



*New Testament Directions for
Correction, Discipline
and Fellowship*

*Number Five in a series on
the Holiness of Christian Fellowship*

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Preface

Table of Contents

Preface	
Part 1: Some Scriptures Concerning Correction and Discipline Bearing on the Holiness of Christian Fellowship	1
Matthew 18:15-20: If Thy Brother Sin Against Thee	1
Gal. 6:1: Taken in a Fault	6
1 Thess. 5:14 Admonish the Disorderly	8
2 Thess. 3:6-16: Withdraw from the Disorderly	9
1 Tim. 5:20: Rebuke Before All	11
Titus 1:11: Whose Mouths Must be Stopped	13
Rom. 16:17, 18 Creating Divisions and Occasions of Falling	14
Part 2: Touch Not What is Unclean	17
What the Lord Said About Defilement	17
2 Cor. 6:14-18: Be Separated and Touch not What is Unclean	20
Even Professors Have Responsibility	22
Luke 11:47-51: Judaism	22
Revelation 18:4, 24: Christendom	23
Trying to Change God's Order	24
An Allegory: Things Supposed to Illustrate Things That Are by Charles Stanley	28
Part 3: Christian Fellowship	33
The Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord	33
Fellowship with the Father and the Son	35
Part 4: The Holiness of Christian Attitudes and Activities	37
The Holiness of Judging	37
The Holiness of Love	42
The Holiness of Impartiality	51
The Holiness of Peace and Peace-making	54
The Holiness of Correction	60
The Holiness of Qualified Oversight	62
The Holiness of Unity	63
Conclusion	64
Appendix 1: 1 Cor. 11:18, 19: Schism -- Heresy -- Division	65
Scripture Index	67
Subject Index	72

Ultimately, the holiness of Christian fellowship is maintained in practice by assembly decisions of correction and discipline. Therefore, refusal of submission to an assembly decision of correction or discipline is not only a blow struck against what is precious to Christ Himself, the holiness of God's assembly, but against the authority of Christ (cp. 1 Cor. 5:4).

This present paper has been preceded by four other papers concerning the holiness of Christian fellowship:

An Exposition of 2 John With Some Comments on Gal. 5:9 and Rev. 2 & 3.

An Exposition of 2 Tim. 2:14-26.

An Exposition of 1 Cor. 5.

Carefulness in Reception.

This present paper assumes that the previous four papers have been understood. Fellowship with leaven in professed Christians, be it doctrinal or moral, leavens those who fellowship with it. The assembly of God must act to exclude leaven that arises within and must not receive it from elsewhere. However, the holiness of Christian fellowship includes much more than what is subject to excommunication.

Part 1 takes up some passages in the NT that deal with correction and discipline (not necessarily involving excommunication) in order to help us in several ways:

1. There are Scriptures that give us guidance for maintaining holiness among the saints of God, holiness in our fellowship that is due God.

2. There are Scriptures that give us guidance concerning steps to be taken that may prevent the necessity for excommunication.

Part 2 of this paper continues to examine *The Lake Geneva Conference Report* as an instrument of breakdown in the holiness of Christian fellowship. Its thesis is examined and the bearing of "touch not the unclean thing" is considered in view of the *moral darkness* of the Report's thesis. This leads on to considering its similarity to Open Brethrenism, which is followed by a paper written by Charles Stanley of Rotherham.

Part 3 briefly looks at both assembly fellowship and fellowship in the family of God. There is a distinction.

In Part 4 we shall consider holiness required in, for example, showing love, and in peace-making, as well as in other Christian activities.

Appendix 1 brings before us the important distinction between schism and heresy.

Many thanks are due D. Ryan for editing and suggestions.

*New Testament Directions for
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*Part 1: Some Scriptures Concerning
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on the Holiness of Christian Fellowship*

In this part we shall consider Scriptures that have to do with various forms of discipline which do not involve the putting away of a wicked person. It may be that pastoral and priestly care might prevent some cases from developing to the point where such discipline is needed. Furthermore, when a course is observed calling for some lesser discipline, it may be that if it is carried out faithfully the guilty one might be preserved from something more serious, i.e., which should be regarded as leaven.

On the other hand, when the guilty one is, let us say, publicly rebuked, there may be such a reaction of self-will that the assembly may find it is a case of idolatry as in 1 Cor. 5 (cp. 1 Sam. 15:23).

*Matthew 18:15-20:
If Thy Brother Sin Against Thee*

(15) But if thy brother sin against thee, go, reprove him between thee and him alone. If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (16) But if he do not hear [thee], take with thee one or two besides, that every matter may stand upon the word of two witnesses or of three. (17) But if he will not listen to them, tell it to the assembly; and if also he will not listen to the assembly, let him be to thee as one of the nations and a tax-gatherer. (18) Verily I say to you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on the earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on the earth shall be loosed in heaven. (19) Again I say to you, that if two of you shall agree on the earth concerning any matter, whatsoever it may be that they shall ask, it shall come to them from my Father who is in [the] heavens. (20) For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them.

‘Brother X said something to me and I am angry and offended.’ But the issue

in this passage is *sin* (v. 15). What do you mean, you are offended?¹ Something was said to you that you did not want to hear? You are annoyed that it was said to you? Your brother had an opinion or a judgment about something that is different than yours and he said it to you? Your feelings are hurt? Well, you can bring yourself to the Lord in prayer, to remove these feelings, and to profit by what was said to you -- even if what was said was not 100% accurate. “Oh, but the tone of voice in which it was said”! Perhaps as a result of your injured feelings you have misconstrued that also. But if it is *sin*, and that involves

1. When considering being offended, it is well to remember that James says that *we all* often offend:
For we all often offend. If anyone offend not in word, *he* [is] a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body too (James 3:2).

The word for offend is *ptaio*, causing to stumble. It is used in James 2:10 and 2 Pet. 1:10 (JND: fall; WK: stumble). It is used in Rom. 11:11 for Israel’s stumbling also. And God is able to keep us without stumbling (Jude 24). W. Kelly remarked:

Yet even the most spiritual have to watch habitually and to judge self in this respect at least as much as in any other. . . . It is trying to hear men talk of matters which they are incompetent to judge. And it is easy enough to overshoot the mark of a true and deserved horror of what no godly mind should tolerate; and all the more because true discernment is rare. Christ is the pattern. A perfect man is he who offends not in word, able to bridle the whole body also. May our word as the rule be always with grace, seasoned with salt. May we also, if by God called to the duty, be brave to overthrow reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and to lead every thought into the obedience of Christ. . . . (*Exposition of the Epistle of James*, p. 117).

Bits in horses’ mouths, rudders of ships, are small but of great power: so yet more with the tongue, more untameable than any animal of land, air, or sea. It is apt to be, not inconsistent only, but hypocritical (*God’s Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 535).

Another word, *proskope*, is used in 1 Cor. 10:32:

Give no occasion to stumbling, whether to Jews or Greeks, or the assembly of God.

JND translates using the word “offense” in Acts 24:16; 2 Cor. 6:3; Phil 1:10. The thought is to keep clear of giving an occasion for someone to stumble by our doing something that leads another into sin.

Another word, *proskomma*, is something against which one’s foot may stumble, and is used in Rom. 14:13, 20. In this chapter, patience is called for between Jewish and Gentile believers. Jewish believers may still have scruples concerning certain observances from a system formerly sanctioned of God; hence, Gentile believers need to take care not to use their liberty with respect to those things to the harm of weak believers. (See the exposition by W. Kelly, on Romans.)

. . . but judge this rather, not to put a stumbling-block {WK: “occasion of stumbling”} or fall-trap {WK: offense”} before his brother (Rom. 14:13).

All things indeed [are] pure; but [it is] evil to that man who eats while stumbling [in doing so]. [It is] right not to eat meat, nor drink wine, nor [do anything] in which thy brother stumbles, or is offended, or is weak. Hast thou faith? have [it] to thyself before God (Rom. 14:20-22).

Another word sometimes translated offend is *skandalizo*. For this word see *Young’s Concordance*, p. 710. In a footnote to Matt. 13:57 JND says,

The root in the Greek, *skandalon*, is literally ‘the catch of a trap,’ that makes it fall when touched. It is generally the occasion, or means, of getting into an evil case, not a stumbling stone.

something against the Lord as well as yourself, why do you not obey the Lord in this Scripture?

“Well, it is not *that* serious.” Then why are you fault-finding instead of bearing and forbearing? (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13). Perhaps the Lord is dealing with an attitude that you have that contributes to slowing of growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). Do you resent correction? Perhaps you are one who nurses grudges? Perhaps you even like to control people and situations and when you cannot do so you become fault-finding, back-biting and evil-speaking against certain persons -- and so they can be regarded as having “offended” you; especially if you are narcissistic. Our hearts are quite capable of cloaking all this in a mantle of godliness. Perhaps self-judgment is the answer. Moreover, Christians are sometimes “offended” because they have been admonished about something:

. . . that yourselves also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another (Rom. 15:14).

Is every admonishment I receive really a case of my brother sinning against me? Also, it is also well to remember this:

. . . bearing with one another in love (Eph. 4:2).

