquy that you will do all in your power to persuade your church to help him when he will have connected himself with one of our denominations?' They all answered, 'yes! we do promise that.' I then said, 'I cannot sufficiently thank you, venerable and dear brethren, for this unexpected, unmerited, and so great kindness towards me. You give me one day to consider which is the most evangelical Christian denomination among you, and if I join that denomination, my dear people and myself will be delivered from the terrible calamity which is upon us! This is very kind, very liberal indeed! But allow me to show you that I am still more liberal than you are. I do presently give you three

days to consider and solve that great question of the most evangelical Church.’

‘If it is an easy task for me, as you say, to find out that great and marvelous secret in one day, it will be more easy for you all to find it in three days. I am here alone, without experience, and without knowledge of the great questions involved in that finding: whilst you will not only be sixty against one to resolve that great problem, but you are among the most learned men of the United States, being also well versed in all the questions and the difficulties involved in that work. Yes! I ask you again, please take three days for your researches, and the moment you unite in finding what I want to know, tell it to me. I solemnly promise here that I will connect with that denomination at once.’

The last word was not yet out of my mouth when a burst of enthusiastic applause shook the very walls of the vast edifice. Every one seemed to be beside himself. They were clapping their hands, striking the floor with their feet, waving their handkerchiefs in sign of approbation, and crying, ‘Bravo! Bravo! That is right! That is right!’

Mr. Stuart, who had been among the most enthusiastic in applauding, rose, and said, ‘The lesson Father Chiniquy has just given us, is one of the best we ever had: it is worth a million of dollars. I wish all the echoes of our vast plains and high mountains would carry them over all the Protestant Churches of the five continents. Father Chiniquy has put us Protestants into a bag out of which we cannot escape. Yes! our miserable, ridiculous divisions are a shame! How can we ask him to do a thing which not one of us can do—nay, a thing which cannot be done by sixty, by a million of us! Would to God that we were one as our Saviour Jesus Christ wants us to be one, that the world might see that He is really the Saviour of our world. Without that unity, I fear much that our Christianity is a sham! Would to God that our theologians would have kept the Christian nations on that platform on which Father Chiniquy and his people stand today!’

‘I move that no more effort be made to ask him and his converts to come down from that large and divine platform which he has so wisely chosen and on which he so nobly stands! Is he not safe on it? Who will second my motion?’ And the whole assembly—ministers and people—were on their feet to second it.”

JOHN BOLTEN, SR., President of *The Sunday School Times*, which has been published since 1859 and is interdenominational.

(From his feature article, *The Living Church*, *The Sunday School Times*, Vol.107, No.43, October 23, 1965, Lesson for November 7th.)

“Of the many crises in the life of our Lord Jesus, perhaps the most crucial was His confrontation with Satan in the desert, when the Enemy led Him to the top of a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms

of this world. 'I will give them to you,' Satan told Him. 'You need not suffer. You need not go to the cross. All you have to do is kneel once before me, and all is yours—all the kingdoms, riches, power, and glory of this world.' The Lord rejected Satan's offer with complete finality, and sent him away with the words: 'It is written! It is written!'

A few centuries later it seemed as if Satan took the church to the very same mountain, and to her, also, he showed the kingdoms of this world—their power and their glory. And again, with the same words, he enticed the church and said: 'All is yours. All. Take it. It is mine, and I can give it to you.' The church took it, and for a time it looked as though the Lord had died in vain, and in vain had rejected the temptation in the desert. It seemed as though the work of the cross had been wiped out, the plan of God thwarted.

The pages of history reveal that at the end of the Dark Ages, Christendom in Europe was so corrupted that it could no longer be recognized as a Christian church. Rome had departed from God's truth. The New Testament was unknown; the Bible, available only in a foreign tongue. The popes ruled, and the foundation truths of the Scriptures were almost buried under ritual and tradition. Suddenly, God again selected a single man to turn, not only Germany, but all Europe back to God and back to the Word of God.

We see Martin Luther before the Diet of Worms, the Bible in his hands, facing the emperor, cardinals and bishops, princes and potentates, all assembled in one great meeting. It was the last time Luther was permitted to speak in his own defense.

'Since then your Majesty and your Lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the other. My conscience is captive to the word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand! I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen.'

These words, which Luther spoke some 400 years ago, have resounded down the corridors of time to our own day. The words have remained the same, but their power is gone. For Luther, the Bible was the final authority. In the hour of decision, Luther stood steadfastly, irrevocably, and unconditionally on the Word of God! His conscience was bound to it.

Today many in the churches have lost this stand. They *can* see things from different points of view. They *can* do otherwise. That is the great change that has taken place. Since they no longer consider the Holy Scriptures their sole authority in doctrine and practice, since the Bible is no longer the bedrock of their thinking, since their conscience is no longer captive to the Word of God, their ideas about the church have again become warped, confused and unbiblical.

We have proof of this in the large number of Christian groups all calling themselves 'churches.' In his undisciplined thinking and on his

own authority, man has formed a variety of 250 denominations—a most deplorable development. Small wonder that a thinking person today cannot make any sense out of the multiplicity of church ceremonies, church divisions, church rules and regulations, and other human inventions.

Perhaps this is the reason why more and more the question is being asked by Bible believing Christians, by Christendom's own church members, and also by thoughtful theologians: 'What is the nature of the church?' And, in particular, 'What is the nature of *my* church, the one to which I belong? Is it a New Testament church, or do I also belong to one of the 250 human varieties?'

The *ekklesia*, the church of God, is very clearly and unmistakably described by the Divine Architect in a detailed blueprint—the New Testament. It should not be difficult for anyone who wants to know the truth to find out that the present ecclesiastical system, as historically developed through the centuries in its pomp, cult, and ritual, is a totally different house, built by a totally different builder and architect. It is a new thing, an invention of man.

Is it not time that we consider seriously what God and our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to build here on earth? I should like to challenge all who really want to know the truth, cost what it may, to forget all the traditions of man in which they have grown up, all our organizations and activities that have become so precious to them, and look at the New Testament to find God's plan for the church...

This church, the *ekklesia* of God, is something totally different from the organized church, or what we call Christendom. Here we see a confused mass of 250 or more competing organizations and institutions, each with its own name, a name that to many of its members has more value than the name of Jesus Christ. The present confusion of our ecclesiastical system is the product of man's activity for almost 2,000 years. Man took the initiative out of the hands of God. *Man* wants to build the church. *Man* wants to be its master.

But the *ekklesia* is not an institution. It is not an organization. It is not being built by man. And it is different from all that man has built, or can build, or will build. The *ekklesia* is a fellowship of redeemed sinners, sinners saved by grace through the blood of Christ.

Immediately some theologians will answer: 'True. But we must organize this fellowship, rule it, and govern it. Otherwise it will not last for any length of time. We must be concerned for the continuity of our faith.'

But once God's truth has gripped our soul, shaken it to its very foundation, given us a glimpse of His almighty power and glory, then we can only feel pity for such human reasoning. The continuity of our faith depends on holding fast the Head, and on obeying our Lord and Master, as the first Christians did.

The first Christians had no systems of theology, no schools, no colleges, no books, no church history to confuse them and lead them astray. Their faith and their new life depended on God—and on God alone. They did not follow a church system, but a Person! They followed the Lord Jesus Christ and made Him the focal point of all things. They took their orders from Him, and Him alone. The churches today, on the contrary, are dependent on their own systems, institutions, and organizations. They are imbued with a strong desire to continue old behavior-patterns and cults...

If one examines church history, one will look in vain for the New Testament pattern of the church. Nowhere, either in the present nor on the long road through the centuries, is the rock visible, on which Christ built His church. All we see is shifting sand. Do we dare believe that God, Who has placed everything under the power of Christ and has made Him head over everything for the church, intended this confused structure of a variety of 250 denominations? That is an absurd assumption.

What is the remedy for this confusion? From a human, a purely intellectual point of view, it seems quite reasonable to say: 'Let us unite the 250 different divisions into one world organization.' But even if all the 250 different denominations could be amalgamated, they would not constitute the *ekklesia!*

All such attempted reorganizational unity will never bring us closer to the New Testament church. All these efforts of man to organize the *ekklesia* of God will fail. The activity of the Holy Spirit cannot be organized. This is unnatural, unscriptural, and foolish...

Nowhere in the New Testament do we read that some persons had special rights over others. But their extraordinary duties are mentioned again and again. Deacons and overseers, bishops, evangelists, pastors, teachers—all were called to perform special service, and not to demote the other members of the *ekklesia* in their service to the status of layman or amateur. On the contrary, their appointment was to free every member of the *ekklesia* from anything that would hinder him in the work of the Lord. Not only the individual, but even more so, the *ekklesia* as a whole, as a unit, was used by the Holy Spirit...

What the Lord refused to do in His temptation in the desert, the church had done. It had bowed before the world and its power. It had become part of the world! It had accepted a man instead of God as the head of the church. From this time on, not only head and body made up the new man in Christ Jesus; something new was added—the clergy and laymen...

This is exactly what we see today. The head no longer rules the body. As a result, the body has become a senseless, foolish organism. If we would change this tragic condition, there is only one course of action: Break the power that is now strangling the church; hold fast the Head, which is Christ!

We are not advocating fanaticism against organization as such. There are evangelists, pastors, and teachers in the church—and they are necessary. There are rules and doctrines, just as the body has hands and feet, eyes and ears. But they all function under one will. They are tools in the hands of the Lord, the Head of the church. They do not act independently. Only if the Head orders the hand to work and the foot to go will there be direction and purpose to these activities and functions of the body...

How little understanding of the *ekklesia* there is today! How few realize that it is a portion of Heaven reaching into our time and our world—an island, a veritable colony from Heaven! The *ekklesia* is God's *lebensraum*—God's space for living on this earth.

To become a member in the *ekklesia*, there is only one requirement: the new birth. Man was lost in trespasses and sin, beyond remedy, a corpse, dead beyond all hope of life. But God did the impossible. He sent His Son. Together with Christ He quickened dead and hopeless man to a new life. This company of believers in Christ, this new creation, is the beginning of a new world. This company of redeemed sinners is the living fulfillment of God's triumphant, final promise: 'Behold! I make all things new.'

Such a concept should leave us breathless with wonder and adoration. In the light of this stupendous revelation, how trivial and childish are all our attempts to add to this divine structure the hay and stubble of human organizations, tradition, and culture! All these will burn to the ground, leaving nothing but dust. But the temple of God, the *ekklesia*, will remain forever. 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it!'

Compare this indestructible, majestic structure of God's love and grace—God's eternal plan for His own—with the vast monuments of ecclesiastical power of our day, whether they be buildings of stone or systems of human pride. Is there any comparison? Is there any similarity or identity? None at all!

But there is an enormous difference between the *ekklesia* of God and the church organizations of man. The *ekklesia* is the habitation of the holy God. The *ekklesia* is the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth, while the organized church is a mixture of life and death, a mixture of good and evil, a mixture of lies and truth, the corrupt masterpiece of Satan!

In view of the nature and glory of the church, as the Holy Spirit has revealed them to us in the New Testament, several salient points emerge. The first is this: We believers compose a fellowship whose members belong together for time and eternity—a fellowship that transcends national and geographic boundaries, and completely ignores intellectual and economic difference. We do not have to be driven together; we belong together! We do not need any organizations or

outward pressure to convince us of our essential unity. If we are Bible-believing, born-again Christians, saved by the blood of our Lord and Savior, we are bound together through His Holy Spirit.

Our oneness is in Jesus Christ! Our loyalty is to Him! Here and here alone are all our guarantees: the guarantees of our life, our power, our hope of glory, and of an eternal inheritance. Once sinners saved by grace, now we are one in Christ! He the head—we the body! Oh, that the reality of His glorious name would so fill our hearts that we might again experience the unity of the children of God and the wonder of His fellowship!

Another fact of prime importance is that as members of His church we have been called out of this world. Jesus said in John 17:14, 17: ‘They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world... Sanctify them through the truth: Thy word is truth.’ ‘I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou has given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them’ (John 17:9, 10).

If this is true, then our home is not this world. Heaven is our home. As long as we are on earth, we are ambassadors of God with a mission to fulfill. All our love, all our loyalty, belong to our Lord whose ambassadors we are. We are not permitted to follow our own will, but His instructions. We have no future here on earth. Our future belongs to the King Who sent us here. There, with Him, is our inheritance, our home, our hope, our future. All our love and longing go Him, Who loved us to the uttermost.”

EDWARD JOHN CARNELL, President of Fuller Theological Seminary.
(From his book, *The Case For Orthodox Theology*, pages 129-132.)

“Jesus prayed that his followers would be knit together with such perfect cords of love that when the world saw the church it would see an image of the Son's union with the Father.

‘The glory which Thou has given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, I in them and Thou in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that Thou has sent Me and hast loved them even as thou has loved Me.’ (John 17:22, 23). In commenting on this passage, J. C. Ryle observes: ‘We can ask no stronger proof of the value of unity among Christians, and the sinfulness of divisions, than the great prominence which our Master assigns to the subject in this passage. How painfully true it is that in every age divisions have been the scandal of religion, and the weakness of the church of Christ! How often Christians have wasted their strength in contending against their brethren, instead of contending against sin and the devil! How repeatedly they have given occasion to the world to say, “When you have settled your own internal differences, we will believe!”’...

But what does the world see when it looks at the church? Instead of a warm fellowship where each prefers his brother in love, it sees a knot of quarreling sects. 'Once Parthians and Medes and Elamites, Cretans and Arabians, the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, heard the common language of the gospel with a common joy. Now they and their modern heirs are without a common language; the joy of the great community has been lost in the bickerings, rivalries, and misunderstandings of divided sects. The accord of Pentecost has resolved itself into a Babel of confused sounds; while devout men and women continue devoutly to confess, Sunday by Sunday, "I believe in one, holy, catholic church!"' (H. R. Niebuhr). When the gospel incites a spirit of rancor among those who claim to be its finest product, what attraction will the gospel have to outsiders?

While the world is offended by the physical divisions in the church, the real offense is the manner in which these divisions are used as vehicles of pride and pretense. 'Denominationalism in the Christian Church is such an unacknowledged hypocrisy. It is a compromise, made far too lightly, between Christianity and the world. Yet it often regards itself as a Christian achievement and glorifies its martyrs as bearers of the cross. It represents the accommodation of Christianity to the caste system of human society. It carries over into the organization of the Christian principle of brotherhood the prides and prejudices, the privileges and prestige, as well as the humiliations and abasements, the injustices and inequalities of that specious order of high and low wherein men find the satisfaction of their craving for vainglory. The divisions in the churches closely follow the division of men into the castes of national, racial, and economic groups.' (H. Richard Niebuhr *The Social Sources of Denominationalism.*)

Denominational distinctives are an index to our blindness, not our vision, for if we knew Christ as we ought, we would succeed in mediating the gospel without dividing brother from brother on the level of the local community. As Melville observes, 'Heaven have mercy on us all—Presbyterians and Pagans alike—for we are all somehow dreadfully cracked about the head, and sadly need mending.' The Apostles went everywhere preaching the gospel, but sectarians go everywhere preaching the Episcopal view of succession, the Lutheran view of the real presence, the Baptist view of immersion, the Methodist view of holiness, and the Pentecostal view of speaking in tongues. Church history proves that denominational distinctives trace to very ambiguous evidences. They have no right to share honors with the gospel; they are adjectives not nouns.

The difficulty, of course, is that though this is cheerfully acknowledged in the abstract, the denominations are all the while taking active steps to ensure the finality and perpetuity of their own vested interests. As a result, new walls are raised against a truly church-wide fellowship. For example, when a young seminarian appears before the

committee on ordination, the decisive question is not, do you believe the gospel and will you preach it with power and conviction? But rather, will you support the program of the denomination? Ordination should be for the Christian ministry; denominationalism makes it an initiation into the cult.”

(Further quotations from Carnell, that show double-talk. He remains an ordained Baptist minister.)