Put on therefore, as [the] elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any should have a complaint against any; even as the Christ has forgiven you, so also [do] ye. And to all these [add] love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts, to which also ye have been called in one body, and be thankful (Col. 3:12, 15).

Let all bitterness, and heat of passion, and wrath, and clamour, and injurious language, be removed from you, with all malice; and be to one another kind, compassionate, forgiving one another, so as God also in Christ has forgiven you (Eph. 4:31, 32).

It is profitable to our souls to read 1 Cor. 13.

But if your brother has *sinned* against you, reprove him privately. “Reprove”² has the thought of bringing conviction -- to the conscience. Your desire is that the Lord might be honored and the sin be judged and put away. If he owns the sin and judges it, “thou hast gained thy brother.” Gained him for what? Compare 1 Cor. 9:19-22; Phil. 3:8; 1 Pet. 3:1: there is a gain for the Lord.

If private dealing with the sin does not gain the brother, then he must be sought by taking one or two others with you and again seeking to gain your brother. Now, this brings to bear an often repeated requirement:

that every matter may stand upon the word of two witnesses or of three (Matt. 18:16).

2. See Luke 3:19; John 3:20; 8:9; 16:8; 1 Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:9; Rev. 3:19.

Why is this passage so often not obeyed? *Every matter* must be able to stand on the word of two or three witnesses -- regarding *sin*. Complaints that have narcissism at bottom, or personal pique, stand in grave danger of being exposed for what they are in the face of this procedure laid down by the Lord who knows our hearts, and knows how full of self-seeking those hearts are. *He* never pleased Himself (John 8:29; Rom. 15:3).

Clearly, proof of the sin is required. Thus, the sin itself is to be demonstrable by two or three witnesses and if he who sinned will not listen to reproof in the presence of two or three witnesses, then the matter is to be brought before the assembly. And if he will not listen to the assembly, he is publicly seen to be a *contumacious person*, as well as guilty of the *sin* which was the occasion for this exposure of *stubborn perverseness and rebellion*. This is a deeper and graver matter. The *sin* which began this would not be of a character that had to be brought more directly to the assembly for judgment, as in the case of those things in 1 Cor. 5. Here it is some *personal sin of one against another* that was not of the class of sins noted in 1 Cor. 5. In the words,

let him be unto thee as one of the nations and a tax-gatherer (Matt. 18:17),

the word “thee” is singular and refers to the one against whom the sin was done. These words given to His disciples, who were Jews, indicate that the contumacious person was to be regarded as a Jew would regard a Gentile or one of the Jewish tax collectors for the Romans; i.e., with such a person they would no longer have anything to do.

However, the contumacy regarding the assembly (the assembly began at Pentecost) exposes a state. Matt. 18:18-20, then, contemplates assembly action. Matt. 18:20 is Christ’s presence for those gathered together unto His name, for the binding and loosing (v. 18) and prayer (v. 19). The assembly replaced Judaism. A case of binding by the assembly is given in 1 Cor. 5 and a case of loosing is seen in 2 Cor. 2:7. The assembly acts with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and in His name (in His authority) in such cases (1 Cor. 5:4), He being present (Matt. 18:20). Matt. 18:18 has in view the sin of contumacy as the occasion of the Lord’s stating this, though it has a general bearing. Taking these Scriptures together, the contumacy will be seen as leaven, and the contumacious person ought to be put out as a “wicked person.”

If he refused to hear the assembly, he was to be counted as a heathen man. The Christian assembly took the place of the synagogue, and, where the assembly had acted, the judgment (till repentance) was final; the offender was held to be outside as a heathen . . .³

3. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 14:108. In an early paper (1841) *Collected Writings* 1: 339, 340, “On Discipline,” JND took this as personal action only, as some do, based on the “let him be unto THEE” which is singular. However, I believe that the thought quoted is correct. Verse 18 makes this clear. The binding and loosing is assembly action. The offender was to be regarded as

(continued...)

It is true that heaven will not necessarily bind everything done on earth. God's order needs to be followed. However, the fact that heaven does not bind everything done on earth does get abused in order to resist the action of the assembly. It is not so that account must be taken of everyone who takes it into his head to oppose assembly action. Often enough there can be favoritism for those dealt with by an assembly, or hostility to those taking action. Hear this good counsel:

The ground is not the wisdom of a set of individuals, but the promise that where they are gathered to His name He will be in the midst of them. And I have always found that respecting the action of an assembly *prima facie* is the way of wisdom and what God owns. And Mr. -- forgets that the fact, that we are all one body, gives the title to communicate and remonstrate if called for, and in an extreme case, where evil is *deliberately* allowed, to disown the meeting altogether.⁴

There remains another point to speak of and that is an attempt to reverse the true force of v. 18, to which an answer was given by W. Kelly:

Q. Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18 -- What is the true form of the future with the perfect part in these texts? Does it teach, what has been drawn from it and apparently by more than one Christian recently, not a ratification in heaven consequent on the binding on earth, but that what was bound on earth had been previously bound in heaven? W.

A. I am of opinion that there is no ground grammatically, any more than in the scope of our Lord's doctrine, to suppose that the participle *δεδεμένον* expresses time past relatively to that which is signified by the future *ἔσται*. The idea is that of a certain condition viewed abstractly from consideration of actual time. "Whatever thou mayest bind on the earth shall be a thing bound in the heavens," etc. It is well known that, according to the grammarians, the futurum III or exactum in many verbs (as *δέω, κόπτω, παύω, πιπράσκω*) supplies the place of the simple future passive, as may be seen in Jelf's Gr. Gr. second ed. Vol. II. p. 71. The difference, I would add, is that the complex form before us views the result as permanent (*δεδεμένον*) but, beyond doubt, of a future act (*ἔσται*). Had the meaning contended for been meant, care would have been taken to express it distinctly, as *ἤδη δεδεμένον ἔσται ἐν τ. οὐ.*, or *ἔσται τὸ δεδεμένον* or in some other way quite different from the actual construction, which appears to me to admit of no other translation than that which is given in the Authorized Version {KJV}.⁵

Gal. 6:1:

(...continued)

a heathen; i.e., outside. See *Collected Writings* 24:37; *Notes and Comments* 5:147. See also *Things New and Old* 17:55; T. B. Baines, *The Lord's Coming, Israel and the Church*, London: Morrish, p. 278, sev. ed.

4. *Letters* 2:399. See also p. 215.

5. *The Bible Treasury* 6:304.

Taken in a Fault

Let us look at two translations of this verse:

Brethren, if even a man be taken in some fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest *thou* also be tempted (JND).

Brethren, if a man be even taken in some offence, do ye, the spiritual ones, restore such an one in a spirit of meekness, looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted (WK).

First of all, it should be understood that Gal. 6:1 does not refer to assembly discipline. It refers to care on the part of those whom the Lord enables to restore such a one. W. Kelly remarked that the text

does not mean surprised "by," but taken or detected "in."⁶

It is something in which the person was caught in the act. "Some fault," or "some offence," (sometimes "trespass") refers to something such as C. H. Mackintosh noted:

The greatest care, tenderness and wisdom are needed in cases such as you refer to. A man may be "overtaken in a fault" as in Gal. 6. In an unguarded moment a person may be led to take more stimulant than he ought, and perhaps he may seem to be the worse for drink. Should such an one be hastily thrust out of the assembly? Assuredly not. He should be lovingly and tenderly admonished by "the spiritual" who alone know how to do it. He should be carefully looked after, not for the purpose of finding accusation against him, but to "restore" and deliver him thoroughly from the effect of his "fault."⁷

Note that nowhere in this quotation did CHM advocate the toleration of drunkenness or even hint that a single incident of drunkenness ought to be overlooked. Moreover, CHM distinguishes a fault which can be discerned by the *spiritual* -- a distinction obnoxious to the loose and the legal.

Restore refers to compacting or knitting something together. The word for "perfecting" in Eph. 4:12 comes from the same root word. Each saint should be fitted into his place as God would have him to be.

Not all are suitable to do such a work of restoration. "Ye who are spiritual" indicates that not all are spiritual (cp. 1 Cor. 2:15). If we consider this matter first of all in the context of the book of Galatians, dealing as it does with keeping the law, i.e., with legality, those given to a legal spirit are not suitable for this work, not being spiritual. C. H. Mackintosh wrote:

What constitutes legality is the old nature taking up God's precepts and

6. *The Bible Treasury* 14:379.

7. *Things New and Old* 17:279.

assaying to carry them out.⁸

We appeal solemnly to the consciences of our readers as to these things. The present is a deeply solemn time for Christians. There is a demand for earnest, deep-toned devotedness to Christ, but this cannot possibly exist where the common claims of practical righteousness are neglected. We must ever remember that the self-same grace which effectually delivers the soul from legality is the only safeguard against all levity. We have done very little for a man, if anything at all, if we bring him out of a legal state into a light, easy-going, careless, unconscientious condition of heart. And yet we have frequently marked the history of souls, and noticed this sad fact respecting them, that when they were delivered out of darkness and bondage they became far less tender and sensitive. The flesh is ever ready to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and therefore it must be subdued. It needs that the power of the Cross be applied to all that is of the flesh. We want to mingle the “bitter herbs” with our paschal feast. In other words, we want those deep spiritual exercises which result from positive entrance into the power of the sufferings of Christ. We need to meditate more profoundly upon the death of Christ -- His death as a victim under the hand of God, His death as a martyr under the hand of man.⁹

“Ye who are spiritual” live in neither legality nor levity. The Corinthians were generally characterized by Paul as carnal:

. . . for ye are yet carnal (1 Cor. 3:3).