“As long as sin dwells in our members, divisions in the church will be natural and necessary; but to say that they are natural and necessary does not mean that they are desirable or good. Christian fellowship repudiates any separation of brother from brother in the community of faith.

Original sin prevents history from accepting its own ideas—including the idea of visible Christian unity. As long as sin dwells in our members, we shall continue to express our faith along sectarian lines that are partly a refutation of that faith. But this ambiguity is merely an occasion for love to manifest its creative possibilities. Love understands why divisions in the church are simultaneously necessary and sinful. There is a risk in freedom, and love cheerfully accepts this risk. Parents do not conform their children to some abstract standard; nor does a gardener make all his flowers alike; for the beauty is in the variety.”

(Please observe the beauty in the variety of denominational flowers that Carnell has planted—“sinfulness, pain, scandals, weakness, rivalries, caste system, Babel, divisions, no attraction, quarreling, refutation, hypocrisy, blindness, no good, misunderstanding, compromise, bickerings, offenses, undesirable, no right to share, repudiates fellowship, etc.” Aren't they beautiful? - J.W.L.]

JACK VAN IMPE, Evangelist and president of Jack Van Impe Ministries, Royal Oak, Michigan.

(From *The Fundamentalist's Journal*, April 1983, JERRY FALWELL, Editor.)

“EDITORS' NOTE - It is evident from Jack Van Impe's article *‘That They All May Be One,’* that Rev. Van Impe has taken a position to which he is so committed that it has resulted in his discontinuation of citywide crusades and a personal apology to the body of Christ. That his heart has been laid bare cannot be denied.”

“The following transcript was taken from a message delivered by Rev. Jack Van Impe to the International Christian Education Association at Cobo Hall, Detroit, October 22, 1982.”

“The Lord Jesus, in His high priestly prayer said: [Father], As Thou has sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the

world. Neither pray I for these alone [My sent ones], but for them also which shall believe on Me [converts of future generations] through their word; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me' (John 17:18, 20, 21).

The unity or oneness of the family of God is the purpose of the Lord's prayer. Imagine, God in the flesh prayed that all Christians in all eras of time might have love for one another as a sign that Christianity is genuine. Is it any wonder that Jesus said in John 13:35: 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another'?

We Fundamentalists have often shied away from this text on oneness because of its constant use by the perpetrators of the one-world church—but should we discard the baby with the bathwater simply because an opponent has used it? Never. Such a position is woefully wrong when one considers that the desire of the Savior's heart is that all true believers—past, present and future—be united in love. Since we are to be 'doers of the word, and not hearers only' (James 1:22), we soothe our consciences by convincing ourselves that the oneness for which Jesus prayed is realized and fulfilled solely through loving believers within our own denominational affiliation. How wrong! This is only the tip of the iceberg.

First Corinthians 12:13 declares: 'For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.' This is not a Baptist, Nazarene, Pentecostal, Wesleyan Methodist, Christian & Missionary Alliance, or Evangelical Free Church body. Rather it is the one body of Jesus Christ composed of all born-again believers in numerous denominations. Oh, if the church of Jesus Christ would quit sporting its labels and begin exalting the Savior, calling themselves by His name—Christ or Christians—then love for one another would become the effectual force it was meant to be within the evangelical scene. It's too bad that God, Who chose us and called us to salvation (Eph. 1:4), did not do it through one denomination. This would have made unity much simpler (ha!).

The only meaningful label in eternity will be 'Christian.'

Don't misunderstand me; I am a Baptist, a Fundamentalist, and a separatist, and practice Romans 16:17 and 2 John 7-11. However, this separation is based exclusively on the doctrine of Christ: His deity, Virgin Birth, blood atonement, bodily resurrection and return—not one's personal standards or rules based on a misinterpretation of these texts."

MERRILL F. UNGER, A recognized Bible scholar. Author of a Bible Dictionary and Handbook and numerous other works. Professor of Semitics and Old Testament at the Dallas Theological Seminary until 1965.

(From his book, *Biblical Demonology*, pages 169, 170, 173-180.)

“In view of the ceaseless industry of Satan and his vast cohorts of demon-helpers, zealously bent upon instigating error, and perverting and distorting the truth of God as the chief barrier to the progress and success of their nefarious program for the world, the oft perplexing problem of the prevalence of so many conflicting sects and isms in professing Christianity, with such contrariety of doctrinal opinion, even among those of the same denominational affiliation, becomes less and less difficult of explanation. The recognition of demonism as the source of doctrinal deception is the only adequate basis upon which to account for the modern religious Babel, and the present-day confusion of tongues...

The lamentable facts of Christian disunity and disharmony must largely remain an unsolved riddle, a source of endless misunderstanding, and a prolific cause of stumbling to those ignorant of the devices of Satan (II Cor. 2:11) and the reality of the spiritual world of evil. Satan has thus gained large advantage over many, because of a widely prevailing incomprehension of even the first principles of Biblical demonology, and because of a manifest unacquaintance with even an elementary knowledge of the power and reality of demonic deception...

The Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, is the great Unifier. In answer to the Saviour's fervent intercessory prayer that those whom the Father has given Him ‘may all be one’ (John 17:11,21,22), the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost to unite all God's people positionally into ‘one body,’ the Church, by the baptism with the Spirit (I Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3- 4; Eph. 4:5, Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27). The most impassioned exhortations of the Holy Spirit, through this Apostle, are to the end that God's people may maintain experimentally the unity which they possess positionally, by the Spirit's baptizing work (Eph. 4:1-6; Phil. 2:2-3).

Whereas the ‘Spirit of truth’ is the great Unifier, ‘the spirit of error’ (I John 4:6) is the great divider. Satan and demons have the keenest perception and appreciation of the eminent practicality of the old adage, ‘in unity there is strength.’ When unable to keep their victims from contact with truth, light, and salvation, they resort to the next best device to further their detestable plans. With serpentine subtlety and venomous malignity, they strike at the very foundation of Christian unity to disrupt and disorganize the efficiency and testimony of those, who, when standing together, possess such exhaustless energy, and wield such tremendous power against them...

That Scripture views the destruction or impairment of Christian unity as one of the chief disasters and calamities of demonic deception and the satanic introduction of false doctrine into the Church, appears clear from the prevailing New Testament use of the term ‘heresy’ (*hairesis*). This word is never employed in its strict modern sense, as meaning ‘heterodoxy’ or ‘doctrinal aberration,’ but consistently denotes a ‘sect’ or ‘faction’ produced by the introduction of such error—thus inseparably identifying heresy with factional division.

It is true, however, that the later meaning attached to the word in ecclesiastical language and common parlance is, perhaps, implied in one passage in Peter's second Epistle; yet even here the emphatic idea is the doctrinal divisions themselves, rather than the erroneous 'opinions' or 'tenets' producing such divisions. 'But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies (*haireseis apoleias*, "sects of perdition"), denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction' (II Pet. 2:1). *The Twentieth Century New Testament* accurately renders the expression 'ruinous divisions,' and Weymouth gives 'fatal divisions,' both recognizing the descriptive force of the genitive *apoleias*, as well as taking into account the primary emphasis of the word, as elsewhere in the New Testament, upon the effect produced by the false teaching, rather than upon the false teaching itself, as the cause of that effect.

In conformity with the general denotation of an effect, rather than a cause, the word 'heresy' is employed to designate a 'sect,' 'party,' or body of men who have separated themselves from others, advocating some particular doctrine or special mode of life, in accordance with their own peculiar beliefs. Thus the term is used to refer to 'the sect' or 'party' of the Sadducees (Acts 5:17) and the Pharisees (Acts 5:15; 26:5). Likewise, the expression is applied derogatively to Christians (Acts 24:5, 14; 28:22).

In Galatians 5:20 'heresies' are listed under 'the works of the flesh,' along with three other terms of similar import: 'factions' (*eritheiai*, 'party spirit, feuds'), 'divisions' (*dichostasiai*, 'splits'), and 'parties' (*haireseis*). This list of three vices is evidently arranged in accordance with the progressively aggravated character of the sins enumerated. 'Party spirit' degenerates into actual 'divisions,' which, when developed into distinct and organized parties, are called 'heresies.' A similar use of the word occurs in I Corinthians 11:19: 'For there must be also factions (*haireseis*) among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you.' But the force, in this particular verse, is likely simply 'dissensions' arising from diversity of opinions and aims. In Titus 3:10, the adjectival form of the word occurs, signifying 'creating or fostering factions': 'A factious (heretical) man after a first and second admonition refuse.'

In the fixed, ecclesiastical sense, which it ultimately attained, the term 'heresy' indicates not only any doctrinal distortion, but open espousal of fundamental error with respect to the central truths of Christianity, in the face of all better instruction, often combined with aggressive assault upon the common faith of the Church, and its defenders. However, its strictly New Testament usage is seen not to contain these elements, except, perhaps, by implication in II Peter 2:1, but is found significantly to center all emphasis on the connection of heresy with disunity and division in the Church of Jesus Christ.

The inference is clear. The Holy Spirit, the Creator of Christian unity, the Revealer of the truth by which that unity is nurtured and maintained, the infinitely efficient Worker, who operates with unimpeded power in the sphere of true Christian concord and agreement, emphasizes Christian solidarity as a supreme blessing to be realized experientially by God's people, and views heresy not at all as primarily false doctrine, as is done in the extra-Biblical conception, but first and foremost, as sectarian disharmony, and factional division, and lays practically complete emphasis upon the thought of a deadly and damnable satanic device, utterly destructive of Christian oneness.

Hence it is apparent why demonic industry is indefatigably directed against the bastion of God's revealed truth, and why distortion or obscuration of any part of the divine revelation is a real asset to Satan and a victory for his kingdom. There being but one divine standard of truth, and that being the norm of all Christian faith and practice and the basis of all Christian harmony, and there being but one Spirit of truth opening the divine revelation of truth to man, any deviation from that norm, either in doctrine or practice, must inevitably lead to disunity and disharmony, and must be accounted the direct and destructive work of Satan and demons.

Throughout the Christian centuries, from the very days of the Apostles themselves, new sects and isms have arisen to trouble the purity and peace of the Church. Taking leave of the Ephesian elders at Miletus, Paul warned that 'grievous wolves' would enter in among them, 'not sparing the flock,' and that even from their own select group would 'men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them' (Acts 20:29-30). With prophetic sweep, the Apostle scanned the centuries and saw the rise of innumerable sects in Christendom, and particularly the great apostasy and the multitudinous cults of the latter days, which he brands as 'doctrines of demons' (I Tim. 4:1). Peter, in similar prophetic vision, beheld them as 'destructive heresies,' or 'ruinous divisions' (II Pet. 2:1). Jude boldly inveighs against the wickedness of their human promulgators (Jude vv. 12-13). John sketches a historical tableau of their progress and development, and the interminable confusion they cause in the professing Church (Rev. 2:3)...

With the formation of systems of error, and the organization of weakening schisms, the Church of Rome, in alarm, sought to establish a man-made unity instead of a Spirit-inspired one, and, in the place of the infallible Word of God, substituted an infallible so-called 'Church.' In thus attempting to escape the inevitable ravages of 'doctrines of demons' from without, in dethroning the Word of God, it laid the foundation for a whole new brood of 'doctrines of demons' from within, and became a well-knit and brilliantly organized system of incredible error, a very citadel for the 'doctrines of demons'...

Rejecting the truth that ‘*all* Scripture is inspired by God’ (II Tim. 3:16) and consequently doubting and denying the authority of the Word, the supreme tragedy of our day is a far reaching departure in the large evangelical denominations from the great doctrines of historical New Testament Christianity. The appalling result is a weakened, worldly Church impotent to regenerate, powerless to attract, and unable to answer the distressed cry of sinful humanity for spiritual reality. A prey to seducing spirits, only a sweeping revival of the Spirit of God can keep the professing Church from lapsing more and more into that lukewarm state, in which our Lord threatened he would ‘spew’ Laodicean professors out of his mouth (Rev. 3:16).”

H. A. IRONSIDES, Pastor of Moody Memorial Church, Chicago, Teacher and prolific writer.

(From his book, *Sailing with Paul*, with special exhortations to young Christians, pages 44-52.)

"THE ASSEMBLY AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

...Now, in what sense is this great truth ‘made known for the obedience of faith?’. Manifestly it can only mean that it is a truth each believer is expected to hold in a practical way. And this surely involves the recognition of but one body and one Head, which necessarily leaves one outside of all human systems, and apart from all recognition of human heads. ‘The Church must have a head!’ was the Romanist’s challenge to Luther, as he began to set forth the claims of the Papacy. ‘Yes,’ replied the mighty champion of the reformation, ‘and that Head is Christ!’

Never allow yourself in any association, dear young saint, where you will have to give this up. Hold the Head at all costs. And if you hold the Head, you can consistently own but one body; for one head with many bodies is unthinkable.

‘To which of the various bodies of Christ do you belong?’ I was once asked by a clergyman. I could only reply, ‘There is one body, and I know no other.’

Nor does this result in unkind feelings or hard, critical thoughts concerning others, equally dear to Christ, who may not be enlightened upon this great mystery. The very fact that we are all members one of another should hinder this. All may not see alike, and will not till the Lord Jesus comes; but that need not prevent fervent love going out to every member of Christ’s body on earth.

‘What church do you belong to?’ an evangelist was once asked by a well-meaning lady. ‘I am a Christian,’ was the reply, ‘I belong to the body of Christ.’ ‘Oh, of course,’ was the retort, ‘I know that. So am I, and I am also a member of the—church.’ ‘Ah, my sister,’ he answered, ‘that is just the difference between us. You are a Christian *and*, I am only a

Christian. Once I too was a Christian *and*; but when I learned that ‘there is one body and one Spirit’ I ceased to be a ‘Christian *and*.’ I have ever since been simply a ‘Christian.’ ‘But,’ she exclaimed in evident astonishment, ‘in that case I do not see how you distinguish yourself from other Christians.’ ‘Why, you see,’ was the quiet reply, ‘I have no desire to distinguish myself from fellow-Christians. I am one with them all; and I desire them all to see in me a fellow-member of Christ's body.’

This is what I would commend to you. When God saved you He put you in the body of Christ. What other membership do you need or desire? You are a member of the Church of God, the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in heaven. What more would you have?

Before the confusion of sectarianism came in, ‘all that believed were together,’ and it was said of them on an ever-memorable occasion that ‘those who received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them—[that is, unto those already baptized by the Spirit into the one body]—about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers’ (Acts 2: 41, 42).

Nothing else is needed for faith today. God's word remains and it is for each believer to act upon it, regardless of the ever-increasing apostasy. If only two or three do so, there is fellowship, and Christ will be enjoyed as He cannot be when His place as Head is forgotten and the truth is ignored that ‘there is one body.’

THE ASSEMBLY IN ITS LOCAL ASPECT

Side by side with the truth of the Assembly as the body of Christ, is the counter truth of the local assembly, the company of believers in any given locality, acting on the ground of the ‘one body.’

Perhaps it might be said that, strictly speaking, there is no declared doctrine of the local assembly, but both the Acts and the Epistles give us many illustrative incidents and historical notices which enable us clearly to see the divine method of ordering these companies of believers gathered to the peerless name of the Lord Jesus Christ. For His own words: ‘Where two or three are gathered together in (or, unto) My Name, there am I in the midst’ (Matt. 18:20), clearly apply to all scriptural assemblings of His people. He will ever be the Center and recognized Head, who will lead the praises and worship of His saints, as it is also written, ‘In the midst of the Church (Assembly) will I sing praise unto Thee’ (Heb. 2:12).

In the beginning the local assembly at Jerusalem and the Assembly the body of Christ were one. Every member of that body was, for a brief season at least, a part of the local assembly in that city. Then as these believers were scattered abroad, as Pentecostal visitors returned to their homes, or others were driven from Jerusalem by persecution—as the gospel also was carried to Samaria, and then to the Gentiles—wherever a company of members of Christ's body was found there was

another local assembly. This was the only way in which separate gatherings were formed. 'Two or three' in any given locality were drawn together by the Spirit to the Name of the Lord Jesus, and thus a local assembly sprang into existence. To this little company others were added, as grace revealed Christ to their souls, and they in turn became partakers of the blessings of the Spirit's baptism, owning the rejected Jesus as Lord.

Thus all was simple. There was no human organization, no cumbrous ecclesiastical machinery, no sectional membership. He who was recognized as a member of Christ's body in Jerusalem, traveling or going elsewhere, upon making himself known there as one subject to Christ the Head, was at once accounted as one of them. He had found his own company. From an early period letters of commendation were given to such brethren, that they might be, at once, accredited in places where they were personally unknown (Rom. 16:1, 2; II Cor. 3:1, Acts 18:27). But this was all. There was no dismissing a 'member' from the church in Ephesus that might 'join' the church in Philippi. If a known member of Christ's body in Ephesus, he was gladly acknowledged as such in Philippi when his claim was properly attested.

As one goes over all this, how the conviction is forced upon the soul that Christendom has got far indeed from the simplicity of early days! And that very fact leads us to inquire: Is it possible now to act just as they did then?—when love was warm, and ere evil and pernicious doctrines had honey combed what should have ever been in an outward way 'The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth' (I Tim. 3:15). The answer is that all this declension and failure was foreseen by the Holy Spirit, and directions clearly given how to proceed when such unhappy ruin should have come in. In Acts 20, where Paul delivered his farewell address to the elder brethren of the Ephesian assembly, he warned them of the very things we have been considering; but at the close he simply says, 'I commend you *to God and the word of His grace.*' God's word therefore is all-sufficient, whatever the cold-heartedness and backsliding that may be prevalent.

What course, then, are we directed to take when such evil days have come? Build sects and systems, walled about with iron-clad creeds and buttressed by human regulations? Not at all. What then? Go back to 'that which was from the beginning.' Find out how things were at the first, and act on what the word of God makes known...

This is largely ignored in Christendom generally, which has become like a great house in which valuable and common vessels are all mixed up together. If a man would be a 'vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use,' he is called to purge himself out from this mixture, by separating himself from it. He is then to find fellowship among similar separated ones, and to 'follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart' (II Tim. 2: 19-22); and so walking together the ground of the one body is maintained. If

companies in different places are similarly gathered, they occupy the same position, and thus, in principle, go back to 'that which was from the beginning.' ”

J. C. RYLE, Bishop of Liverpool in the Church of England.
(From this tract, *The True Church*, which has seen wide distribution around the world and throughout all denominations.)

“No word in the English language, perhaps, is more frequently misused than the word ‘church.’ People frequently speak of ‘belonging to the church’ when they are talking about their affiliation with a denomination or religious organization.

There are many ‘churches,’ but in the New Testament only one true Church is recognized.

This true Church is composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus. It is made up of all God's elect—of all converted men and women—of all true Christians...

It is the Church whose existence does not depend on forms, ceremonies, cathedrals, churches, chapels, pulpits, fonts, vest-ments, organs, endowments, money, kings, governments, magistrates, or any act or favor whatsoever from the hand of man. It has often lived on and continued when all these things have been taken from it. It has often been driven into the wilderness, or into dens and caves of the earth, by those who ought to have been its friends. Its existence depends on nothing but the presence of Christ and His Spirit, and they being ever with it, the Church cannot die.

This is the Church to which the scriptural *titles* of present honor and privilege, and the *promises* of future glory, specially belong. This is the body of Christ. This is the Bride, the Lamb's wife. This is the flock of Christ, the household of faith and the family of God, God's building, God's foundation, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. This is the Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. This is the royal priesthood, the chosen generation, the peculiar people, the purchased possession, the habitation of God, the light of the world, the salt and the wheat of the earth. This is the Universal Church of the Apostle's Creed, and of the Nicene Creed. This is that Church to which the Lord Jesus promises that ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,’ and to which He says ‘I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world’ (Matthew 6:18; 28:20)...

This is the only Church which is truly *universal*. It is not the church of any one nation or people. Its members are to be found in every part of the world where the gospel is received and believed. In it there is no difference between Jew and Greek, black man and white, Episcopalian and Presbyterian—but faith in Christ is all. Its members

will be gathered from north, and south, and east, and west, in the last day, and will be of every name and tongue—but all one in Christ Jesus...

This is the only Church which is certain to endure unto the end. Nothing can altogether overthrow and destroy it. Its members may be persecuted, oppressed, imprisoned, beaten, beheaded, burned, but the true Church is never altogether extinguished. It rises again from its afflictions. It lives on through fire and water. When crushed in one land, it springs up in another. The Pharaohs, the Herods, the Neros, the bloody Marys, have labored in vain to put down this Church. The true Church outlives them all, and sees them buried each in his turn. It is a bush which is often burning, and yet it is not consumed.

This is the only Church of which no one member can perish. Once enrolled in the lists of this Church, sinners are safe for eternity. They are never cast away. The election of God the Father, the continual intercession of God the Son, the daily renewing and sanctifying power of God the Holy Spirit, surround and fence them in like a garden enclosed. Not one bone of Christ's mystical body shall ever be broken. Not one lamb of Christ's flock shall ever be plucked out of His hand.

This is the Church which does the work of Christ upon earth. Its members are a little flock, and few in number, compared with the children of the world: one or two here, and two or three there, a few in this parish, and a few in that. But these are they who shake the universe, who change the fortunes of kingdoms by their prayers. These are they who are the active workers for spreading the knowledge of pure religion and undefiled.

This is the Church which shall be truly glorious at the end. When all earthly glory is passed away, then shall this Church be presented without spot before God the Father's throne. Thrones, principalities and powers upon earth shall come to nothing. Dignities, and offices, and endowments, shall all pass away. But the Church of the firstborn shall shine as the stars at the last, and be presented with joy before the Father's throne, in the day of Christ's appearing. When the Lord's jewels are made up, and the manifestation of the sons of God takes place, Episcopacy, and Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism, will not be mentioned. One Church only will be named, and that is the Church of the elect.

Reader, this is the true Church to which a man must belong, if he would be saved. Until you belong to this, you are nothing better than a lost soul. You may have the form, the husk, the skin, and the shell of religion, but you do not have the substance and the life. What ignorance prevails on this point! Men fancy that if they join this church or that church, and become communicants, and go through certain forms, that all must be right with their souls. It is an utter delusion. You may be a staunch Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, or Independent, or Baptist, or Wesleyan, or Plymouth Brother, and yet not belong to the true Church."

D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES, Minister, Westminster Chapel, London.

"Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones is the greatest expositor of the Word of God in any pulpit in the English world today (July 1975),"—[Wilbur M. Smith](#). Wilbur M. Smith is a renowned editor, author and Bible teacher of prodigious influence in Evangelical Christianity.

(From the booklet by Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Basis of Christian Unity*, an exposition of John 17 and Ephesians 4, printed by Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. The booklet contains the substance of two messages given at a gathering of ministers in June, 1962. This is an abridgement of that booklet.)

“INTRODUCTION

No question is receiving so much attention at the present time in all branches and divisions of the Christian Church as the question of Church unity. It is something that is written about, talked about and preached about. Now we are all agreed, surely, that the Christian Church should be one, that she was meant by God to be one. And therefore, we must agree, further, that it is a tragedy that division ever entered into the life of the Church. In addition we must all regard schism as a grievous sin. That is common ground. But having said that, one must also point out that there is obviously great confusion, and much disagreement, as to what constitutes unity, as to what is the nature of unity, and as to how unity is to be obtained and preserved.

PART I: THE TEACHING OF JOHN 17

Our Lord says, ‘And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.’ That is the fundamental text, and in the one statement we have all the essential principles stated.

First, we notice that He is praying for particular people whom He designates as ‘these.’ Who are ‘these’? They, and they alone, are the subject of this unit.

They are those who have ‘received his word,’ His teaching, and particularly His teaching concerning Himself. They have known who He is, that He has been sent by God, and that He has been sent to do this work for them. They have ‘believed’ and have ‘received’ that word. That is His own definition of these people. In other words, the unity of which He is speaking applies only to those who receive and believe this word—what we now would call the gospel message.

The second principle which He lays down in the eleventh verse concerns the origin of the unity. You notice that He uses the word ‘keep.’ ‘Holy Father,’ he says, ‘keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.’ Nowhere in this chapter is there an exhortation or an appeal to produce a unity. Our Lord is saying that the unity is already there, is already in existence. It is the unity of those who, in

contradistinction to all others, have believed the truth concerning Him and His work.

The third point which He raises is that of the nature of the unity: 'That they may be one, as we are.' This is the fundamental text, as it were, on this subject, but as our Lord elaborates it in verses 20-23, let us now proceed to consider them. 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.'

Here we have what is undoubtedly one of the most exalted statements to be found anywhere in the whole of the Scriptures. We notice at once that the essential character of the unity about which our Lord is speaking is that it is comparable to the unity that exists between the Father and the Son Themselves. It is also comparable to the unity between the Son and the people for whom He is praying.

Light is thrown on this in certain verses of John 14 For instance, in verse 20 our Lord says: 'At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you;' and in verse 21: 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' Verse 23 continues: 'If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'

We deduce from this that the unity which is to obtain in the Church is something which involves this unity of essence, of being. This is, of course, but another way of putting the doctrine taught so plainly in the New Testament that the Christian is a man who is 'born again,' 'born of the Spirit,' a 'partaker of the divine nature.'

You are born into a family. Though you may disagree with members of your family you cannot get rid of the relationship. It is a matter of blood and of essence. So is the unity of the Church. It must never be thought of, therefore, as something voluntary. It is something which is inevitable because it is the result of being born into a given family. Christians are brothers and not merely an association of friends.

Incidentally, it is interesting to notice that He mentions that extraordinary exception, the case of Judas. Here is one who belonged to the company but shows quite clearly that he is not truly 'of' it. Verse 12 says: 'While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.' You may give the appearance of belonging, but if there is not this new life and this new birth there is no real unity; and it must eventually show itself.

So we find here that the whole of our Lord's statement is not an exhortation to us to do anything, but is a prayer to His Father asking Him to preserve this unity that is already in existence. Moreover that unity is essentially spiritual, is produced by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the act of regeneration, and shows itself in a common belief and reception of the teaching concerning our Lord's Person and work. Any 'unity' which lacks these characteristics is not the unity of which our Lord speaks in John 17.

PART II: THE TEACHING OF EPHESIANS 4

I. Does fellowship or doctrine come first?

What does this passage teach? There are many who think that the teaching here is that we are exhorted to have fellowship with one another, whatever our views of the Christian faith may be, in order that ultimately we may come to a unity of faith and belief. Some years ago a well-known evangelical preacher put it like this: 'I always used to think,' he said, 'that you could not have fellowship with a man unless you were agreed with him about doctrine. My position had always been that first of all you must have agreement about truth and your view of truth, and then, on that basis, you could have fellowship with people.' But he went on to say that he had made a great and startling discovery from reading again this fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. He had observed for the first time in his life that the apostle starts by exhorting to fellowship: 'Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (verse 3). He said, 'I discovered that there you start with fellowship and it is only later, in verse 13, that the apostle says, 'Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' So in the light of that he was now proposing to have fellowship with people who disagreed with him theologically, those who were liberal in their doctrinal outlook, and others. He was going to do this because he believed it was through such fellowship that he could hope to arrive ultimately at doctrinal agreement. It was a complete reversal of the position that he had always held. He felt convicted, he felt he had been sinful. And now he exhorts Christian people to put his new view of the teaching of Ephesians 4 into practice. It is through working together, evangelizing together, praying together, and having fellowship together, he declares, that we shall ultimately arrive at the unity of faith.

The crucial question we must consider is whether this section of Scripture teaches that or not.

A general analysis of the section reveals the following: In verses 1-3 Paul makes a general appeal for unity: in verses 4-6 he describes the nature of the unity: in verses 7-12 he describes the variety in the unity and the means which God has taken to preserve it. Finally, in verses 13-16, he describes the unity perfected, or its ultimate full realization and flowering. This he presents both positively and negatively.

The key to the whole exposition of chapter 4 is the word ‘therefore’ in verse 1. It points us back to the first three chapters of this great Epistle, and emphasizes the fact that the theme of unity is something which follows as a consequence of what has gone before. This, of course, is typical of the New Testament method of dealing with matters of conduct and practice. Its essential teaching is that conduct is always the outcome of truth and of teaching. Practice and behavior are the result of the application of doctrine which has already been laid down. And that is precisely what the apostle does here. ‘Therefore,’ he says – ‘I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.’ The exhortation that follows is made in the light of all that he has been saying in the first three chapters.

It is clear, then, that anyone who interprets this section as saying that the apostle starts with fellowship and then goes on to doctrine is fundamentally wrong: his entire exposition is vitiated at the outset for the simple reason that he starts with verse 3 and ignores verses 1 and 2. The doctrine expounded in chapters 1-3 is already the basis and the background of everything the apostle has to say about the unity. He does not start with unity and then proceed to doctrine; he takes up unity because he has already laid down his doctrine.

II. The Context of Ephesians 4

The apostle makes this abundantly clear in his opening exhortation that we are to ‘walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.’ Now the word ‘worthy’ brings together two main ideas. One is ‘equal weight,’ ‘balance.’ In other words he is saying, ‘You have already heard what the doctrine is, now you must balance that with your practice and conduct.’ You have exactly the same thought in Hebrews 6:11: ‘And we desire,’ says the writer there, ‘that... you do shew the same diligence.’ They had been showing diligence in the matter of ‘the full assurance of hope to the end.’ In other words it is again a matter of balance—balance between doctrine and practice.

The second notion in this word is the idea of something that ‘becomes’ or ‘fits in with’ something else. Philippians 1:27 conveys exactly the idea: ‘Only let your conversation be as it “becometh” the gospel of Christ.’ ‘You have your doctrine,’ Paul says; ‘now be careful that your conversation “becomes” it, that it corresponds to it, that it does not clash with it, that it fits in with it, that it shows it out still more in its glory and in its perfection.’ Another well-known phrase in the letter to Titus puts it like this: ‘adorning the doctrine’ (Titus 2:10). That is what conduct and practice are meant to do. We must not think of them apart from doctrine. To talk about unity apart from doctrine is like talking about a woman's clothing as if it had no connection with her person. The business of the clothing is to adorn the person. So it is with practice and doctrine. One is to adorn the other. This is quite fundamental in all approaches to this question of unity.

We have it in verses 2 and 3: ‘with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’ He says that we should show ‘great diligence eagerly.’ To what end? Not to produce a unity, not to create a unity, not to try to arrive at a unity, but to ‘keep the unity.’ Again it is the same fundamental point which we noticed in our exposition of the earlier passage. The unity is already in existence. It is the unity of all those who have believed the message expounded in chapters 1-3. As our Lord had prophesied in His prayer recorded in John 17, there were to be people who would believe the message of the apostles whom He was sending out. And here is one of the apostles writing to Ephesians who have believed, who have ‘received’ that message. And because of that they are in this body, they are one with all others who believe the same message; and the exhortation is that they should ‘keep,’ should preserve, this unity.

That is the way in which the New Testament always puts it. The unity itself is inevitable among all those who have been quickened by the Holy Spirit out of spiritual death and given new life in Christ Jesus. What they have to be careful about is that they do not allow anything to disrupt it or in any way to interfere with it. The emphasis is entirely upon the word ‘keep.’

But in order that this may be abundantly clear the apostle again reminds us that it is ‘the unity of *the Spirit*.’ In other words, it is a unity which is produced by the Holy Spirit and by Him alone. Man cannot produce this, try as he may. Because of the nature of this unity, because it is a spiritual unity, it can be brought into being only as a result of the operation of the Holy Spirit. The apostle rejoices in this staggering fact, that these people who were once Jews and Gentiles are now one in Christ Jesus. They not only share the same life, they are agreed about their doctrine. They believe the same things, they are trusting to the same Person, and they know that He has saved them all in the same way.