“Carnal” here is explained in a footnote in JND’s translation. In 1 Cor. 3:1 carnal is identical to carnal in Rom. 7:14, but there is a distinction in 1 Cor. 3:3. The Corinthians had a severe problem of stunted spiritual growth and fleshly conduct, so he could not speak to them as he could speak to spiritual Christians (1 Cor. 3:1). W. Kelly wrote:

In {1 Cor.} ch. 2 the apostle, speaking of the natural man, declares that he “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” In ch. 3 he takes up the other term, and distinctly tells the Corinthian believers that they were carnal; not, of course, natural, but “carnal.” They were believers, but in a wrong and low condition. They ought to have been, but were not, “spiritual.”

Thus every believer is not by any means a spiritual person. For this reason the apostle, in addressing the Galatians, says, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” He did not mean by this that every believer is a spiritual man, but, on the contrary, distinguishes certain believers more fitted than others for the delicate work of restoring a man who has slipped aside. And who are they? The men who know best the hateful evil of flesh, as well as, what is of far deeper moment, the grace of God. These can therefore feel for souls ensnared and

8. From *Notes on Genesis*. May I add that this may take two different forms; one form involving the law of Moses, and another form where NT Scriptures are taken up by the flesh assaying to carry them out.

9. From *Legality and Levity*.

drawn away from the Lord. A carnal man knows God and himself so partially, that he is unfit for such work. He would err, either on the side of easy-going amiability, which would slip over sin, or in overwhelming harshness. The spiritual man, by grace, holds the balance even. He would condemn the wrong, but also meet the soul in restorative grace.

This distinction appears everywhere. Among believers, who does not know some spiritual, with not a few carnal?¹⁰ As believers, they are no longer natural, but they are not therefore necessarily spiritual. Not that they have not the Spirit, but that they do not walk or judge in the Spirit. The possession of the Spirit does not necessarily make a man spiritual. The Corinthian saints clearly had the Spirit, but there was unjudged activity of the flesh in many. There is a shade of difference between the word, and the sense, I also think, in Rom. 7, compared with 1 Cor.3 {3:3} It is one letter and the Authorised Version {KJV} always translates both by “carnal” . . . Now the word in Rom. 7 does not necessarily suppose that the Spirit is there, the word in Corinthians {3:3} does.¹¹

The *law* required love but could not produce it, while grace operative in the soul does produce love. *Fleshliness* has self before the soul also but in another (worse) way. Both legality and levity disqualify from the work of restoring one. In Gal. 6:1 Paul speaks of the spirit in which the spiritual should restore one taken in a fault:

1. “In the spirit of meekness” means an attitude and behavior that involves not insisting on one’s own rights (supposed, or real), but never yielding the rights of God. The Lord Jesus was meek and lowly of heart and always insisted on God’s rights.
2. “Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted”; this attitude would show itself in self-judgment, distrust of self, and dependence on God to sustain.

1 Thess. 5:14 *Admonish the Disorderly*

But we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, comfort the faint-hearted, sustain the weak, be patient towards all.

Disorderliness indicates insubordination to divine directions and not keeping rank with the obedient to God. When this manifests itself, obeying this Scripture may cause a godly change and prevent the next step from having to be taken; namely, the direction in 2 Thess. 3 to withdraw from the disorderly.

Admonition involves both warning and instruction. The disorderly conduct is brought before the one engaging in it so as to warn him about its character

10. {“With not a few carnal” is a way of saying “with many carnal.”}

11. *The Bible Treasury* 12:30.

and its consequences, its dishonor to the Lord -- instructing him in the mind of God about it.

2 Thess. 3:6-16: Withdraw from the Disorderly

(6) Now we enjoin you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the instruction which he received from us. (7) For ye know yourselves how ye ought to imitate us, because we have not walked disorderly among you; (8) nor have we eaten bread from any one without cost; but in toil and hardship working night and day not to be chargeable to any one of you; (9) not that we have not the right, but that we might give ourselves as an example to you, in order to your imitating us. (10) For also when we were with you we enjoined you this, that if any man does not like to work, neither let him eat. (11) For we hear that [there are] some walking among you disorderly, not working at all, but busybodies. (12) Now such we enjoin and exhort in [the] Lord Jesus Christ, that working quietly they eat their own bread. (13) But ye, brethren, do not faint in well-doing. (14) But if any one obey not our word by the letter, mark that man, and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed of himself; (15) and do not esteem him as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother. (16) But the Lord of peace himself give you peace continually in every way. The Lord [be] with you all.

Where a case of unjudged disorderly walk is discerned in a fellow-believer, each individual Christian is responsible to obey, and to apply, 2 Thess. 3:6 and 14. I am aware that it is said that this is individual action and one may act on it when others do not. Certainly one may be obedient to this instruction when others are not. On the other hand, we must bear in mind that no one is excused as “ye withdraw” (v. 6) shows. “Ye” means the saints in the assembly, those referred to as “brethren,” which includes sisters, of course. These are the ones meant in v. 16: “The Lord [be] with you all.” The whole passage is addressed to them *all*, and *all* ought to obey the apostolic direction -- what he “enjoined” them to do in such a case. Each saint was responsible to register his disapproval. We must think of the Lord’s honor, not our convenience and comfort and reputation – or feel-good self-consideration. With self-judgment, firmness is called for in order to maintain the Lord’s honor and the good of the disorderly. A false liberality is merely the indulgence of self which refuses to judge the flesh in others *because one does not judge the flesh in himself*. The apostle was able to point to himself and those who came with him to Thessalonica as those who did not seek something for themselves, but sought what was good for others (v. 7-9).

We are all to “mark that man, and do not keep company with him.”¹² This means that each of us no longer will have free intercourse with such. We will not

12. It does not change the directions if the fellow-believer is not at the Lord’s table.

visit back and forth with such. He is to be made to feel that he is regarded as dishonoring the Lord. His walk is “disorderly.” As a military term, this means not keeping rank. The saints’ walking together in holiness to the Lord becomes disrupted by one walking according to his own pleasure. His feet are not rightly walking in the path of God’s pleasure. He has even brought disorder into the assembly where the Lord Jesus Christ is in the midst.

A disorderly walk must be distinguished from leaven. If it is leaven, 1 Cor. 5 applies. A disorderly walk, while serious, is not leaven, though it may develop into leaven. An example of a disorderly walk is given in 2 Thess. 3. The Christian involved did not like to work and it appears he expected others to feed him. It is not a case of one who *cannot* work or is hindered in some understandable way, is disabled, or cannot find employment; no, he did *not want to* work. So, we have instructions regarding those in need (Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 John 3:17; 3 John 8). But this disorderly case is not one of those.

Love to his soul will be shown in obedience to the command in 2 Thess.3:6 and 14. “Withdraw” in v. 6 means “shrink from,” “avoid” (footnote in JND’s translation). What is the object of this? “That he may be ashamed of himself” (v. 14). And while avoiding him, not maintaining normal social intercourse, being cool and reserved towards him, withholding a handshake and kiss, he is not, of course, put away as a wicked person. It is avoiding him personally. Thus in this case we read, “and do not esteem him as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother” (v. 15). Therefore, while we show no free intercourse with him, we ought to admonish him. This behavior towards him by all the saints should make him ashamed and cause him to repent and get right with the Lord.

A disorderly walk might manifest itself in one pursuing a course to marry an unbeliever. Pastoral work and feetwashing are needed. These failing, 2 Thess. 3 should be applied. Next, it may be that 1 Tim. 5:20 should be applied. A public rebuke, under which the rebuked one will remain until repentance, might be necessary.

It is possible that in some cases where 1 Tim. 5:20 and/or 2 Thess. 3 is applied, the will of the disorderly person might manifest itself in such a way that the assembly must judge it to be leaven at work: for example, idolatry for which compare 1 Cor. 5:11 with 1 Sam. 15:23.

When cases such as the one noted in 2 Thess. 3 arise, it is well at least to be able to say that it is “not according to the instruction he received from us” (v. 6), i.e., from Paul and his fellow-laborers. Good it is for those assemblies where truth concerning the will of the Lord as to Christian conduct is taught. It is ever a shame when such cases arise, and ought to bow us in the dust, but how much greater the shame where we have failed to teach what conduct is due Christ! We have heard the shameful words “preach Christ,” as if preaching *what is due Christ* in our walk is *not* preaching Christ. Thus Christians may shamefully oppose corrective ministry.

There might be a case of, say, a lame priest (Lev. 21:18). This does not

necessarily involve a disorderly walk in the sense meant in 2 Thess. 3. It is an uneven walk, an unsteady walk. It is of such a nature, though, that such a one should not take audible part, i.e., not minister at the holy things, though he eats of the holy things (cp. Lev. 21:21, 22).

The Lord give His dear people discernment in all these things as well as spiritual energy to act for His glory and the good of His saints! Where pastoral care, sound teaching and admonishment about Christ-like behavior, as well as teaching the great doctrines, feet-washing, and the application of 2 Thess. 3, and 1 Tim. 5:20 are carried out, some cases will not reach the stage of leaven and require putting away as a “wicked person” (1 Cor. 5:13).

1 Tim. 5:20: Rebuke Before All

Those that sin convict before all, that the rest also may have fear (1 Tim. 5:20).

W. Kelly remarked that this

has nothing specially to do with the elders, but breaks into the larger field of the saints in general. And as the apostle, while sustaining the elders in a work which must provoke the injurious tongues of the unruly, was far from sheltering an elder when impeached on adequate testimony, so here he insists that there should be no sparing those that are guilty of persistent wrong-doing. To limit the range of τῶν ἀμαρτανόντας (v. 20) as if it meant only “the sinning” presbyters [elders] naturally leads to think of “the rest” of that class to the loss of a solemn injunction in no way restricted, as “before all” ought to demonstrate.¹³

Note that he speaks of “the sinning.” This refers to a *course* of things, those that *go on sinning*. For example, it may be that one is intending to marry an unbeliever: such ought to be warned, and that failing, rebuked publicly, that the rest may fear. That may bring the course to an end and thus not develop into a case of leaven.

What is it to convict them before all? It is to demonstrate their sin before all in such a way as to bring it home to their consciences, with the object of leading them to confession and restoration. It is thus a work of power in the Spirit to convict them that sin before the assembly -- it may be by *facts* -- to convict them in their conscience before God, by showing out the character of their sin, and thus producing real humiliation, contrition, and self-judgment. The third question is, On whom does this blessed work devolve? It is not a precept for the assembly any more than the appointment of bishops and deacons. It is rather an apostolic charge to Timothy himself; so that it was Timothy who was to act in the way described. What then would answer to this now? If a brother, on whose heart the Lord has laid a true pastoral care for His people, and one who had sought in every possible way to reach the conscience of any who had sinned but had failed, were to rise,

13. *An Exposition of Timothy*, p. 113.

as led of the Holy Spirit in the assembly, and convict them in the presence of all, he would be acting on the principle of this scripture. From the very nature of the precept it could not be a collective responsibility nor a delegated duty, but wholly and entirely an individual act; and an individual act only when done in the power of the Holy Ghost.¹⁴

We must not think that when a rebuke is given that that is necessarily the end of the matter. There is an end to be gained and that is a change in the person. There might be cases where a rebuke is administered by an individual and the matter is ended. On the other hand, in 1 Tim. 5:20, rebuke is in view of a course persisted in and the conscience of the assembly as such can be moved so that it acts to bind upon the one who has gone on in the course a rebuke that remains until it be lifted. A person may so react that the sin develops into a case of leaven.

It is sometimes a question, How long is the assembly to go on treating as a brother one whom they have admonished? Samuel mourned for Saul until the day of his death. Some have been under rebuke, or outside, for years.¹⁵

Rom. 16:17, 18 or 2 Thess. 3:6, 14 may have to be coupled with the rebuke. The godly will obey these Scriptures when their force is joined to a rebuke.¹⁶

1 Tim. 5:20 appears in an epistle written to an individual, but an individual with moral power. Perhaps this is so because it is not so much an assembly act as in a case of excommunication, but introduces the question of moral power to do it.

If one such as Timothy rebuked, according to the apostle’s order, he would carry the conscience of all the sound part of the assembly with him. But rebuke before all is different from rebuking one who is not there, nor has it the effect in the same degree of making others fear. But if the assembly, or those who watch over it and carry the mind of the assembly with them, are agreed that it is not wickedness calling for excision, but cannot be passed over, I see nothing to hinder a person’s being rebuked publicly. It was done at -- in a case where a man was overtaken in a fault which none would have known had he not voluntarily told of himself, and there was no question of his godliness or state of mind; but the world had more or less known it. And that is now forty years ago, I suppose, and I believe it has been done in several instances. But it requires the existence of moral authority to do it, and must now flow with the conscience of the assembly.¹⁷

We conclude this with these words from W. Kelly:

But if God dwell in the church, He is there to make known His mind, and to set right what is wrong. He is interested in it, faithful, too, and cares for all who trust Him. Discipline, in putting away at least, ought never to be enforced till every

14. *The Christian Friend*, pp. 277, 278 (1885).

15. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 26:220.

16. Of course, these Scriptures may, if the case so arises, form the grounds for excommunication. *The Bible Treasury* 19:92 and *Ministry of G. V. Wigram* 2:7.

17. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:61.

means short of this, acknowledged in Scripture and incumbent on the church of God, has been tried and failed; public rebuke, as well as private remonstrance, etc., from suited individuals, might justly precede. Putting away should be the last sorrowful necessity -- an act not of any individual, but of the assembly: the reason is wise and good. The best and holiest individuals might, if opposed, have their own minds prejudiced or even their will at work. We ought all to know ourselves better than to desire it to be in the hands of any private individual. It is therefore a great safeguard that the extreme act should be in the hands of the assembly, after individuals, leaders, or other Christians, have failed to bring about repentance.¹⁸

Titus 1:11: Whose Mouths Must Be Stopped

In 1839, J.N.D. wrote:

With regard to speaking, I am quite clear those who speak error ought to be stopped, and those, I think, who speak merely from the suggestion of the flesh, ought to be first warned of it. Any one may do it in love, but those who guide may, if it be needed, take it up, and that *for their own sakes* who have done it; and if there were from this, habitual unprofitable speaking, I think it ought to be stopped. Those who are active in this, must carry the sense of the brethren, which if rightly ordered under the Spirit is a real test of unprofitableness, with them; for that is the ground of the act. I never could understand why the church of God is to be the only place where flesh is to have its way unrestrained. It is folly to suppose this. I desire the fullest liberty for the spirit, but not the least for the flesh. The church, for God's glory, is as bound to stop it there (and more, for it is the place of holy order) as elsewhere, and the means are just the same, the grounds just the same, and it is written, "Let the others judge." Such, I think, is the very simple principle and rule of practice.

On the other hand, I am very jealous of meddling, merely because there is not the same refinement, or people being puffed up for one against another; that is just the flesh in another shape. The poor often get profit, where a refined ear would be offended. It is a holy loving wisdom which must order this. In [cases] of error, the act should be prompt, in cases of profit, patient. But I must say I have not the least idea of subjecting myself to the self-will of another's notion, that he is to speak when he cannot profit the church. I should take the liberty of going away in such an extreme case, and try the question summarily if driven to it. I never knew the Lord desert me, or rather the act of obedience to His own will. In such a case, I have no right to wrong the whole church of God, making them unhappy, and *hindering the gathering of the saints*, to humour the flesh of any.

But then, this must be clearly, and if needs be, patiently ascertained, acting in all quietness, though in all firmness; for the other extreme of stopping

18. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 10:43.

people unnecessarily, or merely because they do not please the ear as well, hinders the gathering to *Christ* equally on the other side.¹⁹

An unprofitable speaker may have been admonished as a disorderly person, but self will prevails in him. Putting to silence an unprofitable speaker in the assembly is a degree of correction and discipline stronger than that of a rebuke. From the above quotation, we may see that it is properly done as an act of the assembly, all if possible (except perhaps the offender) joining in the united action. The ground of the action of silencing is the restraint of the flesh and the Scripture on which it is based is 1 Cor. 14:29 (although Titus 1:11 has a similar bearing but it is not quite so connected with speaking in the assembly of God). Some initial results of refusing to silence a fleshly speaker are to allow perversion of ministry by gift, as well as to encourage flesh, to puff up the fleshly speaker, and to hinder the edification of the assembly as time is wasted waiting for the flesh to be quiet and sit down (which it will be less and less likely to do).

Never should the discipline of silencing be substituted for the excision of the teacher (or holder) of a fundamentally evil doctrine. To substitute a lesser correction or discipline when a greater is called for is unholy. J.N.D.'s strong language should encourage weak assemblies in days of lukewarmness and unfaithfulness to Christ: the assembly of God is no place for the toleration of the flesh.

Rom. 16:17, 18 Creating Divisions and Occasions of Falling

But I beseech you, brethren, to consider those who create divisions and occasions of falling, contrary to the doctrine which *ye* have learnt, and turn away from them. For such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting (JND).

W. Kelly answered a question regarding divisions (*dikostasia* -- Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:20 -- "seditions"):

Q. -- Rom. 16:17. What sort of offenders is meant by "those causing the divisions and the stumblingblocks," whom the apostle called the saints to avoid? Y. T.

A.-- They were as yet different from the separatists of Titus 3:10, 11. "Heretic" as in the Auth. V. gives a misleading sense; for in modern usage it means "heterodox." This is not intended, but one forming a party or sect outside, to which schism ever drifts. Therefore in 1 Cor. 11:18, 19 the apostle says, "I hear there exist schisms among you, and I in some part believe it. For there must even be sects (heresies) among you, that the approved may become manifest

19. *Letters* 1:29-30.

among you.” It is not that schisms must lead to heterodoxy, but that, if not judged, parties within (or schisms) naturally land in an outside party or sect. When this happens, disciplinary action is foreclosed. They have gone without. Such are perverted, and sin, being self-condemned to all who know what is due to the Lord, and what the assembly of God is.