That leads us to our next question. What, then, is the nature of the unity produced by the Spirit? The answer is supplied in verses 4, 5 and 6: ‘There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.’ Notice again the exalted way in which the unity is described. This is not just a question of friendliness or fellowship, of good nature, or of desiring to do good together. It is something, once more, which lifts us up into the realm of the blessed Holy Trinity, the Spirit, the Son, the Father! This unity must always be conceived of in this exalted way and never merely in terms of human fellowship, or cooperation or organization.

Observe that the word ‘one’ is used seven times in these three verses. At the beginning of verse 4, the Authorized Version translators have supplied the words ‘There is.’ The words in the original are, ‘endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One

body.' The apostle puts it baldly because the thing is beyond dispute. The translators rightly supplied the words 'There is' because that helps to emphasize that fact. 'There is but one body,' and it is this body that has been produced by the Holy Spirit. Unity is already there, he says. We must get rid entirely of the notion that the Ephesians are being exhorted to 'produce' or to 'arrive at' something. 'There is,' he says, 'You are already enjoying it; all you have to do is to preserve it!'

The first thing we are told about the nature of this unity is that it is the kind of unity that is found in a physical body. This is clearly the apostle's favorite analogy in this connection. He has already used it in 1:22 and 23. He has reminded us of it again in 2:16. We will find it again in 4:16. He works it out in *extenso* in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12.

Why is this such a good analogy? For the obvious reason that it emphasizes the 'vital' and the 'organic' character of the unity. It is not just a matter of a loose grouping, or a mechanical or external attachment. The whole marvel and mystery of the human body is that, while it consists of so many different parts, all of them having their various functions, they are all one, they are bound together in a vital manner.

That is the account which the apostle gives of the nature of this unity, and the point that he is making is, of course, that there is no unity unless we are agreed about these things and participating in them. Paul's teaching here is exactly the same as we found in the teaching of our Lord in John 17. Unity is not something which exists, or of which you can speak, in and of itself. It is always the consequence of our belief and acceptance of this great and glorious doctrine of God who has provided in His Son the way of salvation, and who mediates it to us through the operation of the Holy Spirit. That is the basis and the nature of Christian unity. It must never be thought of except in terms of this great background, this essential doctrine.

Verses 13-16 deal with the subject of what we are being trained for. Here we are looking at what I described earlier as the ultimate goal: 'Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' Then negatively: 'That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.'

The question that arises is, Does this allow for present disagreement about doctrine? Does it look forward to an ultimate agreement as the result of our fellowship together? The apostle himself answers the question by telling us that what he is dealing with is the

‘perfecting’ of something that is already in existence. He is not teaching that we are going to ‘arrive’ at something which was non-existent before. What he is saying is that what is in existence already is going to grow and develop and ultimately will be perfected. I argue thus because he says in verse 12 that the whole object of providing apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers is ‘the perfecting of the saints,’ that they may be useful in ministering to the building up of the Body of Christ.

This interpretation may be further substantiated. Paul says, ‘Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.’ Now to translate the word used by the apostle by the word ‘knowledge’ is quite inadequate. What the apostle wrote was *epignosis*, which means ‘full knowledge.’ In other words, we already have knowledge, but the function of the officers in the Church is to bring us to ‘full knowledge.’ In the same way we have faith and believe the Faith, already. What is needed is the ‘full perfection’ of that. He is not envisaging a gathering of people who differ with regard to basic doctrine but who, through meeting together and through fellowship, may ultimately arrive at the same basic doctrine. That is entirely foreign to what the apostle is saying. He is writing to people who are already ‘one’ in their doctrine, and ‘one’ in their knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is not perfect, or fully developed, as yet.

Now that, I suggest, is the key to the understanding of this passage. If there were any doubt about it he settles it once and for all by his use of the negative in verse 14. ‘That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.’ His desire is that his readers should become adult men; that they should not remain as children. Surely that puts the matter entirely beyond dispute. Even as ‘children’—incomplete, not fully developed—they are one. They stand as an acorn does in relation to the full-grown oak. The moment we grasp that, we see that the current popular use of this passage is entirely false to the apostle's teaching. He is not hoping to produce agreement or trying to produce it; his concern is that the understanding, the agreement, the knowledge and the faith which they already have should grow and develop into its ultimate completeness and fullness.

PART III: NEW TESTAMENT CORROBORATION

1. Causes of Disunity

The New Testament teaches that certain things ‘break’ this unity. What are they? One is that people, instead of looking at Christ tend to form factions around men, and say, as they did at Corinth, ‘I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas.’ The question Paul puts to such people is, ‘Have you been baptized into any of these?’ He answers by reminding them that they have been baptized into Christ above and that He cannot

be divided (I Corinthians 1: 10-16). The moment you take your eyes off Him and look at anybody else you are already causing a disturbance in this unity and threatening to disrupt it.

Still more important is false teaching. What does this include? Among other things, 'philosophy,' or 'the wisdom of this world.' Paul was terrified, as he tells us in I Corinthians 1:17, 'Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect' through philosophy, through turning it into a notion and an idea instead of believing the stark reality of the fact of what happened there—that God was making Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,' that God was smiting Him with the stripes that we deserve. The apostle foresees the danger of philosophizing or turning the cross into nothing but a beautiful picture. He says that this destroys the unity completely. The same idea is taught in Colossians 2, where he warns against substituting philosophy, this same wisdom of men, for the facts reported in the gospel and the true meaning of those facts.

Others who cause division are those who fall back upon 'the works of the law.' Those were the people who in the early Church said that you must be circumcised, that you must keep the law in addition to believing in Christ. That was the heresy which Paul had to deal with in his letter to the Galatians. It is the theme likewise of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Those people did not realize as they should that Christ is pre-eminent and all-sufficient, and they were beginning to look back to the old Jewish religion.

The third group of things which cause disunity is anything that exalts self and not Christ. Some in the early Church were glorifying in their spiritual gifts. But they are reprimanded because that again detracts from Him, takes our eyes off Him, and all the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Anything that has that effect is always disruptive. Self leads to jealousy and rivalry and disputation and so 'Christ is divided.'

II. Doctrine Can Be Defined

But let us look at it positively. The New Testament everywhere insists upon true doctrine. I emphasize this because, as we have seen, the whole tendency today is to discourage talk about doctrine and to urge that we work together, pray together, and evangelize together, because 'doctrine divides.' Doctrine is being discounted in the interests of supposed unity. The fact is, however, that there is no unity apart from truth and doctrine, and it is departure from this that causes division and breaks unity.

The first thing the New Testament emphasizes is that doctrine can be defined. If this were not so Paul would never have written his Epistle to the Romans. He had been unable to visit them, so he writes to them a summary of his teaching. It is a great doctrinal statement in which the cardinal doctrines of justification, atonement, union with Christ, assurance, the final perseverance of the saints, *etc.* are set forth.

But that is far removed from the modern attitude and the way in which the subject of unity is being presented today. We are told that the Christian faith cannot be stated in propositions, that it is something mystical which cannot be analyzed, and which cannot be put down in a series of definitions stating what is right and what is wrong. By saying that, they are not only running counter to the practice of the Church in the early centuries when she drew up her Creeds and Confessions of Faith, they are also denying the teaching of the New Testament itself which maintains that truth can be so defined that you can say that a man has departed from it. For how can you say that a man has departed from something if you do not know what the thing is? The whole presupposition is that it can be defined and described accurately. Nothing is so interesting as to contrast the ecumenical councils of the first centuries of the Christian era with the World Council of Churches today.

III. False Teaching Condemned

This becomes even clearer when we note the way in which false teaching is denounced in the New Testament, and the language which is used with regard to false teachers. In particular, observe the way in which our Lord Himself does this. For the whole climate of opinion today is utterly opposed to this. I find it amusing to notice in the reviews of books that a point which is almost always emphasized is whether the writer has been entirely positive or not. We must never be negative; we must never be critical of other views. That is regarded as 'sub-Christian.' It is the spirit that matters. So we must never criticize, still less must we denounce anything. Views which are totally divergent are to be regarded as valuable 'insights' which point in the direction of truth.

The fact is, of course, that in our misunderstanding of the New Testament and its teaching we are exalting a kind of 'niceness' and 'politeness,' which are not to be found there, not even in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Look, for instance, at what He says in Matthew 7: 15- 27. He says that there are false teachers whom He can only compare to 'wolves in sheep's clothing.' No severer castigation than that can be imagined. He is referring to men who themselves are deniers of the truth but who give the impression that they are preaching it. He warns us against them. They are 'false prophets,' 'false teachers,' people who claim that they belong to Him and say, 'Lord, Lord, have we not done this, that and the other in Thy name?' He says that they are liars and that at the great day of judgment He will say to them, 'I never knew you!' They have never been His at all. One cannot imagine any stronger teaching than that.

We have already seen the same thing in Ephesians 4. Here is this great apostle, filled with the spirit of love, and, let us remember, 'speaking the truth in love;' but the language he uses, as we have seen, is, 'Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every

wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness...’ That is ‘speaking the truth in love.’ It includes denouncing these false teachers in the Church and making clear the sort of people they are and the kind of thing they do. He describes them as predatory beasts ‘lying in wait to deceive.’ To speak the truth in love includes a clear exposition of error, and everything that can be harmful to ‘babes in Christ.’

Even stronger language is used by the apostle in his farewell address to the elders of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:28). ‘Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over that which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.’ That is the language! ‘Wolves!’ ‘Grievous wolves!’ In II Corinthians 11:13-15 he calls them ‘false apostles’ who are like the devil, who ‘himself is transformed into an angel of light.’ In Galatians 1:8 he says: ‘Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you... let him be anathema,’ that is, let him be accursed.

All that comes under the heading of ‘speaking the truth in love.’ Why is such speech abominated today and regarded as ‘sub-Christian?’ Because the notice of truth as something which can be defined has gone, and we are replacing it by a flabby, sentimental notion of unity and of fellowship. In Philippians 3:18, 19 the apostle writes, ‘For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.’ Such people were in the Church and represented themselves as teachers of the truth of the gospel. But the apostle does not hesitate to denounce them as ‘enemies of the cross of Christ.’ Why? Because they were denying this essential doctrine at some point.

The New Testament talks about people being carried away with a ‘strong delusion,’ and people ‘believing a lie.’ The false prophets are referred to as ‘dogs,’ as those who teach and speak ‘damnable heresies,’ whose ways are pernicious and who are ‘liars.’ It refers to false teaching as a canker, a cancer that eats away at the vitals of life. That is New Testament teaching. But all that is abominated today and is regarded as being a complete denial of ‘the spirit of love and of fellowship,’ indeed of the spirit of Christ.

In other words, this modern teaching about unity has departed so far from the New Testament that it dislikes any polemical element at all in the preaching and the teaching of the truth. As I saw, we are told that we must never be negative, that we should always be positive. The man who is admired is the man who says ‘I am not a controversialist, I am simply a preacher of the gospel!’ Some evangelists and others who are

evangelical in their own views are praised by those who are very liberal in their theology on the grounds that they do not 'attack' liberalism and modernism. That is what is admired. Any polemical element is regarded as a negation of the Christian spirit. We must never criticize; we must always be kind and friendly. I agree that we must always be kind and friendly, we must always 'speak the truth in *love*.' But we must expose error and denounce it and not be 'men-pleasers' only. The New Testament is full of that, as I have just proved.

That is what was done at the time of the Protestant Reformation. That is what is always done in times of revival and renewal because at such times there is a return to the New Testament. Error is unmasked, exposed, and denounced. It was done, likewise, in the time of the Puritans. Let us remember in these days when 'niceness' and 'friendliness' and 'fellowship' are exalted to the supreme position and at the expense of truth, that the exhortation addressed to the New Testament teachers and believers was not that they should be ready to agree with anything for the sake of unity and fellowship. The exhortation addressed to them in I Corinthians 16:13 is 'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.' We are to be men, we are to be strong, we are to stand fast in the faith which we have believed. We are to know that we have a foundation beneath our feet and we must know what it is. We are not to be riding on clouds, we are not to be in the air, we are to be 'standing fast' on a solid, recognizable, definable foundation. We are exhorted to 'earnestly contend for the faith.'

PART IV: CONCLUSION

Unity must obviously never be thought of primarily in numerical terms, but always in terms of life. Nothing is so opposed to the biblical teaching as the modern idea that numbers and powerful organization alone count. It is the very opposite of the great biblical doctrine of the 'remnant,' stated, for instance, so perfectly by Jonathan to his armor bearer as they faced alone the hosts of the Philistines, in the words, 'Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few' (I Samuel 14:6). Still more strikingly, perhaps, is it taught in the incident of Gideon and the Midianites, where we read of God reducing the army of Israel from 32,000 to 300 as a preliminary to victory (Judges 7).

God has done His greatest work throughout the centuries through remnants, often even through individuals. Why is it that we forget Micaiah the son of Imlah, and Jeremiah, and Amos, John the Baptist, the mere twelve disciples; and Martin Luther standing alone defying some twelve centuries of tradition and all the power of a mighty church? This is not to advocate smallness or exclusiveness as if they had some inherent merit; but it is to suggest that the modern slavish attitude to

bigness and organization cuts right across a central biblical emphasis. Indeed it suggests ignorance of, and lack of faith in, the power of the Holy Spirit.

The ultimate question facing us these days is whether our faith is in men and their power to organize, or in the truth of God in Christ Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. Let me put it another way. Are we primarily concerned about the size of the Church, or the purity of the Church, both in doctrine and in life?”

LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER, Founder and President of the Dallas Theological Seminary
(From his book, *The Ephesian Letter*, page 122, 123.)

“1. There is ‘*one body*.’

The imagery here, as throughout the New Testament, is of a human body with its head and its many members. The Ephesian letter presents the most extensive development of this conception of the Church (1:23; 2:15, 16; 3:6; 4:12-14; 5:30). If the human body is a means of manifestation of the invisible human life, so the Church is the manifestation of Christ to the world.

Likewise, as the many members are privileged to serve, each in its appointed sphere in the human body, so each individual believer serves the living Head. However, the specific truth in view at this point is that of *unity*; and of this aspect of relationship between Christ and the Church and between the members themselves, there could be no more vivid portrayal than is set forth by the figure of the human body. Here, as in the following verities, the word ‘*one*’ is emphatic, signifying that there is but *one* body—not two, and certainly not three hundred to correspond to the present number of sects in Christendom. Every saved person is in this unity, and only those who are saved are included in it.”

J. VERNON McGEE, Renowned radio Bible teacher and one-time Pastor of the “Church of the Open Door” in Los Angeles.
(From his “*High Noon Broadcast*,” *Study of Ephesians*, 1961.)

“Do you know today who I think the meanest people in the world are? They're not people today that are the gangsters. They're not today the criminal element. And it's not these people today that are beating their children. I can tell you people worse than that. There are people today that are in the church that ought to display the wonderful fellowship and unity of the body of believers and they're in there causing divisions. You talk about a Communist, friends. You talk about today, a traitor today. You talk about somebody today that's terrible—the worst person in the world, I think in God's universe, is that person, today in

the church, that's dividing the body of believers. And out yonder, today, I think angels looking at those people are absolutely shocked, and they are wondering why God immediately does not judge them. I think He's going to some day, but He's not moving today.”

(J. Vernon McGee also wrote a booklet “Why I left the Presbyterian Church,” and he then joined the “Independent Fundamentalists Churches of America.”)

JIMMY R. ALLEN, Pastor, First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas; President, Southern Baptist Convention.

(From his message “*Should Christianity Be Churchless,*” delivered at the Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Oct. 2, 1968.)

“I always feel a little uncomfortable when I hear people defending the church as if there is nothing in the criticism that's going on,... When I come to look at God's Word and our world, and churches, and congregations as they really are, and the ideals that God lays out for us, I find myself wanting to say to those folks who are insecure and defensive and shouting out, hoping by their volume to drown out the critics, that they are on the wrong track. They will not be able to answer the question whether or not Christianity should be churchless... The things that are being said are descriptions of what's going on in the church life of our country. What actually needs to be done is to find out what ought to be going on according to God's Word.