But the case in Rom. 16 is an earlier stage. It supposes self-confident and restless zeal inside, inconsistent with the teaching already learnt by the saints, and reckless of the pain, shame, evil, and danger created by striving after innovations without scriptural warrant. In accordance with the word is the amplest scope for every kind and measure of true gift; and gift ordinarily is apt to be over-estimated, as we see it was in Corinth and is today. But the self-seeking and self-important are never satisfied with the place of subjection which scripture claims from us in deference to our Lord. Hence the desire for popularity and excitement. “From among your own selves,” warned the apostle, “shall rise up men speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them.” For such men chafe under the protests and reproofs, urged by spiritual experience and insight into scripture, to save them from a course as dishonoring to the Lord as ruinous to themselves and any swayed by them.²⁰

Women can be guilty of these divisions and occasions of falling also, working their “self-seeking and self-importance” through manipulating their husbands. Self-seeking is seen in the phrase, **whose god is their belly**. This is a phrase used to describe earth dwellers (Phil. 3:19) in contrast to citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20, 21). It is a phrase that denotes serving self-pleasure and self-satisfaction rather than serving God. This self-serving may take any of a number of forms and be accompanied even by what appears to be “good works.” “*Good words and fair speeches*” are put forward, which in reality undermine in some way what has been learned from the NT. What is being advocated has a kindly and generous sound to the unsuspecting. The truth of the case is being masked. We must bear in mind that deception is going on and it is easy for those serving self to deceive themselves also, in deceiving others. They may twist Scripture in order to accomplish what they want. Antagonism to what constitutes sobriety, righteousness, and godliness may be involved, whether individually or in the assembly. What is the safe-guard? It is the apostolic doctrine we have learned. Therefore “turn away from them”! Such a treatment may recover them, or it may proceed to a case of leaven.

Perhaps the binding on of a public rebuke might be in order, coupled with Rom. 16:17, until repentance is secured, consequent upon which this discipline would be removed. I have personally seen this done after a person was first admonished by some, the person subsequently coming under, and remaining under, an assembly decision of rebuke, joined with Rom. 16:17, for about a year (the saints leaving the person to feel it) until confession was made that the

rebuke was necessary. Then the rebuke was removed from the person at an assembly meeting.

On the other hand, the application of public rebuke may result in a course of behavior on the part of the one rebuked that must be regarded as leaven.

This Scripture also applies to certain persons who have caused the kind of division in the assembly spoken of in Rom. 16:17 and then have withdrawn. Withdrawal from the assembly does not relieve a person from the consequences of sins committed while still in fellowship at the Lord’s table.

20. W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series, 2:63.

Part 2: Touch Not What is Unclean

What the Lord Said About Defilement

(17) Do ye not yet apprehend, that everything that enters into the mouth finds its way into the belly, and is cast forth into the draught? (18) but the things which go forth out of the mouth come out of the heart, and those defile man. (19) For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessings, blasphemies; (20) these are the things which defile man; but the eating with unwashed hands does not defile man (Matt. 15:17-20).

(18) And he says to them, Are ye also thus unintelligent? Do ye not perceive that all that is outside entering into the man cannot defile him, (19) because it does not enter into his heart but into his belly, and goes out into the draught, purging all meats? (20) And he said, That which goes forth out of the man, that defiles the man. (21) For from within, out of the heart of men, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, (22) thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, deceit, licentiousness, a wicked eye, injurious language, haughtiness, folly; (23) all these wicked things go forth from within and defile the man (Mark 7:18-23).

Is it true that from these verses we can eat whatever we want? -- anything at all? What about things offered to idols (1 Cor. 10), for example? There are considerations that must be taken into account. The moral lesson of these verses is to instruct our consciences with respect to what comes out of our mouths, not to give license to put into our mouths everything that we can imagine or lust after. Let us now see what *The Lake Geneva Conference Report* says:

. . . the Lord confronted the Pharisees who had constructed elaborate interpretations of the Law concerning the nature and mechanics of defilement which placed undue emphasis on externals while disregarding the motivations of the heart (Matthew 15:1-20; 23:25-28; Mark 7:14-23).

. . . His teaching effectively reversed the commonly held, but erroneous perception that a man was made unclean by his exterior contacts. Instead, the Lord establishes that a man is made unclean by what emanates from his own heart (p. 41).

. . . James (1:13-15) reflects the same perspective as he states that sin flows out of a man's own heart, thus negating any attempt to blame outside influences for the sins which originate within . . . Therefore an individual or assembly is not held accountable to God as a result of proximity to those who sin, but for sin in their heart (p. 42)

The effect of this *Report* is to set aside the teaching that association with evil defiles, that fellowship with leaven leavens a person. The method used to arrive

at this denial has two parts:

- (1) to say that the teaching that association with evil defiles is a Pharisaical doctrine that the Lord rejected in these passages quoted above; and,
- (2) make the teachings of the NT concerning dealing with the Christian's responsibility for holiness in associations not really apply, or else assert that no personal defilement takes place by being in "proximity" to evil.

The Lake Geneva Conference Report caricatures, with the word "proximity," the doctrine that association with evil defiles. The *Report* is very concerned to portray those who adhere to the truth about associations and fellowship as holders of a doctrine of defilement by mere physical contact. At the same time the *Report* perverts the force of various passages so that they appear not to teach that there is a *moral contact* and *moral identification* which is defiling (see the first four papers in this series).

The goal of the doctrine in the *Report* is given in the last sentence of the quotation above. Why does it say "proximity to those who sin" instead of 'fellowship with those who sin'? The signatories substitute external touching, or "proximity" (nearness in space) to evil, for the real meaning of fellowship (*koinonia*), which means to 'make one with.' They try to escape the issue: *moral contact* and *moral identification with the evil in another person*. Look again at their words:

Therefore an . . . assembly is not held accountable to God as a result of proximity to those who sin, but for sin in their heart.

This is a truly amazing statement. Whose doctrine of proximity (nearness in space) to those who sin are they speaking about? No one's. The signatories concocted (or, invented) that notion in their own minds! Having thus blatantly misrepresented the true teaching, they set about to knock down this fraud of their own making.

What the system in the *Report* leads to is that they could break bread with those who, for example, deny the divine and eternal Sonship of Christ, or deny the eternal, conscious punishment of the wicked, or affirm that Christ could have sinned, etc., etc., but they are "not held accountable as a result of proximity {nearness in space}" to such persons. Very true; it never was a matter of "proximity" -- an invention, a subterfuge, of their own making. But we are held accountable for the *moral contact* and *moral identification* with leaven that God sees in our associations. They believe that if they break bread with such persons, there is not sin in their own heart on account of doing so! In what we are examining, there is a system of teaching that fosters and promotes the sin of fellowship (*koinonia* -- meaning, making one with) with what we know to be leaven, fostered by perverting the holiness of Christian fellowship. James, who is quoted in the *Report*, traces sin to the heart. The heart is where there is *moral contact* with the evil tolerated. There is in the heart *neutrality* regarding a true

or a false Christ. They will break bread with one who holds to a true Christ, or with one who holds to what we know to be a false Christ. It is the sin of *neutrality* concerning Christ even if they cannot discern it. It is *indifference in the heart* to the honor of Christ that causes acts of fellowship (*koinonia* -- making one with) with evil, and “wicked persons,” and “wicked works.”

The bread which we break, is it not the communion {*koinonia* -- fellowship} of the body of Christ? (1 Cor. 10:16).

If anyone come to you and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into [the] house, and greet him not; for he who greets him partakes {*koinoneo*} in his wicked works (2 John 10, 11).

The system laid out in the *Report* is an elaborate effort to get rid of this fact of *making oneself one with what one has fellowship with*. Most certainly breaking bread with a person who holds a fundamentally evil doctrine involves *koinonia* with that person in his “wicked works.” Indeed, Gal. 5:9 with 1 Cor. 5 shows that a professed Christian who holds fundamentally evil teaching is a “wicked person” (1 Cor. 5:13).

Now, what the apostles have written is the commandment of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37), the same Lord quoted at the beginning of this section. There is nothing contradictory between not being defiled by external, physical contact (and “proximity” to) and being defiled by *moral contact* through fellowship (*koinonia*) with evil. James 1:13-15 is used in the *Report* as if it demonstrates their false position. But James shows the starting point from whence comes this effort to have a wider fellowship at the expense of separation from evil unto the Lord. James refers to “lust” in the heart which “gives birth to sin.” If I have a lust in my heart to have a wider fellowship than allowed by Scripture, it can give birth to the (very evil) sin of writing just such a paper as this *Report*. It is the *sin of neutrality and indifference to Christ*. This sin results in *moral contact* and *moral identification* through fellowship with evil. It is the intent of the *Report* to get rid of this truth by talking about “proximity” (nearness in space), and by making it appear that the Lord Jesus is the author of their doctrine:

According to the Lord’s teaching on defilement, a man is made unclean by the sin which emanates from his own heart, and not by contact with others who sin (p. 39).

The truth is that a man is made unclean by the sin which emanates from his own heart, and what emanates from his heart when he has fellowship with “wicked works” and “wicked persons” is the sin of *neutrality* and *indifference* to the honor of Christ by having *koinonia* (fellowship -- making one with) with them -- *moral contact with the evil*.

The *Report* has much to say about external contact not being defiling -- as if that is the issue! -- and is devoid of the thought of *moral contact* and of *moral identification*, as if they did not exist. In connection with their view about

external contact, let us learn from the warning in 2 Cor. 6:14-18 not to touch the unclean thing. There we learn that it is possible to morally touch the unclean thing: a *moral touch*.

2 Cor. 6:14-18:

Be Separated and Touch not What is Unclean

(14) Be not diversely yoked with unbelievers; for what participation [is there] between righteousness and lawlessness? or what fellowship of light with darkness? (15) and what consent of Christ with Beliar, or what part for a believer along with an unbeliever? (16) and what agreement of God’s temple with idols? for ye are [the] living God’s temple; according as God has said, I will dwell among them, and walk among [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be to me a people. (17) Wherefore come out from the midst of them, and be separated, saith [the] Lord, and touch not [what is] unclean, and I will receive you; (18) and I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters, saith [the] Lord Almighty (1 Cor. 6:14-18).

This passage shows that a believer must not be yoked with an unbeliever. This seems to be quite plain and that point will, therefore, not be labored. Neither is it purposed to discuss the various ways in which a diverse yoke may be contracted.

Many see clearly enough that we must not break bread with unbelievers. But why not? It is because fellowship (*koinonia* -- to make one with) is expressed (1 Cor. 10:16) with the unbeliever (2 Cor. 6:14). The breaking of bread together identifies us practically as one. I fellowship with those with whom I break bread (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16). I identify myself with them practically. (Of course, this is true as to those who teach evil doctrine also. If I break bread with them, I identify myself with them, I make myself one with them (*koinonia*, make one with), whether I think so or not, and whether I believe it or not. Now consider the import of the words “and touch not [what is] unclean.” Where have we heard such words before? They are found in Isa 52:11. There, of course, the touch was physical. The physical touch made the Israelite unclean; ceremonially, of course. He became defiled by that touch:

... touch not what is unclean; go out of the midst of her, be ye clean, that bear the vessels of Jehovah (Isa. 52:11).

That reminds us of Hag. 2:12, 13. In 2 Cor. 6 the touch is *moral*. It is a link of fellowship with what is unclean. Such a touch is forbidden because evil associations defile. Evil associations involve the sin of indifference to Christ’s honor being in the heart. The heart has in it neutrality and the person’s acts spring from these sins in the heart.

Surely the Apostle did not write about putting one’s finger on something

unclean. It is not a matter of physical touch; it is *morally touching* -- a moral connection and link to what is morally unclean. Moreover, we are thus taught how to use the types in the OT. The *Report*, in its systematized effort to overthrow the truth regarding holiness in fellowship, also rejects OT types as having a use (pp. 10, 11, 40-42). If the Lord will, these types will be considered in the sixth paper in this series.

What would you think if someone tried to contradict the force of this passage with an argument that “proximity” (being near in space) to Beliar, or unbelievers, or idols is not defiling?

Therefore an individual or assembly is not held accountable to God as a result of proximity to those who sin, but for sin in their heart (*Report*, p. 42).

‘Well,’ they might say, ‘we are speaking of believers’ fellowship with other believers.’ But that will not do. We read: “what fellowship (*koinonia* -- make one with) of light with darkness.” How do they touch? The “proximity” argument is bogus; it is a sham, a shameless and impudent caricature of what they so strenuously try to get rid of. The touch is a *moral touch*; just as there is moral identification and *moral contact*, with evil.

Having fellowship with evil is evil!

“Touch not [what is] unclean, and I will receive you . . .” Were they not saved? Yes, they were! Had God already received them? Yes, He had. What then was this condition of receiving them consequent upon their not touching (i.e., not fellowshiping with) what is unclean? God has received all of the saved. They were accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6). This is position and this is *standing*. But what of our *state*? What about practical fellowship? I want to have fellowship with you, says God, but you therefore must not have fellowship with the unclean, with Belial, with unrighteousness, or with darkness. My receiving you, My practical fellowship with you, depends on your associations.

While we are considering this passage, we may consider a point before passing on. A Christian should not marry an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:39) as surely *the principle* of 2 Cor. 6:14-18 should show. However, the application of 2 Cor. 6:14-15 is as follows, in the words of another:

2 Cor. 6:14 -- Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. But this {application of the passage to marriage} is an error, though it is true that marriage ought to be “only in the Lord”, as is exhorted in 1 Cor. 7. The subject is the service or ministry of Christ. In service and worship, fellowship is forbidden with unbelievers, or unfaithful men. If I, a servant of Christ, am among such, I am to come out. What confirms it is -- 1st, That a yoke is a scriptural badge of service, not of marriage. 2nd, That the believing wife is not to be separate from her unbelieving husband (1 Cor. 7:10-16). On the other hand, the true inference from 2 Cor. 6 is that all communion between the Christian and the world in the service and worship of God is interdicted in

every form and measure.²¹

If 2 Cor. 6:14 applies to marriage, then the Christian should get a divorce from the unbeliever. That is not the intent of this passage. For a Christian to marry an unbeliever brings in other considerations already touched on.

Even Professors Have Responsibility

Luke 11:47-51: Judaism

(47) Woe unto you, for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, but your fathers killed them. (48) Ye bear witness then, and consent to the works of your fathers; for *they* killed them, and *ye* build [their sepulchres]. (49) For this reason also the wisdom of God has said, I will send to them prophets and apostles, and of these shall they kill and drive out by persecution, (50) that the blood of all the prophets which has been poured out from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, (51) from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the house; yea, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation (Luke 11:47-51).

We learn from Luke 11:50-51 that there was a generation at whose hands God would require the blood of Abel down to Zacharias. How could they be held accountable for Abel’s blood? The Lord Jesus, who spoke those words to the pharisees about what goes into the mouth, here speaks of those He regards as guilty by association:

Ye bear witness then, and consent to the works of your fathers; for they killed them, and ye build [their sepulchres].

Do you imagine they *stated* that ‘we consent to the killing of the prophets’? God saw through them. The “blood of all the prophets” will be required of that generation (from Moses onward) as well as from ecclesiastical Babylon (see next section).

Luke 11:50, 51 speaks of God’s governmental vengeance upon them, which happened in A. D. 70 as a foreshadow of the final dealings of God with the nation (Psa. 79, 83; Zech. 12:1-3, etc.). Both Luke 11:47-51 and Rev. 18 speak of those professedly in the place of testimony and relationship to God. They must account for their own sins as well as those of others who occupied the place that they profess to occupy.

But how were these in Luke 11:47-51 associated with previous evil? W. Kelly noted:

Although it seemed the opposite of what their fathers had done, it was the same love of the world which slew the martyrs in that day, and now led man to build

21. *Bible Witness and Review* 1:312.

their sepulchers in order to make religious capital out of this pious honor.²²

So God sent them a test shortly thereafter. He sent prophets and apostles (v. 49) whom they killed and thereby confirmed their association with the others. Hence the need of such a warning as is found in Rev. 18:4.

Those to whom the Lord Jesus addressed Himself had identified themselves with their fathers who had killed the prophets. They had not done it themselves. Their fathers had done the deeds (v. 48) but their action showed fellowship and identification with what had been done (v. 48). God brings upon them even the blood of Abel (v. 51). It would do no good to say, "Oh, why quibble over the past? That happened long ago." **The passage of time does not alter the moral character of an action.** Have we ever learned this divine principle? Does it have any practical meaning in our lives? What should they have done when the Lord said this? They should have acknowledged that the Lord was righteous and true, that their fathers were unjust and false. Confession of, and judgment of, the past, as well as their present condition, was their proper course. They were associated with the history of the evil course of their forebears. It was God the Son who said so, and so it must be true. They should have judged the past, confessed it, taken sides with God against what had been done, i.e., dissociated from that which made them guilty. Plainly, the Lord considered them as in fellowship with what their fathers had done and therefore they must bear the guilt even if they didn't do the deed personally. They were morally guilty of the same thing.

Revelation 18:4, 24: Christendom

Come out of her, my people, that ye have not fellowship in her sins, and that ye do not receive of her plagues.

And in her was found [the] blood of prophets and saints, and of all the slain upon the earth" (Rev. 18:4, 24).

We might well wonder how she is held guilty for all that blood. Guilt by association is the answer. Rome claims to be the spiritual and temporal ruler of the earth. In accordance with her spiritual pretension, God renders to her account the blood of prophets and saints. In accordance with her temporal pretension, God renders to her account the blood of all the slain upon the earth.

Ed. Dennett wrote:

It must be remembered then, in the first place, that Babylon represents a spiritual system, and that this system, in its main moral features, has been in existence ever since the days of John. Thyatira and Laodicea, in fact, contained the root of all the evils which are afterwards seen fully developed in Babylon.