For these (critics) are the folk that are saying that the church is a dead organization: ‘Outwardly splendid as of old, inwardly sparkles, void and cold. Her force and fire all spent and gone, like a dead moon she still moves on.’ These are the folks who see only ‘the structure of a dead kind of organization, institutional loyalties built out of guilt complexes, and people who are geared to a Pavlovian response of activism.’ *And they have a point.*”

M. R. DE HAAN, Radio Bible Class. Preached over the full network of the Mutual Broadcasting System and by Short Wave around the world.

(From his message which is also in print—“*The One True Church—The Body of Christ.*”)

“There are many, many churches in the world but there is only ONE TRUE CHURCH... There are countless sects and cults and denominations and beliefs who all claim to have all the truth, and to be the True Church and yet we know that there can only be ONE TRUE Church in the world... There is a great difference between A church as men use the name and THE CHURCH as the Bible uses the same word.

Never once in the Bible do we have any of these local assemblies calling themselves after men's names, or names to identify their doctrines, or practices, or creeds, such as Baptist, Presbyterian, or Methodist. These were later inventions. Neither did they, we said, call themselves after men and human leaders no matter how godly they may have been, or what valuable contribution they might have made to the cause. In vain do we seek for human names applied to the churches, whereas today we talk of Calvinistic and Armenian, call them Lutheran, or Mennonite, or Wesleyan. Paul himself very severely warns against the spirit of carnality which says 'I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas and I am of Paul.' He wanted Christ to have the preeminence in the church at all times. He wished to emphasize the UNITY OF ALL BELIEVERS, and not call attention to their differences, by the use of other names.

Neither does the Bible distinguish between an invisible and a visible church. That too is a distinction which we use to indicate the members of the Church who have died and those who are still living. It is merely a matter of convenience but the True Church is still one whether living or dead. The members of the true Church are all visible to Him who is our head. In the mind of God He always saw every member of that body as already complete in the body of Christ.

God chose every member of the true church long before there were denominations and sects and divisions and organizations, and ignores all human names and differences. We have before mentioned that man has abused the word church, so that its meaning has been confused. We speak of this and that denomination as a church, but there is no Bible ground for such a classification... As in the days of Jesus, men have made the Word of God of none effect through their traditions and so have added forms and rituals and ordinances and offices and committees and programs, which are not only NEVER taught in Scripture but actually defeat the very purpose of the Church."

(From "508 Answers to Bible Questions," page 143.)

"Question: Is there any foundation in the Bible for different denominations? Answer: I am of the firm opinion that while there are many of God's faithful children in all denominations, that nevertheless sectarianism and denominationalism is sin."

J. N. DARBY, Leader in what was later to be called the Plymouth Brethren movement, and prolific writer.

(From his paper, "What is a sect," pages 4-7.)

"Further, the Holy Ghost came down from heaven on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), baptized all believers of that time into one body, united to Christ as a body to the head, and manifested here below on the earth in this unity (I Cor. 12:13)..."

The spirit of a sect exists when we see disciples unite outside this unity, and when it is around an opinion that those who profess it are gathered, in order that they be united by means of this opinion. This unity is not founded on the principle of the unity of the body, or of the union of brethren. When such persons are united in a corporation, and mutually recognize each other as members of this corporation, then they constitute formally a sect, because the principle of the gathering is not the unity of the body; and the members are united, not as members of the body of Christ, when they are even such, but as members of a particular corporation. All Christians are members of the body of Christ—an eye, a hand, a foot, etc. (I. Cor. 12:13-25). The idea of being a member of *a* church is not found in the Word. The Holy Ghost compares the Church on the earth to a body, of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18); then each Christian is a member of this body, so of Christ. But to be a member of a particular corporation is quite another idea...

But now a difficulty is presented: the children of God are dispersed; many pious brethren are attached to this opinion, to that corporation, and mixed up for advantage's sake, even in religious things, with the world. There are, unhappily, many who have no idea of the unity of the body of Christ, or who deny the duty of manifesting this unity on earth. But all that does not annihilate the truth of God. Those who unite themselves, as I have already said, are but a sect in principle. If I recognize all Christians as members of the body of Christ—if I love them, and receive them, from an enlarged heart, even to the supper, supposing that they are walking in holiness and truth, calling upon the name of the Lord out of a pure heart (II Tim. 2:19-22; Rev. 3:7), then I am not walking in the spirit of a sect, even though I cannot gather together all the children of God, because I walk according to the principle of this unity of the body of Christ, and seek the practical union among the brethren...

A sect is, then, a religious corporation, united upon another principle than that of the body of Christ. It is formally such when those who compose this particular corporation are regarded as being the members of it. It is to walk in the spirit of a sect when those alone are recognized in a practical manner, without properly saying so, who are members of a corporation."

(From the paper by J. N. Darby, "*Separation from Evil, God's Principle of Unity,*" pages 15-19.)

"We find then most distinctly that, as the unity of Israel of old was founded on deliverance and calling from the midst of, and maintained separation amongst, the heathen which surrounded them, so the Church's unity was based on the power of the Holy Spirit come down from heaven, separating a peculiar people out of the world to Christ, and dwelling amongst them; God Himself thus dwelling and walking in them. For there is one Spirit, and one body, as we are called in one hope of our

calling. Indeed, the very name of Holy Spirit implies it; for holiness is separation from evil. Whatever failure, moreover, there may be in attainment, the principle and measure of this separation is necessarily the light, as God is in the light; the way into the holiest being made manifest, and the Holy Spirit comes down thence to dwell in the Church below, and so, in power of heavenly separation, because the indwelling center and power of unity (just as the Shekinah in Israel), He establishes the holiness of the Church and its unity in its separation to God, according to His own nature, and the power of that presence. Such is the Church, and such is true unity. Nor can the saint recognize, intelligently, any other, though he may own desires and efforts after good in that which is short of it...

Thus, then, the Word of God affords us the true nature, object, and power of unity; and, in so doing, it gives us the measure of it, by which we judge of what pretends to it, and the manner of it; and, moreover, the means of maintaining its fundamental principles according to the nature and power of God by the Holy Spirit in the conscience, where it may not be realized together in power. Its nature flows from God's; for of true unity He must be the center, and He is holy; and He brings us into it by separating us from evil. Its object is Christ; He is the sole center of the Church's unity, objectively as its Head. Its power is the presence of the Holy Spirit down here, sent as the Spirit of Truth withal from the Father by Jesus. Its measure is walking in the light, as God is in the light; fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus, and, we may add, through the testimony of the written Word—the apostolic and prophetic word of the New Testament especially. It is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (of the New Testament), Jesus Christ Himself being the cornerstone. The means of maintaining it is putting away evil (judicially if needed), so as to maintain, through the Spirit, fellowship with the Father and the Son. If evil be not put away, then separation from that which does not, becomes a matter of conscience. I return, if alone, into the essential and infallible unity of the body, in its everlasting principles of union with the Head in a holy nature by the Spirit. The path of the saints thus becomes clear. God will secure by eternal power the vindication, not here perhaps, but before His angels, of them who have rightly owned His nature and truth in Christ Jesus.

I believe these fundamental principles are deeply needed in this day, for the saint who seeks to walk truly and thoroughly with God. Latitudinarian unity it may be painful and trying to keep aloof from; it has an amiable form in general, is in a measure respectable in the religious world, tries nobody's conscience, and allows of everybody's will. It is the more difficult to be decided about, because it is often connected with a true desire of good, and is associated with amiable nature. And it seems rigid, and narrow, and sectarianism to decline so to walk. But the saint, when he has the light of God, must walk clearly in that. God will vindicate His ways in due time. Love to every saint is a clear duty;

walking in their ways is not. And he that gathers not with Christ scatters. There can be but one unity; confederacy, even for good, is not it, even if it have its form. Unity, professed to be of the Church of God, while evil exists and is not put away, is a yet more serious matter. It will always be found to be connected with the clerical principle, because that is needed to maintain unity, when the Spirit is not its power, and, in fact, takes its place, guides, rules, governs in its place, under the plea of priesthood, or ministry, owned as a distinct body, a separate institution: it would not hold together without this.”

(From J. N. Darby's book, *Thoughts on the Church*, page 525.)

“The Church ought to have been the perfect testimony of what Christ is; whereas it had become the cradle of corruption - the formal denial of Christ.”

C. H. MACINTOSH, Noted writer and preacher, author of “*Notes on the Pentateuch*” and “*Miscellaneous Writings*.”

(From the book, *The Macintosh Treasury*, pages 815-817.)

“The Assembly of God: The All-Sufficiency of the Name of Jesus

But let us proceed with our Scripture proofs. In the Acts of the Apostles, or rather, the Acts of the Holy Ghost, we find the assembly formally set up. A passage or two will suffice: ‘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 favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the assembly, daily, such as should be saved’ (Acts 2:46-47). Such was the original, simple apostolic order. When a person was converted, he thereby belonged to the assembly and took his place in it: there was no difficulty in the matter, there were no sects or parties, each claiming to be considered a church, a cause, or an interest. There was just the one thing, and that was the assembly of God, where He dwelt, acted, and ruled. It was not a system formed according to the will, the judgment, or even the conscience of man. Man had not, as yet, entered upon the business of church-making. This was God's work. It was just as exclusively God's province and prerogative to baptize the saved into one body by one Spirit, as to save the scattered.

There is no such thing in Scripture as being a member of a church. Every true believer is a member of *the* Church of God—the body of Christ, and can therefore no more be, properly, a member of anything else, than my arm can be a member of another body.

The only true ground on which believers can gather is set forth in that grand statement, ‘There is one body, and one Spirit.’ And again, ‘We being many are one loaf, and one body’ (Eph. 4:4; I. Cor. 10:17). If God

declares that there is but 'one body,' it must be contrary to His mind to own more than that one.

Now, while it is quite true that no given number of believers in any given place can be called 'the body of Christ,' or 'the assembly of God;' yet they should be gathered on the ground of that body and that assembly, and on no other ground. We call the reader's special attention to this principle. It holds good at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances. The fact of the ruin of the professing Church does not touch it. It has been true since the day of Pentecost; is true at this moment; and shall be true until the Church is taken to meet her Head and Lord in the clouds, that '*there is one body.*' All believers belong to that body; and they should meet on that ground, and on no other.

Why, we may justly inquire, should it be different now? Why should the regenerated seek to belong to something else than that to which they already belong—the assembly of God? Is not that sufficient? Assuredly. Should they seek aught else? Assuredly not. We repeat, with emphasis, 'Either that or nothing.'

True it is, alas! that failure, and ruin, and apostasy have come in. Man's wisdom, and his will; or, if you please, his reason, his judgment, and his misguided conscience have wrought, in matters ecclesiastical, and the result appears before us in the almost numberless and nameless sects and parties of the present moment. Still, we are bold to say, that the ground of assembling as at the beginning, simply as being members of the assembly of God, remains the same, in spite of all the failure, the error, and the confusion, which have come in. The difficulty in reaching it practically may be great, but its reality, when reached, is unaltered, and unalterable.

Thus much as to our Scripture proofs of the fact that God has an assembly on the earth, gathered, indwelt, and governed by the Holy Ghost who is the true and only Vicar of Christ upon earth. The Gospel prophetically intimates the assembly; the Acts historically presents the assembly; and the Epistles formally address the assembly. All this is plain. And if it be broken into fragments now, it is for us to be gathered on the ground of the *one* assembly of God, and to be a true expression of it.

And let it be carefully noted that we will listen to nothing on this subject but the voice of Holy Scripture. Let not reason speak, for we own it not. Let not tradition lift her voice, for we wholly disregard her. Let not expediency thrust itself upon us, for we shall give it no place whatever. We believe in the all-sufficiency of Holy Scripture—that it is sufficient to furnish the man of God thoroughly—to equip him perfectly for all good works (II Tim. 3:16-17). The Word of God is either sufficient or it is not. We believe it to be amply sufficient for every exigency of God's assembly. It could not be otherwise if God be its author. We must either deny the divinity or admit the sufficiency of the Bible. There is not a single hair's

breadth of middle ground. It is impossible that God could have written an imperfect, an insufficient book.”

JOHN MacARTHUR, JR., Pastor of the Grace Community Church of Panorama City, California, and well known radio Bible teacher.
(From his book, *The Church The Body of Christ*, pages 132, 188 & 195.)

“If God wants Christians to be one, Satan wants them to be divided. So, while the prayer of Christ was that Christians would be one, and while the activity of the Holy Spirit is to make them one, all of the energy of Satan is to fracture Christian unity. Whenever a divisive issue arises within the body of Christ, we can be sure one side is the agent of Satan. Christ wants to unify; Satan wants to divide. There are so many carnal Christians that Satan can get away with all the division he wants. He has been tremendously successful.

There is no scriptural justification for all the present divisions of the church. There were no divisions denominationally in the New Testament. In fact, all church divisions are explicitly contrary to the teaching of the Word of God. The whole intent of Christ, in forming the body, was that believers may be one, not divided into little parts.

Was the body formed in discord or in unity? In unity, of course. In the Book of Acts, the body of Christ was formed in a prayer meeting in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem. The disciples of Jesus gathered there to pray. Out of their faith, obedience, and waiting in prayer, God brought into being the church. In that prayer gathering, the hour of another divine dispensation struck. Men and women filled with the Holy Spirit, and possessing gifts of the Holy Spirit, went out of the room into the streets to preach Christ crucified and risen and to announce God's free grace. They were humble people. There were no great ones, no mighty ones. They had no organizational structure; they just prayed and waited.

That was the birth of the church—of the body of Christ. It was accomplished in the energy of the Holy Spirit. Every member who was part of that prayer meeting was engaged in the activities through the Spirit's power. From that moment on, every member has been added to the church the same way—by the Spirit's power, placing him into the body of Christ. Christians are as singularly one today as they were in Acts 2...

The body witnesses by its unity (John 13:34, 35; 17:7). Can you imagine the devastating impact that a united church would have on this world? I don't mean an ecumenical church where everybody kisses doctrine good-bye, throws their arms around each other, and marches off to battle over the latest social issue. The body of Christ comprising truly saved people needs to be one and, sadly, it is not. Today the body's testimony in that regard is pathetically weak. Our testimony is strife,

division, carnality, and confusion. The world, then, renders its verdict on the strength of these two kinds of witnesses: the individual members of the body, and the body as a whole...

How can the body witness in a collective, single testimony? There are two ways. First, the body witnesses by its visible oneness. Jesus prayed, 'Neither pray I for these [disciples] alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me' (John 17:20, 21).

Today this body witness is nil because of strife, division, and confusion. We are fragmented into many small divisions, each one trying to protect its own little ideas. We haven't begun to see what God can do through a united testimony to Jesus in the church. The Spirit indwells all of us, so that our witness might be total and unified. If only the world could see us as one—what an impact!"

FRANCIS A. SCHAEFFER, Widely recognized as one of the most influential thinkers in Evangelical Christianity today. Author, lecturer and founder of L'Abri Fellowship, an international study group.

(From his last and final book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, pages 162-171.)

“ The Final Apologetic

But there is something even more sober. And to understand it we must look at John 17:21, a verse out of the midst of Christ's high priestly prayer. Jesus prays, ' That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' In this, his high priestly prayer, Jesus is praying for the oneness of the church, the oneness that should be found specifically among true Christians...

Now comes the sobering part. Jesus goes on in this twenty-first verse to say something that always causes me to cringe. If as Christians we do not cringe, it seems to me we are not very sensitive or very honest, because Jesus here gives us the final apologetic. What is the final apologetic? ' *That they all may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*' This is the final apologetic.

In John 13 the point was that if an individual Christian does not show love toward other true Christians, the world has a right to judge that he is not a Christian. Here Jesus is stating something else which is much more cutting, much more profound: We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus' claims are true, and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians.

Now that is frightening. Should we not feel some emotion at this point?

Too often the evangelical has said, 'Well, of course Jesus is talking here about the mystical union of the invisible church.' And then he lets it go at that and does not think about it any more—ever.