The instruction therefore is for all ages, calling upon God's people to come out,

22. *An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*, p. 200.

and to be separate from that which can be spiritually discerned as Babylon, in which, as in Ezra's and Nehemiah's days, so many saints are enslaved. (Cp. Jer. 50:8; 51:6-9.) And they are also reminded that, if they continue to be mixed up with such a system, they will become partakers of her sins, and be governmentally subject to her plagues. Was there ever a day since these words were written when this solemn, urgent call needed to be more persistently sounded out through the length and breadth of Christendom than now? For what do we behold? Babylon plainly manifesting herself, and boldly rearing her head with her arrogant claims, as well as insinuating herself into popular favor and acceptance by her subtleties and flatteries. Let God's people therefore everywhere be obedient to this heavenly voice, and come out of her; for her sins are fast reaching up unto heaven, and the cup of her iniquities is already nearly full.

The question still returns, Is there no application to the eve of Babylon's destruction? That there can be no Christians in Babylon, at this period, is seen from the fact that the church is already in heaven. There will be Jewish saints on the earth, and, as chapter 7 teaches, also Gentile believers, who will have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; but we have no information as to whether any of these, wearied out with their persecutions, may be tempted to seek shelter within the precincts of Babylon. If so, the call would be also addressed to such; yet the main significance of the cry is to all who may have become at any time mixed up with the principles that will finally concentrate and express themselves in Babylon.²³

Trying to Change God's Order

Wherefore, beloved, as ye wait for these things, be diligent to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless . . . (2 Pet. 3:14).

H. P. Barker wrote:

When He for Whom we look comes, will He find us like the servants in Luke 12:37 and 43, or like the quarrelsome one in verse 45? "Be diligent that ye may be FOUND of Him (1) in peace, (2) without spot, (3) blameless" (2 Peter 3:14). At the beginning the prime emphasis was on purity (James 3:17), for James is perhaps the earliest of the Epistles. But 2 Peter, one of the latest, and written for the last times, puts peace first. Should not this have weight with us?²⁴

Passing by his gratuitous equation of contending for holiness in associations with quarreling, let the reader note the effect of giving up the truth that evil associations defile. It always ends up with some form of palliation of evil. And here we have him opposing Peter to James, who wrote that the wisdom from above was first pure, then peaceable (James 3:17). So for H. P. Barker, for "the last times" the wisdom from above is first peaceable, then pure!

23. *The Visions of John in Patmos* pp. 231, 232.

24. *Why I Abandoned Exclusivism*, p. 26.

Is not the meaning of this quotation that as times became more evil in the professing church, purity became less important and that the prime emphasis now is on peace instead of purity? At least it is admitted that at the beginning “the prime emphasis was on purity (James 3:17).” Had 2 Tim. 2:22 (in Paul’s last epistle, written so that the man of God might know how to be a purged vessel) been consulted, Christians might have been spared this unholy, shameful, and ungodly conclusion from 2 Pet. 3:14. 2 Tim. 2:22 says, “Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Note well the order in Paul’s final epistle. In 2 Pet. 3:14 we learn again how to be found of Him in peace: by walking without spot (without defilement) and in a blameless way. Moreover, “as ye wait for these things” that 2 Peter spoke of, and looking for the eternal state where *righteousness dwells*, we are to be *in peace about this contrary, present scene* we are in, but we are to be characterized by that which reflects that coming scene of righteousness: “without spot and blameless.”

Concerning spots, which represent defilement (as wrinkles represent care), our brother had something to say only two pages previous to his comment on 2 Pet.3:14:

A school teacher once held up before his class a large sheet of white paper with a little black spot on it. He asked the boys: “What do you see?” Not one said, “A large sheet of white paper.” One and all replied: “A black spot” . . . It is like that with Exclusives. They ignore all the white in those from whom they stand frigidly aloof . . .

Notice that our brother did not expect them to say, “A large sheet of white paper with a black spot.” He is not really concerned, for all practical purposes, with spots (though God is). His paper conveys the impression that all division is sin. Separation from evil to the Lord is not discerned. All is lumped together by him, under frigidity. Now, scripture wants us to HATE spots, though indifferentism would, for all practical purposes, counsel otherwise.

There is an interesting story (concerning, probably, J. N. Darby) in this regard:

Many years ago an honored servant of Christ was engaged with a few brethren in some important translation, which the Lord had laid on his and their hearts, and at which they assisted him in their little measure. One morning, on beginning their work, he noticed a little spot of ink in his book. He took out his penknife and, whilst erasing with the greatest care the little blot, so that hardly a trace of it could be discerned, said, as if speaking to himself, rather than to those with him: “I hate spots.” The writer of these lines, who was one of them, never forgot the lesson conveyed, though perhaps never intended, by those

three words.²⁵

“Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 23). Spots in Scripture denote spiritual defilement.

N. Noel wrote:

Not only does Mr. Barker labor to break down the walls, but he condemns Nehemiah for having rebuilt the wall, and publishes it in an O. B. {Open Brethren} magazine, in October 29 1935, and says:

. . . in connection with the rebuilding of the wall, the initiative was taken by Nehemiah. (?) It does not appear that he was commanded or sent of God for this purpose (?) . . . Christians need to lay this to heart, for many, Nehemiah-like, have busied themselves in building walls.²⁶

. . . the holy city, Jerusalem . . . having a great and high wall (Rev. 21:10, 12).

Such is the effect upon the mind of refusing the teaching that tolerated leaven constitutes the lump a leavened lump. How dare he speak of Nehemiah in such a fashion? We wonder where a Christian’s mind might go in attacking the defenses of practical holiness in associations. One writes it, and others spread it. Jeroboam didn’t care for walls either (1 Kings 11:26, 27), nor did Tobijah (Neh. 4:7).

In concluding this, we shall consider comments on the oft abused epistle of John. H. P. Barker said:

I know of no Exclusive who has disputed the reasonableness of my remarks on 2 John 9, 10.²⁷

His paper is characterized by huffing and puffing. He wrote:

Now Scripture is silent as to any relation between churches. We find in it no trace of any inter-church organization. The one Body of Christ is not formed of assemblies, but of individual members. A Scripture that helped me in connection with this matter is 2 John 10. Exclusives have built their structure on their interpretation of 2 John 10, 11, but have paid very little attention to the implications of this other passage.²⁸

First of all, as a former “exclusive,” he knew very well that what he calls “exclusivism” is not built only on 2 John 9, 10, though that passage is part of the issue (see the first paper in this series). The series of papers on *the holiness of Christian fellowship* contains very numerous quotations from persons who lived before H. P. Barker, and it could hardly be that he was not acquainted with the writings of numbers of them. He has dishonestly misrepresented the truth, and has played upon the ignorance of those for whom he wrote his paper.

25. J. A. Von Poseck, *Light In Our Dwellings*, p. 209.

26. *The History, of the Brethren* 1:227.

27. *Why I Abandoned Exclusivism* p. 3, first ed.

28. *Why I Abandoned Exclusivism*, p. 16.

One of the errors here is equating “relation between churches” with “inter-church organization.” There is another “relation between churches” but it is not one’s object to develop this in this paper. His third sentence is the clue, but he abandoned its import, if he ever understood it. As to the last sentence, the reverse is true of himself and the followers of Bethesda. He continued:

There were certain brethren cast out of what the apostle still calls “the church” for no reason but that they would have received some whom Diotrephes did not. They were evidently good men, lovers of truth. They were excluded from “the church” at one place, but does this imply that they would be excluded from every other church? If so, the apostle himself would have to be excluded everywhere. Exclusives would reply, of course, that the reception of these brethren would involve the disowning as an assembly of the company that cast them out. But John still calls it “the church,” though undoubtedly he would have received those cast out therefrom. He had not been instructed in the principles of Exclusivism!²⁹

J. Rankin said:

Is it not significant that even although the best of the Christians were cast out of that unknown assembly the Apostle John still acknowledged that company as “the church.”³⁰

Thyatira and Laodicea are called “the church” also. Concerning this, see the first paper in this series, *An Exposition of 2 John*.

It seems strange, in view of these remarks, that Gaius and Demetrius were not “cast out” in the above sense! The subject of 3 John is the free action of ministry and its opposition by clerical tendencies. Thus I believe that A. Van Ryn, of Open Brethren, is correct when he stated that it is not likely that excommunication from Christian fellowship is meant but rather that refusal to recognize or allow the ministry of others is meant.³¹ Thus, a follower of Bethesda contradicts the reasonableness of H. P. Barker’s remark, not to speak of others, as W. Kelly in his *Lectures on the Epistles of John*.

An Allegory: Things Supposed to Illustrate Things That Are by Charles Stanley

Some forty years ago, there was a serious outbreak of smallpox, and some scholars came from an infected house to a large school. Those who had the care of the children refused to examine whether there was smallpox in the house from which these children came, maintaining that if the smallpox was not in *their school*, they had nothing to do with its being in other houses, or in other places. The result was that a good many children left this school, and many parents refused to let their

29. *Ibid.*

30. *The Third Epistle of John*, p. 27.