In theological terms there are, to be sure, a visible church and an invisible church. The invisible Church is the real Church—in a way, the only church that has a right to be spelled with a capital. Because it is made up of all those who have thrown themselves upon Christ as Savior, it is most important. It is Christ's Church. As soon as I become a Christian, as soon as I throw myself upon Christ, I become a member of this Church, and there is a mystical unity binding me to all other members. True. But this is not what Jesus is talking about in John 13 and John 17, for we cannot break up this unity no matter what we do. Thus, to relate Christ's words to the mystical unity of the invisible Church is to reduce Christ's words to a meaningless phrase.

Third, he is not talking about our positional unity in Christ. It is true that there is a positional unity in Christ—that as soon as we accept Christ as Savior we have one Lord, one baptism, one birth (the second birth), and we are clothed with Christ's righteousness. But that is not the point here.

Fourth, we have legal unity in Christ, but he is not talking about that. There is a beautiful and wonderful legal unity among all Christians. The Father (the Judge of the universe) forensically declares, on the basis of the finished work of Christ in space, time and history, that the true moral guilt of those who cast themselves upon Christ is gone. In that fact we have a wonderful unity; but that is not what Jesus is talking about here.

It will not do for the evangelical to try to escape into the concept of the invisible Church and these other related unities. To relate these verses in John 13 and 17 merely to the existence of the invisible Church makes Jesus' statement a nonsense statement. We make a mockery of what Jesus is saying unless we understand that he is talking about something visible.

That is the whole point: The world is going to judge whether Jesus has been sent by the Father on the basis of something that is open to observation.

True Oneness

In John 13 and 17, Jesus talks about a real seeable oneness, a practicing oneness, a practical oneness across all lines, among all true Christians.

The world looks, shrugs its shoulders, and turns away. It has not seen even the beginning of a living church in the midst of a dying culture. It has not seen the beginning of what Jesus indicates is the final apologetic—observable oneness among true Christians who are truly

brothers in Christ. Our sharp tongues, the lack of love between us—not the necessary statements of differences that may exist between true Christians—these are what properly trouble the world.

How different this is from the straightforward and direct command of Jesus Christ—to show an observable oneness which may be seen by a watching world!"

JOHN R. RICE, Baptist minister, evangelist, pastor and teacher. Since 1934 he has edited the *Sword of The Lord* weekly publication, and has written many books.

(From his book, *The King of the Jews*, a commentary on Matthew, page 243.)

“ The meaning of the word *church* is important. It never in the Bible means a denomination. Our use of the term *church* in the phrase, ‘The Roman Catholic Church,’ or the phrase ‘ The Methodist Church,’ is thoroughly unscriptural. *Remember, the word ‘church’ never means denomination.* Catholics are not the church of Christ. Baptists are not the church of Christ. The sectarian group that calls itself ‘the Church of Christ’ is not that. The claims of Episcopalians, Greek Catholics, Seventh-Day Adventists, or any other denominational group, that they are ‘the true church,’ are untrue. The word *church* as used in the Bible, never one time refers to a denomination. The word means ‘a called-out assembly.’ Thus it is used many, many times in the New Testament of local congregations, like the ‘church at Jerusalem,’ ‘the church at Rome,’ ‘the church of God at Corinth,’ ‘the churches of Galatia,’ and ‘the seven churches of Asia.’ Notice that several local congregations are each called a church, not fractions nor branches of a mother church. Each local assembly was completely and separately a church.

(From one of the last books he wrote, *Come In or Stay Out*, which was dedicated to Bob Jones, Sr., pages 163-168.)

"2. *See Final Picture of Denominationalism at Its Peak and Destruction*

I think that both friends and foes will agree that as a great ecclesiastical organization, the Roman Catholic Church is the apex of denominationalism. Its organization is more powerful; its influence on government takes control of the wills and lives of men; its claim to represent God on earth are beyond that of any other denomination.

But denominationalism has not yet reached its peak, and this will not take place until after all born-again Christians are taken out at the rapture. Then we will see human governments center in a worldwide dictatorship of the Antichrist. Then we will also see the final development of one superchurch, one ecclesiastical octopus, a state church, backed by the Antichrist and worldwide.

Just as the Man of Sin himself cannot appear until 'he who now letteth... be taken out of the way' (II Thes.. 2:7), just so denomination-ism cannot come to its fruitage until born again Christians are taken out, and the shell, the power structure, the unconverted membership appear as revealed in the book of Revelation, after the rapture of the saints.

That the great superchurch under the Antichrist will be an outgrowth of denominationalism now is evidenced in two ways. First, that must be what will be left of Roman Catholicism. Note the purple and scarlet colors decked with gold and precious stones (Rev. 17:4). Notice that it is a religion which has led kings into spiritual adultery. Notice that it is the mother of false religions, '... THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH' (Rev. 17:5). Notice that it is a false religion that has persecuted the saints, 'drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the martyrs of Jesus' (Rev. 17:6). Notice that this great harlot, the superchurch, sits upon the 'seven mountains' of Rome (vs. 9). And then verse 18 tells us that 'the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.' The superchurch, or the great harlot of Revelation 17 is the culmination of Roman Catholicism.

But it is quite clear that it is also the culmination of other false cults and false religions. It is also evident that it will be turned wholly against Christ. So the modernists, the infidels, and the other false religionists left here on the earth will be included in it. This will be the climax of the ecumenical movement. Who knows but that even now the constant pressure of people who want to unite with Rome, the receiving of Catholic priests into ministerial associations and Protestant councils, the trend back to Rome, the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, the receiving of Unitarian infidels along with born-again Christians—all this may be simply further development toward that great harlot church of Revelation 17.

But follow on a little further into Revelation, chapter 18. We notice that great city, the city of the seven mountains on which the woman sits, is here symbolized by the term 'Babylon.' Now read Revelation 18:2: 'And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.'

Here the tree has grown and grown; the denominations have become one great superchurch. Now the birds, those parasite birds that sat on the branches and hid under the leaves and befouled the tree, have been caged. For in the tribulation time every person who does not take the mark of the beast cannot buy or sell, and the members of this great and deluded superchurch will be enslaved. But notice now that the inhabitants of this denomination, come to its climax, are devils, foul spirits, unclean and evil birds!

VI. WHAT SHOULD CHRISTIANS DO ABOUT MAJOR DENOMINATIONS?

The downgrade movement among Christians, the increase of worldliness, the compromise with evil, the encouraging of 'dialogue' with infidels, and the taking over of places of leadership in denominations by those who are enemies of Christ and the Bible, unconverted liberals and infidels—these distress Christians everywhere. What, then, should a Christian do about major denominations?

1. Beware of Course of Events Clearly Foretold in BIBLE

The Lord Jesus said, 'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits' (Matt. 7:15, 16). Since Jesus said 'beware,' Christians should beware. They should beware of 'feigned words,' the 'covetousness,' the making merchandise of Christians (II Pet. 2:3), which the Bible foretells will come. They should beware of the downgrade tendency in modern denominations and of the awful ruin which will eventually come to the denominations.

That means, then, Christians ought to be on guard. We are commanded to do two things distinctly. One is to watch for Christ's return; the other to watch about false prophets.

2. Try to MAINTAIN New Testament Christianity as a Seed-Sowing, Soul-Winning Business.

We Christians are not to be in the business of growing trees but in the business of sowing gospel seed. Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). We are not 'building the kingdom;' we are to remember that 'God... did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name' (Acts 15:14). The command is to preach the Gospel, to get people saved, to get them baptized, then to teach them to get others saved and baptized, and then teach them to win souls (Matt. 28:19, 20).

3. Determine to Get Rid of Birds Which Lodge in Trees

Every Christian ought to resolve that he will not support any man who denies the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, the inspiration of the Bible, and essential truths of the Gospel. No Christian should be content to remain in the membership of a local congregation which will accept unconverted and unbelieving people. No preacher should be willing to remain a member of a ministerial association which will accept on the same basis an unconverted rabbi or priest or liberal, or modernistic Protestant. No man should support any denominational program which in turn supports some infidel unbeliever.

4. Where Such 'Unclean and Evil Birds' Appear, God's People Should Get Out

God's people are plainly commanded in II Corinthians 6:14-18: 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship

hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'

We are plainly told in II John, verses 9 to 11, that one who does not abide in the Bible doctrine about Christ, 'hath not God.' We are not to receive him into our houses, we are not to bid him Godspeed. So, there is only one thing for a good Christian to do if he obeys Christ—get out of any fellowship with unbelievers and infidels, as far as the churches and denominations are concerned.

In Revelation 18:4 we read, 'And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' In the time of tribulation many will be converted (Rev. 7:9-14). Unto them with loud voice the angel commands, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.'

Since the end of denominationalism will be so terrible, then as corruption increases and as it becomes clear, Christian people should separate themselves from the modernism, from the idolatry and the wickedness of these great denominations as soon as their rejection of the Gospel or as soon as their receiving of unconverted members and leaders is known."

BOB JONES, SR., Evangelist, pastor and founder of Bob Jones University.

(From the book, *How to Hold a Revival*, which was edited by John R. Rice and several other ministers, page 88.)

"Here is what is the matter with us now. We have built up an ecclesiastical machinery that takes all the church to hold it up. One wall is the educational wall and we get everybody to prop it up, hold it for awhile. After a few months the social service wall needs the whole crowd to hold it up. Then somebody props up some other kind of wall. We spend the year propping up ecclesiastical walls that would not hurt us if they fell down. Don't misunderstand me, I am not against comfortable churches; but did you ever stop to think—I don't want to shock you—but did you ever stop to think that God never told you to drive a nail in a board, never told you to put any brick or mortar together. There is not one single commandment in the Bible to build a church. You can do

everything the New Testament tells you to do and never erect a building. Paul did not build any churches. That little Jew did not go around and say, 'Brethren we had better stop here and dig in.' That little Jew turned every street corner into a pulpit, set the city forum on fire with the gospel, shook the foundations of the Roman Empire, and turned the current of history. You cannot find a church he ever erected. I believe in church buildings—don't misunderstand me—but that is not the big business!"

FRANKLIN CLARK FRY, President, Lutheran World Foundation.
(From *Parade*, Dec.31, 1961.)

"I believe that the manifest unity of the Church is the will of God... I disown and reject the notion that the unity of Christ's church is ever a matter of mere human convenience, that it dare ever be impeded on the grounds of expediency or whim. When Christians are one in faith, they ought to become one visibly before God, before each other and before the world."

JOHN W BEHNKEN, President, The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.
(From *Parade*, Dec. 31, 1961.)

"We believe that the divided state of the visible Christian Church is a deplorable condition. We pray fervently and frequently at our altars, asking that God would through the converting power of the Holy Spirit, remove schisms rending His Church. God has not caused these divisions. God's Word is clear. The cleavage within Christendom is the result of human errors and judgments... God alone can heal the breach. He is willing to do so through His Spirit wherever men are willing to listen to His Word. Speaking for the Missouri Synod, I say that my people are willing to listen, to pray and to work for unity."

ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS, Primate, Greek Archdiocese of North and South America.
(From *Parade*, Dec.31, 1961.)

"The Greek Orthodox Church mourns over the continued existence of disunity... faced as we are by the most perilous anti-Christian forces the world has ever known. Our division and disunity are welcome fuel for this unholy fire by which these forces mean to destroy and consume all which remains alive and blooming in the hearts of men. The Holy Scriptures refer to cardinal and mortal sins; but I find no cardinal or mortal sin greater than our disunity. Christian churches must decisively begin to move, one toward another. This is the only way in which they can eventually return all to Christ and to His one and only Church."

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK, Modernist and liberal preacher of fame.
(From an address to the summer faculty and students of Columbia University.)

“Our protestant denominationalism with over 150 sects in the United States has become utterly obsolete as far as our modern significance is concerned and is now a public scandal and disgrace.”

CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL, Organized the Millennial Dawnist group, later to be known as “The International Bible Students Association” and still later as “The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society” and commonly known as “The Jehovah's Witnesses.”
(From the book, *Pastor Russell's Sermons*, which was originally published by the Society, page 742 and 743.)

“When we think of the Church of Christ we must drop from our minds the various churches of men. We must remember that there is but the one Church of Christ, and that it includes all who are truly His through faith, consecration and obedience. Sectarianism, great or small, has no part in the Divine arrangement as revealed in the Scriptures. The Church which the Lord recognizes is the ‘Church of the First-borns, whose names are written in Heaven’ (Heb. 12:23). Consequently no church history gives the record of the experiences of the true Church. What we know of it must be based upon the testimonies of the Lord's Word, and our own experiences and inferences drawn from these.”

BILLY GRAHAM, International Evangelist and a Baptist.
(From, *My Answer* by Billy Graham, Chicago Tribune-New York News Syn., Inc., 1970)

“Q. Why are there so many denominations? Were there denominations in the New Testament?”

A. No, there were no denominations in New Testament times. We do read about Christians who tended to gather in little groups of their own, such as at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:10-17). In many of the larger cities, Christians met in various groups, usually in private homes. But these were not really denominations.

Denominations grew up for a variety of reasons, especially in the United States, where there has been freedom of religious worship. Some started because of a common national origin (such as a group of Christians from Germany or Scotland who settled in America and tended to stay together in their worship). Some started because of minor differences in interpretation of the Bible. Some, such as the Methodists of John Wesley, started because older groups were not providing the spiritual nurture necessary when people became Christians. Some

started because it was more practical to establish a new organization to carry out the ministry of the Gospel than to rely on a distant organization.”

(From, *My Answer* by Billy Graham, Chicago Tribune-New York News Syn., Inc.)

“False Church, Not True Institution, Is Challenged

Q. I sense that Christianity is being challenged by forces both within and without the church. What is the reason for this? Is this something in history?-D.W.

A. Absolutely not! Christ said, ‘Upon this rock I will build my church, and the very gates of hell will not prevail against it.’ You must remember that there is the true church and the pseudo church; true Christians, and pseudo Christians. These should be, and are, challenged, as every false thing is challenged by a civilized society.

As Dr. Paul S. Rees has said, ‘It may be asked whether, in our time, the name of our Lord suffers most at the hands of the Marxist millions who challenge it or of the maudlin millions of Christians who cheapen it.’ As always, the greatest enemies are ‘within the camp’ not outside it, whether in nations or in institutions.

It is right that pseudo Christianity should be attacked, and if possible, destroyed. However, our Lord taught that in the last days false christs would arise and would deceive many. So, we are not to be over-alarmed when His predictions come true. At the same time, we must remember that the true church cannot be successfully assailed, and it will withstand the very gates of hell, whether they swing from within or without Christ's church.”

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL CONFERENCE SPEAKERS, Kansas City Conference 1977.

(All quotations are taken from the Special Report as published in the *New Covenant Magazine*, October 1977 issue, which is the organ of the Catholic Charismatic Movement.)

“The various streams of the charismatic renewal have always been concerned for renewal of the particular Christian churches. This should and will continue to be their objective. *However, at Kansas City the Lord called us all to reach beyond our denominational walls to work and pray aggressively for a higher goal—the unification of all Christianity.* Prophecies during the conference called us to mourn and weep for the brokenness of Christ's body on this earth, and to intercede for its healing. We should view Kansas City not as culmination but as the beginning of our working in earnest, praying in earnest, learning to love one another in earnest, as we respond to the Lord's desire to have his body be one.

On Thursday morning Ralph Martin, director of the International Communication Office in Brussels, Belgium, and Bobbie Cavnar, a coordinator of the Christian Community of God's Delight in Dallas, Texas, spoke on ecumenism.

Mr. Martin expressed a theme that was to run through the entire conference: the sinfulness of the disunity of the church, and the need of repentance and intercession to correct it. 'It isn't the Holy Spirit that got us where we are,' Mr. Martin said. 'It is our own pride and willfulness that has broken the unity of the body of Christ. And it is our lack of unity that blocks the Holy Spirit from convicting the world that it is wrong in its judgment about Jesus.'

Prophecies from the General Sessions

'Mourn and weep, for the body of my son is broken.

Mourn and weep, for the body of my Son is broken.

Come before me with broken hearts and contrite spirits, for the body of my Son is broken.

Come before me with sackcloth and ashes, come before me with tears and mourning, for the body of my Son is broken.

I would have made you one new man, but the body of my Son is broken.

I would have made you a light on a mountaintop, a city glorious and splendidous that all the world would have seen, but the body of my Son is broken.

The light is dim. My people are scattered. The body of my Son is broken.

Turn from the sins of your fathers. Walk in the ways of my Son.

Return to the plan of your Father, return to the purpose of your God.

The body of my Son is broken...'

'The Lord has a word to speak to the leaders of all the Christian churches. If you are a bishop or a superintendent or a supervisor or an overseer or the head of a Christian movement or organization, this word is for you. The Lord says:

"You are all guilty in my eyes for the condition of my people, who are weak and divided and unprepared. I have set you in office over them, and you have not fulfilled that office as I would have had it fulfilled, because you have not been the servants that I have called you to be.

This is a hard word, but I want you to hear it. You have not come to me and made important in your lives and in your efforts those things which were most important to me, but instead you chose to put other things first. You have tolerated divisions among yourselves and grown used to it. You have not repented for it or fasted for it or sought me to bring it to an end. You have tolerated it, and you have increased it.

And you have not been my servants first of all in every case, but you have served other people ahead of me, and you have served this world ahead of me, and you have served your organization ahead of me. But I am God, and you are my servants; why are you not serving me first of all?

I know your hearts, and I know that many of you love me, and I have compassion on you, for I have placed you in a very hard place. But I have placed you there, and I call you to account for it. Now humble yourselves before me and come to me repentant, in fasting, mourning and weeping for the condition of my people...” ’

Judy Tydings, a member of the advisory committee of the National Services Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States— ‘Out of all the marvelous things at the conference, I heard two things particularly clearly. One was what Ralph Martin said at the Catholic conference, that by living in disunity we are living in an objective state of sin. I think that's true; I'm glad he said it. The other was the prophecy we heard at the end of the conference, in which God calls us to mourn the brokenness of his Son's body on earth. God was calling us to fasting and mourning, and it was like what it says in the book of Joel, “Proclaim a fast.” For me, although there was a distinct joy at being united on a number of levels with different parts of the Lord's body, I felt we were being confronted with the seriousness of the disunity among the churches. God was saying that it's sinful and displeasing to Him and was leading us into a time of mourning and weeping and fasting over it.’ ”

RALPH MARTIN, Roman Catholic evangelist and one-time director of the International Communication Office in Brussels, Belgium for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

[\(From the *New Covenant* magazine, of which Ralph Martin is also the cofounder, November issue, 1977.\)](#)

“This article is adapted from an address to the 1977 National Conference on the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church, held at Kansas City, Missouri, July 20-24.

The Sin of Disunity

God's will from the beginning has been for his people to be one. Sometimes we find ourselves praying to know God's will, and are somewhat surprised to discover that God's will has already been clearly stated in Scripture or in Christian teaching, and we don't need special revelation to know what it is. That is the case with Christian unity.

Consider the prayer of Jesus: ‘I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, *that they may all be one*; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one

in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, *that they may become perfectly one*' (John 17:20-23).

God's desire for unity is also reflected in the work of his Spirit. We know that the Holy Spirit was given precisely to form the body of Christ, to knit together into one body those who believe in Jesus. All those upon whom the Spirit falls are to be joined together in one body, one church.

The Lord's clear, stated, unambiguous purpose is for this people to be one.

Yet it's obvious that the body of Christ today is characterized by tremendous disunity. Within local parishes and congregations, we see people who don't love one another; who don't talk together, work together, pray together. The church as we see it in the New Testament—a vital community of faith, love, and witness—is virtually nonexistent in the Christian churches in many parts of the world. And the same situation, on a far larger scale, exists among the various denominations. We are divided, both within and among our churches.

A STATE OF SIN

Simply put, we are living in a state of sin. It is our own pride and willfulness that has broken the unity of the body of Christ. And it is our lack of unity that blocks the Holy Spirit from convincingly demonstrating to the world that it is wrong in its judgment about Jesus. Collectively, the Christian people are living in a state of sin, and our life should be characterized, to some extent, by mourning and repentance for the condition in which we find ourselves.”

KEVIN RANAGHAN, Director of the National Communications Office of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

(From *New Covenant*, December issue, 1977.)

“Lutherans and Catholics Called To Mourn Over Divisions

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA—Under the theme, ‘Father, may they be one in us,’ 12,000 Lutherans and Catholics gathered for the first Upper Midwest Ecumenical Charismatic Conference, September 30 to October 2. In an address to the conference, Kevin Ranaghan, director of the National Communications Office of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, said that ‘our division is a serious scandal to the world.’ He described the lack of unity among Christians as ‘the greatest victory of Satan’ and urged Christians to mourn and repent for the situation. Bob Mumford of Cupertino, California, pointed out that unity demands sacrifice and encouraged the participants to pray that the Lord would show them those things that can be sacrificed without compromise. Larry Christenson, chairman of Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Services, and

Roman Catholic Archbishop John Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis also addressed the conference.”

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, Leader in the “Restoration Movement” and the “Churches of Christ.”

(From *The Millennial Harbinger, New Series, Number XII, Vol.1, page 561 ff.*)

“But let him that yet doubts, read the following passages from the Christian Baptist, April, 1825:—‘ I have no idea of seeing, nor wish to see, the sects unite in one grand army. This would be dangerous to our liberties and laws. For this the Savior did not pray. It is only the disciples dispersed among them that reason and benevolence would call out of them,’... ‘I suppose all agree that among Christians of every name these are disciples of Jesus Christ, accepted of God in him, real members of his body, branches in the true vine, and therefore all one in Christ.’ October 1826, vol.4, p.53.... ‘and if I thought there was any man on this continent who would go farther than I to heal all divisions and to *unite all Christians* on constitutional grounds, I would travel on foot a hundred miles to see him and confess my faults to him.’ vol.5, p.15... ‘I rejoice to know and feel that I have the good wishes, the prayers, and the hopes of myriads of Christians in all denominations.’ vol.6, p.239.”

WATCHMAN NEE, a great Chinese preacher and writer whose books have now been published in many languages and countries. He died while imprisoned by the Communist Government of China.

(From his book, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, pages 47, 49, 55 & 64.)

“What is a New Testament church? It is not a building, a Gospel-hall, a preaching center, a mission, a work, an organization, a system, a denomination, or a sect. It is the meeting together for worship, prayer, fellowship and mutual edification, of all the people of God in a given locality, on the ground that they are Christians in the same locality. All the believers in a locality form the church in that locality, and in a small way they ought to show forth what the Church should show forth. They are the Body of Christ in that locality, so they have to learn how to come under the Headship of the Lord and how to manifest oneness among all the members, guarding carefully against schism and division.

To say ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ is obviously sectarian; but to say ‘I am of Christ,’ is sectarian too, though less obviously so. The confession, ‘I am of Christ,’ is a good confession, but it is not an adequate basis for forming a separate church, since it excludes some of the children of God in a given locality by including only a certain section who say, ‘I am of Christ.’ That every believer belongs to Christ is a fact,

whether that fact be declared or not; and to differentiate between those who proclaim it and those who do not, is condemned by God as 'carnal.' It is the fact that matters, not the declaration of it.

No worker may exercise control over a church or attach his name to it, or the name of the society he represents. The divine disapproval will always rest on the 'church of Paul,' or 'the church of Apollos,' or 'the church of Cephas.' In the history of the Church it has frequently happened that when God has given special light or experience to any individual that individual has stressed the particular truth revealed or experienced, and gathered people round him who appreciated his teaching, with the result that the leader, or the truth he emphasized, has become the ground of fellowship. Thus sects have multiplied. If God's people could only see that the object of all ministry is the founding of local churches and not the grouping of Christians around any particular individual, or truth, or experience, or under any particular organization, then the forming of sects would be avoided.

Spiritual Leaders. 'Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ' (I Cor. 1:12). Here Paul points out the carnality of the Corinthian believers in attempting to divide the church of God in Corinth which by the divine ordering was indivisible, being already the smallest scriptural unit upon which any church could be established. They sought to divide the church on the ground of a few leaders who had been specially used of God in their midst. Cephas was a zealous minister of the Gospel, Paul was a man who had suffered much for his Lord's sake, and Apollos was one whom God certainly used in His service, but though all three had been indisputably owned of God in Corinth, God could never permit the church there to make them a ground of division.

Hero-worship is a tendency of human nature, which delights to show preference for those who appeal to its tastes. Because so many of God's children know little or nothing of the power of the Cross to deal with the flesh, this tendency of man-worship has expressed itself frequently in the Church of God and much havoc has been wrought in consequence. It is in keeping with God's will that we should learn from spiritual men and profit by their leadership, but it is altogether contrary to His will that we should divide the Church according to the men we admire. The only scriptural basis for the forming of a church is difference of locality, not difference of leaders."

WITNESS LEE, A supposed disciple of Watchman Nee, and spiritual leader of the "Local Church" movement in the United States.

(From a "Living Stream Ministry," tract entitled, *The Governing Principle of the Body of Christ*, # G-0H03.)

“The governing principle of the Body of Christ is oneness. ‘There is one body...’ (Eph. 4:4). This is a most fundamental fact! The Bible unequivocally declares that there is only one Body of Christ. Timewise, from the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost even into eternity, there is only one Body. All Christians, whether living in the first or twentieth century, are members of that unique Body. The essential oneness of the Body is not affected by time. Spacewise, the Body is also one. Whether a believer is saved in the United States or India, he becomes a member of the one universal Body. A believer living in New York City is not, in any sense, a member of a different Body than a believer living in Los Angeles. Both are members of the one universal Body of Christ.

Since the Body of Christ is one universally, it must also be one in expression. According to the Bible, there was one expression of the Body in the city of Jerusalem. Though the believers numbered in the tens of thousands (Acts 21:20), there was only one Body with one governmental administration (Acts 21:18). Later, as the gospel was preached, the expressions of the one Body increased in number. First the church in Antioch was raised up, then the church in Philippi, the church in Corinth, and the church in many other cities. These were not many Bodies, but merely expressions of that one Body.

The United States with its many foreign embassies, is a good illustration of the one Body with its many expressions. The U.S. is one nation, but it has an embassy in many foreign countries. The embassy is the unique expression of the U.S. in that country. Though cities such as London and Tokyo are quite large, they still have only one U.S. embassy. If there were two U.S. embassies in a foreign city, it would indicate that the U.S. was divided.

In like manner, if there are two expressions of the Body of Christ in a city, it indicates the Body is divided. The church as the Body of Christ cannot tolerate division without suffering inestimable loss. The most damaging attack upon a living body is the severance and separation of its members. Once a member is detached and separated, loss of function ensues for that member and great suffering is incurred by the whole body.

The present divided condition of the Body of Christ represents the masterstroke of an enemy who is subtle beyond human comprehension. Historically, to persecute the church is to cause it to flourish; to repress it is to cause it to spring up and advance the more livingly; but to divide it is to destroy it. When the persecutions by the Roman emperors failed to eradicate the church, Satan adopted the more subtle strategy of dividing the Body with quarrels over points of doctrine and practice. The modern denominations are but the full-grown fruits of such craftiness. Nothing has damaged the Christian testimony through the centuries more than divisions among the Christians themselves.

The Lord Jesus, realizing the supreme importance of the oneness of His disciples, prayed ‘that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me’ (John 17:21). The most convincing evidence of the reality of Christ is oneness among His disciples. Such oneness is an irrefutable testimony to the world. In that last long season of prayer, the Lord could have prayed many things; the fact that He prayed concerning the oneness of His disciples indicates its serious significance.

When the Corinthian believers tended even slightly toward division by declaring, ‘I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ,’ the Apostle sharply rebuked them by asking, ‘Is Christ divided?’ (I Cor. 1:10-13). The hidden root of division was further laid bare when Paul emphatically declared that divisions were fleshly (I Cor. 3:3-4 NASB). Such a word reveals that divisions have their source, not in the Holy Spirit, but in the fallen human flesh.”

LOUIS T. TALBOT, Pastor of the Church of the Open Door, Los Angeles.
(From his radio message over station KMPC, and put into booklet form,
The Scarlet Woman, pages 3-7, 14 & 24.)

“THE SCARLET WOMAN
Her Final Apostasy, Fall, and Desolation
Rev. 17:1-19:4

In the last, tragic world-drama of ‘the things which shall be hereafter’ (Rev. 1:19); that is, after the translation of the church, forever to be with the Lord—in this approaching, terrific drama of sin and blood and tears, one of the chief ‘personages’ will be ‘the great whore... MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.’ As we shall see from this study of Rev. 17:1-19:4, the ‘great whore’ which John saw, ‘a woman... upon a scarlet colored beast,’ is a symbol of none other than apostate Christendom in its final form. This spectacular organization will include those, both Catholic and Protestant, who profess the name of Christ, yet deny ‘the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.’

The true church is called by the Spirit of God the Bride of Christ; and Satan, ever offering a counterfeit religion in imitation of the true, will present to the world a false system, called by the Holy Spirit ‘the great whore.’ What a contrast in these two scriptural terms! The Bride of Christ, cleansed from every stain, from all defilement, by the shed blood of her bridegroom and Lord, will be ‘to the praise of his glory’ throughout the endless ages. But ‘the great whore,’ ‘full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication,’ will meet her just and fearful and eternal doom before Christ returns to earth with His Bride to set up His millennial kingdom. It is the God-given picture of the final apostasy and

Satan inspired power of 'the great whore,' followed speedily by her fall and desolation, that we are to study today. May the Spirit of God open our eyes to see these 'things which shall be hereafter,' these things which are even now casting their shadows before them. Then may He send us out, as flaming evangelists, to warn men to flee from the wrath to come...

'And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:' (verses 4-6).

We are not surprised that John 'wondered with great wonder' (verse 6, R.V.)! The woman represents a religious system—that system which prevails officially in those nations that now occupy the Roman Empire, a system that is even now grasping for the reins of government in Europe. The head of it has been made temporal sovereign, numbered among the sovereigns of the earth; he has his principality; he has his own coinage, his own mint. This speaks of the time when that system at least temporarily, will dominate.

We shall consider the significance of the name that without doubt makes known to us the identity of this woman. But if the name were not known, the very description of her would make clear just what is in the mind of the Spirit of God regarding her. She is bedecked with silver and gold; she has in her hand a cup which is full of abominations; she is called 'a whore,' which means, in the spiritual sense, one who gives herself to idols. This woman is drunken with the blood of the saints, the martyrs of Jesus. She not only represents the Roman papacy as it is yet to be, but she also represents all the systems of Protestantism that are going to be 'spewed out' of the mouth of the Lord when the true church is taken away.

THE UNION OF THE MYSTERY RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY

Early in the Christian era Nero and others of the Caesars cruelly persecuted the Christians. Many were martyrs; including Paul, the apostle. Then in the fourth century, Constantine came to the throne. He professed conversion. With the eye of a politician, he saw that those first Christians had made wonderful strides; and instead of persecuting them—they now numbered about four million—he thought it would be to his advantage to favor them. But he was never saved, was never a real Christian. If you should go to the British Museum, you would be shown coins that were put into circulation at the time of Constantine. On one side there is a cross; on the other side, a picture of the Temple of Bel and one of the sacred symbols of Tammuz.

This is what Constantine did when he came to the throne, thus bringing about a union of the mystery religion and the professing church

of Jesus Christ. The Pope of Rome, the first bishop of Rome, was given the title 'Pontifex Maximus,' and every pope from that day to this bears that name upon his mitre. To quote Dr. H. A. Ironsides: 'The very fact that he bears that title is a declaration that he is not a successor to Simon Peter, but is rather the successor to the high priest of the heathen mysteries that began away back there in Babel. When Constantine came to the throne and the first pope assumed the title, Pontifex Maximus, all those heathen associations and ceremonies that had their beginning with Nimrod—the worship of the Queen of the Heavens, the eating of the wafer, the doctrine of purgatory, the wearing of vestments, and the observance of a thousand and one lesser mysteries—all these were brought into the church, and for a thousand years they pervaded all Europe.' Thus the Roman Catholic Church as it is now known, with all its God-dishonoring doctrines and practices, came into existence.

Then men like Luther and Wycliffe began to study the Word of the living God. They could see that there was no harmony between what they were teaching and what God had revealed in His Word. They began to preach in their cathedrals, on the streets, in their homes, what God had recorded in Paul's epistle to the Romans; and as a result, the Reformation began. But mysticism did not end there. It continues in that part of Christendom that has rejected the truth of the reformers. Go to Latin America today; that is, to Mexico, Central America, and South America; and you will find superstition and ignorance and fear comparable only to the wretchedness of the Dark Ages—all in the name of Roman Catholicism. The Catholic Church as we know it in our own country has been influenced by the open Bible, has been held in restraint, so far as such evils as the sale of indulgences and certain superstitions are concerned. But that is the result of the Protestant Reformation...

COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE

'And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues' (verse 4).

In these words of warning God calls His born-again children to 'come out of her.' It is the call to separation from this God-dishonoring system. The pathway of separation must be walked if the church of Christ is to exercise an influence for Christ in the midst of this perverse generation. This has been true of God's people all through the ages. The men who have exercised an influence for Him have been men separated from the corruptions of the world, including the corrupt religious systems of their day. The call from heaven to 'come out of her' was heard during the Reformation period, and during the tribulation period there will also be a warning given, lest men be deceived by her pretensions.

This system is today making every effort to bring Protestantism under its influence and thus destroy the work of the reformers. The

Anglo-Catholic movement and similar organizations within the professing Protestant bodies, bring one to a realization of the need of more 'Protestants' with real courage and conviction to stem this awful tide. If we would ever retrogress; that is, if a union of Protestantism and Romanism should ever be formed, at that moment we should be compelled to give up the Bible, because Rome has not changed one whit in her attitude toward liberty of conscience and freedom to study God's Word. Not only that, but we should also be compelled to exchange the great doctrine of justification by faith and all that it includes for the mysteries that were invested in the wife of Nimrod, the consort of one of the mightiest apostates who ever lived in Old Testament days. Men like Luther, John Huss, John Knox, called mightily to the people to come out from the system and be separate from it. Let us lift high the torch which they have put in our hands and magnify the grace of God, which alone brings salvation. We need to contend earnestly for the faith in this day when tens of thousands are winding their way back to spiritual bondage, from which the Gospel of the Reformers had delivered them."

(From the message and booklet by Louis T. Talbot, *Unshakable Things*, also reprinted in the *Sunday School Times*.)

"One Body, One Church.

—*Despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not*
(I Cor. 11:22)

One day I boarded a streetcar and sat beside a man who began to talk, and the man said, 'To which church do you belong?' I answered by asking, 'What is your church affiliation?' He replied, 'I am a Methodist and will die a Methodist.' When he repeated the question, 'What is your church?' my answer was, 'I belong to the Church which is His body.' Puzzled, the man said, 'That is a new one. When was it organized?' My reply was, 'It was organized 2,000 years ago.' When he asked, 'Where are its headquarters?' I answered, 'In Heaven.' The poor man thought I had taken leave of my senses. But, my friends, that is the only Church, and when the Lord returns and the Church is raptured, the only one that He will recognize will be the Church which is His body, made up of all men and women who have been truly regenerated."

F. R. MEYER, Prolific writer and very popular minister at the Christ Church, London.

(From his Introduction to the book, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, by A. J. Gordon, pages XIII and XIV.)

"Throughout the so-called Christian centuries the voice of the Holy Spirit has borne witness to the Lord, directly and mediately. Directly, in each widespread quickening of the human conscience, in each revival of religion, in each era of advance in the knowledge of divine truth, in each

soul that has been regenerated, comforted, or taught. Mediately his work has been carried on through the church, the body of those that believe. But, alas! how sadly his witness has been weakened and hindered by the medium through which it has come. He has not been able to do many mighty works because of the unbelief which has kept closed and barred those avenues through which he would have poured his glad testimony to the unseen and glorified Lord.

The divisions of the church, her strife about matters of comparative unimportance, her magnification of points of difference, her materialism, her love of self and place and power, her accounting herself rich and increased in goods and needing nothing, when she was poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked—these things have not only robbed her of her testimony, but have grieved and quenched the Holy Spirit, and nullified his testimony.”

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON, Head of the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard, a renowned lay theologian, author and Bible teacher on apologetics, Biblical prophecy and dispensational themes. Author of *The Coming Prince*, *The Lord from Heaven*, *The Silence of God*, etc. (From his book *The Buddha of Christendom*, Preface and pages 119-121.)

“All who accept the Ritualists' conception of the Church are on a road which, as every logical and unprejudiced thinker acknowledges, leads straight to Rome. They who accept the Reformer's conception of the Church are separate from Rome by a barrier which is impassible and indestructible. The one position is the religion of Christendom and of its Buddha: the other is Christianity...”

The time foretold in prophecy is not yet, when there can be no salvation within the professing Church of Christendom. Not until the earthly people shall have been restored to favor as ‘the Bride’ will the Church of Christendom be openly revealed as ‘the Harlot.’ And then the command will be peremptory: ‘Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities’ (Rev. 18:4,5). I would not be understood as palliating the sin of remaining in the communion of an apostate Church. And if the Church of England be a branch of the Catholic Church, in the sense in which the Romanist use that term, no Christian should remain in it for a single day; not because there is no salvation with the historic Church—this may not be asserted—but because the Christian has to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

The Israel of Messianic days, by the murder of the Son of God, became guilty of ‘the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world.’ (Luke 11:50, 51). And by her own deliberate acts the ‘historic Church’ entered upon the awful heritage of guilt; and

when, at the close of this day of grace, her sins shall come up for judgment, upon her shall be avenged His holy apostles and prophets, for 'in her,' we read, 'was found the blood of prophets and of saints, even of all that have been slain upon the earth.' ”

MATTHEW HENRY, Presbyterian pastor and Author of the famous *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, which is said to be “the greatest devotional commentary ever written.”

(From *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, John 17:20-23, page 1609.)

“The intimacy of this oneness is expressed in these words, ‘*thou in me, and I in thee.*’ This is insisted on in Christ's prayer for his disciples' oneness, (1) As the pattern of that oneness. Believers are one in some measure as God and Christ are one; they are united by a divine nature, by the power of divine grace, in pursuance of the divine counsels. It is a holy union, for holy ends; not a body politic for any secular purpose. It is a complete union. (2) As the center of that oneness; ‘that they may be *one in us.*’ There is *one God and one Mediator*. That is a conspiracy, not a union, which doth not center in God as the end, and Christ as the way.”

ALBERT BARNES, Presbyterian pastor and author of the famous “*Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*,” which are said to be “the most useful and most practical commentary ever written.”

(From *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, One Volume Edition, Notes on I Corinthians 1:13 and I Cor. 3:1-3, pages 678 & 693.)

“*Is Christ divided?* Paul, in this verse, proceeds to show the impropriety of their divisions and strifes. His general argument is, that Christ alone ought to be regarded as their Head and Leader, and that his claims, arising from his crucifixion, and acknowledged by their baptism, were so pre-eminent that they could not be divided, and the honors due to him should not be rendered to any other. The apostle therefore asks, with strong emphasis, whether Christ was to be regarded as divided? Whether this single supreme Head and Leader of the church had become the head of different contending factions? The strong absurdity of supposing that, showed the impropriety of their ranging themselves under different banners and leaders. *Was Paul crucified for you?* This question implies that the crucifixion of Christ had an influence in saving them which the sufferings of no other one *could* have, and that those sufferings were in fact the peculiarity which distinguished the work of Christ, and rendered it of so much value. The atonement was the grand, crowning work of the Lord Jesus. It was through this that *all* the Corinthian Christians had been renewed and pardoned. That work was so pre-eminent that it could not have been performed by another. And as they had *all* been saved by that alone—as they were alike dependent on

his merits for salvation—it was improper that they should be rent into contending factions, and ranged under different leaders. If there is anything that will recall Christians of different names and of contending sects from the heat of strife, it is the recollection of the fact that they have been purchased by the same blood, and that the same Savior died to redeem them all. If this fact could be kept before their minds, it would put an end to angry strife everywhere in the church, and produce universal Christian love.

Could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, ‘I could not regard you as spiritual’—as qualified to enter into the full and higher truths of the gospel; I could not regard you as divested of the feelings which influence carnal men, the men of the world, and I addressed you accordingly. I could not discourse to you as to far-advanced and well-informed Christians...

But as unto carnal. The word *carnal* here (*sarkikoi*) is not the same which in chap. ii. 14 is translated *natural*, (*psuchikos*.) *That* refers to one who is unrenewed, and who is wholly under the influence of his sensual nature, and is nowhere applied to Christians. *This* is applied here to Christians—but to those who have much of the remains of corruption, and who are imperfectly acquainted with the nature of religion; babes in Christ. It denotes those who still evinced the feelings and views which pertain to the flesh, in these unhappy contentions, and strifes, and divisions. The works of the flesh are ‘hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings,’ (Gal. v.19-21,) and these they had evinced in their divisions; and Paul knew that their danger lay in this direction, and he therefore addressed them according to their character...

As unto babes in Christ. As unto those recently born into his kingdom, and unable to understand the profounder doctrines of the Christian religion. It is a common figure to apply the term infants and children to those who are feeble in understanding, or unable, from any cause, to comprehend the more profound instructions of science or religion.

2. *I have fed you with milk*. Paul here continues the metaphor, which is derived from the custom of feeding infants with the lightest food. Milk here evidently denotes the more simple and elementary doctrines of Christianity—the doctrines of the new birth, or repentance, faith, etc. The same figure occurs in Heb. v.11-14; and also in classical writers. See Wetstein. *And not with meat*. Meat here denotes the more sublime and mysterious doctrines of religion. *For hitherto*. Formerly, when I came among you, and laid the foundations of the church. *Not able* to hear if. You were not sufficiently advanced in Christian knowledge to comprehend the higher mysteries of the gospel. *Neither yet now*, etc. The reason why they were not then able he proceeds immediately to state.

3. *For ye are yet carnal*. Though you are Christians, and are the friends of God in the main, yet your divisions and strifes show that you

are yet, in some degree, under the influence of the principles which govern the men of this world. Men who are governed solely by the principles of this world evince a spirit of strife, emulation, and contention; and just so far as you are engaged in strife, just so far do you show that you are governed by their principles and feelings. *For whereas.* In proof that you are carnal, I appeal to your contentions and strifes. *Envy.* (zalos) Zeal; used here in the sense of envy, as it is in James iii. 14, 16. It denotes, properly, any *fervour* (*zeo*) of mind, . . . and may be applied to any exciting and agitating passion. The envy here referred to, was that which arose from the superior advantages and endowments which some claimed or possessed over others. Envy everywhere is a fruitful cause of strife. Most contentions in the church are somehow usually connected with envy. *And strife.* Contention and dispute. *And divisions.* Dissensions and quarrels. The margin correctly renders it *factions*. The idea is, that they were split up into parties, and that those parties were embittered with mutual recriminations and reproaches, as they always are in a church. *And walk as men.* Marg., *according to man*. The word *walk* is used often in the Scriptures in the sense of conduct or act. You *conduct* [yourselves] as men, i.e., as men commonly do; you evince the same spirit that the great mass of men do. Instead of being filled with love, of being united and harmonious as the members of the same family ought to be, you are split up into factions as the men of the world are.”

C. I. SCOFIELD, Author of *The Scofield Reference Bible*.

(From Scofield's notes under Genesis 11:1-9 concerning the Tower of Babel, Old Scofield Reference Edition.)

“The history of Babel (‘confusion’) strikingly parallels that of the professing Church. (1) Unity (Gen. 11:1)—the Apostolic Church (Acts 4:32, 33); (2) Ambition (Gen. 11:4), using worldly, not spiritual means (Gen. 11:3), ending in a man-made unity—the papacy; (3) the confusion of tongues (Gen. 11:7)—Protestantism, with its innumerable sects.”

DEAN ALFORD (Henry Alford), Priest in the Church of England, became Dean of Canterbury, produced the famous Alford's Greek New Testament and Commentary, one of the original members of the Revision Committee for the Revised Version.

(From his *Greek New Testament and Commentary*, Matthew 12:43-45, page 134.)

“43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

(1) The direct application of the parable is to *the Jewish people*, and the parallel runs thus:—The old demon of idolatry brought down on the Jews the Babylonish captivity, and was cast out by it. They did not after their return fall into it again, but rather endured persecution, as under Antiochus Epiphanes. The emptying, sweeping, and garnishing may be traced in the growth of Pharisaic hypocrisy and the Rabbinical schools between the return and the coming of our Lord. The re-possession by the one, and accession of seven other spirits more malicious... than the first, hardly needs explanation. The desperate infatuation of the Jews after our Lord's ascension, their bitter hostility to His Church, their miserable end as a people, are known to all.

(2) Strikingly parallel with this runs the history of the Christian Church. Not long after the Apostolic times, the golden calves of idolatry were set up by the Church of Rome. What the effect of the captivity was to the Jews, that of the Reformation has been to Christendom. The first evil spirit has been cast out. But by the growth of hypocrisy, secularity, and rationalism, the house has become empty, swept, and garnished: swept and garnished by the decencies of civilization and discoveries of secular knowledge, but empty of living and earnest faith. And he must read prophecy but ill, who does not see under all these seeming improvements the preparation for the final development of the man of sin, the great re-possession, when idolatry and the seven [Greek] *pigenmata ponarotera* shall bring the outward frame of so-called Christendom to a fearful end.”

CHARLES R. SWINDOLL, Pastor of the First Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, California.

(From his nationally known daily radio broadcast, *Insight For Living, Study in I Timothy* and published in the *Bible Study Guide* which gives a survey of this Epistle.)

“Some Observations on the Contemporary Church.

So we may better understand I Timothy's relevance to our twentieth-century churches, let's make some pointed observations about today's church in general. It should be to our chagrin that the following characterize most of our churches:

A. A Deeper Commitment to Tradition Than to Scripture. Many people seem to think that whatever has been done a certain way for a long time must be right. So, rather than test its alleged viability against the canon of Scripture, they keep right on doing and believing what they always have. Churches that do this have elevated tradition over the

Bible. They need to return to a serious reconsideration of their traditions in light of the clear instruction of Scripture.

B. A Greater Concern for Being Successful According to the World's Standards Rather Than by God's Standards. Today, success in the church is often measured by such externals as the number of people in the congregation, the variety of programs, the size and architecture of the buildings, the number of people who have been saved through evangelistic thrusts, and the size of the budget. 'Bigger is better and biggest is best' appears to be the motto. However, some of the most successful ministries are not great in size. Besides, nowhere does the New Testament teach or imply that size is the measure of success. The biblical criteria of success focus primarily on internals, for when they are right, the right actions will follow.

C. A Greater Degree of Confusion and Uncertainty Even Though It's Larger Than Ever in History. Although there are more Christians in the world today than ever before, there is also less decisiveness and confidence concerning the Christian church's purpose and role in the world. We need to get back to the basics of understanding, applying, and proclaiming God's infallible Word. Then, and *only* then, will the church regain clarity of mission and the power and courage to carry it out.

D. A Greater Polarization by Tight Denominational Ties Rather Than Unification in Love. Three times in the Gospel of John (17:21, 22, 23), Jesus prayed to the Father that those who would compose His church (cf. 17:20) would be perfected in unity. Christ's consuming desire was that Christians everywhere would form a strong bond together in love under His authority. In our day, however, many Christians are more loyal to their denomination or local church than they are to the universal Body of Christ. Most contemporary churches are marked by rigidity and exclusivity instead of an attitude of love and concern toward all Christians—regardless of their denominational ties or church affiliations. Again we can see the necessity of paying closer attention to God's original blueprint for His church and much less attention to human revisions, additions, and deletions.”

THE END