31. *The Epistles of John*, p. 177.

children go there. Finally, after forty years, this school decided to hold this principle, that it did not matter if children came from a house where most decided cases of smallpox were known to exist: if the children who came were themselves free from this severe disease, they should be received.

And strange to say, those who had left this school, and adopted the contrary principle, that is, who felt it would be utterly unsafe for the health of the school, to allow any scholars to come from infected houses, or to go to them, these were greatly blamed by the others, and great bitterness was shown towards all connected in any way with the school that desired to do their utmost to preserve their scholars and school from smallpox. And what is still more strange, many doctors also greatly blamed this great care, and thought it very foolish and narrow-minded to refuse to go to that school. Indeed, those who sought to exclude smallpox were quite despised and slandered for forty years.

Not long ago a person could hardly believe it possible, so he wrote a letter to one of the principal persons at this smallpox open school, and to his surprise he received a distinct answer in the affirmative. Yes, it was quite true, their principle of admission at the open school was, that if a scholar came from a place where he believed the smallpox was unmistakably, providing this person was free from the disorder, even if as a day scholar he continued to actually live in the house where the smallpox was, still he should be admitted. Well, the exclusive school have been very sorry, and felt they could not mix with the open school: and *for this alone* they have had to suffer long and great reproach.

At a time like the present, when smallpox is raging, to which of these schools would you prefer sending your child? Is there anything very dreadful in seeking to preserve a school from the danger of smallpox? The exclusive school have not an unkind feeling towards those who carry on the open school. It is only this smallpox infection they feel they must by all means avoid. Are they not bound to do so, if they care for the children?

To many this allegory will be perfectly plain without one word of explanation. Some will say it is not true. Surely every Christian will say that deadly false doctrine, against the Person of Christ, is as serious and dangerous to the soul as smallpox is to the body. If this be allowed, then is not our allegory an exact picture of what has taken place for the last forty years? A deadly doctrine against Christ broke out like an epidemic. So serious was this, that one of the chief leaders at Bethesda, Bristol, said if it were as Mr. Newton taught, Christ would have needed a Savior!³² or words to that effect, and which was assuredly true. Bethesda refused to judge this false doctrine, refused to honestly separate from those who held it, or came from where it was held and taught, and greatly blamed those who did seek in every way to refuse all fellowship with it. We do not need here to repeat what thousands of Christians felt, and do still feel, to be shocking blasphemies against

32. {Indeed, so said George Muller. B. W. Newton continued afterward to teach his evil doctrine of *Christ’s unspeakable circumstantial distance from God*. The truth about these things are found in *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 2.}

Christ. I never met a Christian yet who did not so judge when it was put before him.

I wish, however, to keep to this one point. Is my smallpox allegory a fair representation of the case? Many with Bethesda will say, Far from it. Many will say, "Bethesda has judged its past mistakes, has judged the evil doctrine of Mr. Newton, and is as clear of it as you are, and would no more receive from where it was held than you would. Never would we receive from an assembly where known false doctrine is held." Many are deceived; dear sincere souls believe it is so. The Lord is my witness, I love them in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Oh how I have longed that it was true, and longed until I almost thought it was true, that they would not have fellowship with any coming from and being in fellowship where false doctrine was held. If this were true, why should they remain separate?

And here I would just remark, it is utterly untrue that those they call, exclusive, have bitter feelings against those who take the open ground. We love all the Lord's people amongst them; and we say, if you repent of your past actions, and *now* desire to exclude all connected, or in fellowship with false doctrine, then why are you not with us, seeking to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?

Is it true then, that Bethesda really does now receive from those in fellowship where those minister who teach errors? Certainly not, many will say. C. L., a Christian young man in London, being much perplexed as to this question, wrote to Bristol to inquire at the fountain head. He received the following:

New Orphan Houses, Ashley Down, Bristol: 19th, Dec. 1883.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your enquiry, the ground on which we receive to the Lord's table is soundness in the faith, and consistency of life of the *individual* believer. We should not refuse to receive one whom we had reason to believe was personally sound in the faith and consistent in life *merely* because he, or she, was in fellowship with a body of Christians who would allow Mr. Newton to minister among them; just on the same principle that we should not refuse a person *equally sound* in faith and consistent in life simply because he, or she, came from a body of Christians amongst whom the late Mr. J. N. Darby had ministered, though on account of much more *recent* unsound teachings of the *latter*, we might well feel *a priori* greater hesitation.

I am, faithfully yours,
Signed. James Wright

Now, passing by the false accusations against that honored servant of the Lord Jesus, J. N. Darby, suppose it were true that he also, as well as Mr. Newton, taught unsound doctrine against the blessed Lord, what then are the avowed principles of Bethesda to this very day? Are they not exactly the same as the supposed school that admits its scholars, if free themselves from smallpox, though they come and go to houses infected? Is not this utter heartlessness as to Christ? Should we speak of a man consistent in life because he pretends he is free from Unitarianism, and yet is in fellowship with them? This question is raised again in Christendom. J. N. Darby is with the Lord. Another has spoken out -- I give one line, and such a line.

"To pursue union at the expense of truth is treason to the Lord." -- C. H. S. (*Sword and Trowel*, p. 558.) These are weighty words, and we thank God that the writer has taken some action in accordance with them. Not so the defender of the open school. The editor of "The Christian," speaking of Mr. Spurgeon, remarks, "He has taken action which we deeply regret." (Nov. 18, 1887, p. 13.) To the editor it is perfectly dreadful, because it would justify Mr. Darby in withdrawing from those who held or favoured abominable, unsound doctrine. He says,

It is difficult to distinguish between excommunicating the Baptist Union, and excommunicating the churches represented in it. Nor is it very easy to discern the difference between this line of action and that of the followers of Mr. Darby in excluding from fellowship George Muller and the Bethesda meeting, &c. The argument practically is that all who are faithful and true to Christ ought also to withdraw. What would follow? That the field would be left in the hands of those whose light is darkness . . . Mr. Spurgeon has made his statements, which we believe in the main to be true . . . and he has taken action which we deeply regret.

Thus he deeply regrets Mr. Spurgeon's action. Yes, this is sadly true. The leaders of this open school, open to unsound doctrine, deeply regret that J. N. D. withdrew from it, and deeply regret that Mr. Spurgeon should do the same thing! It would be difficult to conceive more utter indifference to Christ.

That association with evil is not only allowed, but advocated, may be seen in a letter by Mr. {A. N.} Groves,³³ republished in "The Christian" (Sept. 28, 1887), in which the writer says, "I would INFINITELY RATHER BEAR *with all their evils* than SEPARATE from THEIR GOOD." Can words be plainer?

Is it not even worse than the school open to smallpox infection? *For if the bad doctrine is inside*, to withdraw from it, is to take action which is deeply regretted. It is well known that the partisans of false doctrine were in Bethesda, when we were compelled by their refusing to judge it, to withdraw from it. Yes, that is what we felt then, and still feel before the Lord. With this defender of Bethesda it is no question of Christ, but of men, be it Mr. Newton, or Mr. Darby, Mr. Spurgeon or Dr. Angus, and other doctors. May the Lord open the eyes of many sincere but deceived Christians.

To talk of Mr. Darby or Mr. Spurgeon excommunicating such men as George Muller, or Dr. Angus and others, is merely to throw dust in people's eyes. They do no such thing, but in faithfulness to Christ purge themselves from all who identify themselves with false doctrine concerning Christ.

The scripture is clear as to the path of a Christian in these circumstances. 2 Timothy contemplates a state of corruption so sad, that the faithful Christian can no longer purge out the leaven of evil.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord

33. {Appendix 2 in *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 2, gives the views of A. N. Groves regarding fellowship, and his conduct regarding the Bethesda division.}

knoweth them that are his. AND LET EVERY ONE THAT NAMETH THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Not that he will be alone, or seek isolation, but will seek to be in holiness, "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Then read the inspired description of the professing church at this hour (2 Tim. 3:1-5), "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." God says, "FROM SUCH TURN AWAY."

Read 2 John,

Whosoever transgresseth [or goeth beyond] and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God . . . If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.

Are we to say, "Oh it will not do to obey these scriptures; think of what would follow if you did?" No, faith does not reason thus. Surely the reader will see the difference between arrogantly excommunicating others, and simply obeying the word of God. There must be an undivided heart for Christ, that would follow Him at all cost. "Cost," did I say? There can be no joy greater than pleasing Him. Yet true it must be at the cost of everything, to follow Christ, and obey from the heart His word. If Mr. Spurgeon is with God, and his eye only on the glory of Christ, he will go through this hour of testing; and if he is not, he will break down. Nothing will do but uncompromising decision for Christ, and dependence on the Holy Ghost.

Surely every true lover of Christ will be deeply thankful for the action of Mr. Spurgeon. Faithfulness to Christ is not bitterness against those that are His. Can any one see bitterness in either Mr. Darby or Mr. Spurgeon in refusing fellowship with the abettors of soul-destroying false doctrine? No, but Christ was more to them than union with those who would destroy the gospel. One is gone to his rest. His most private letters are now published which he wrote during the severe trial, when the storm of persecution burst upon him, for withdrawing from false practice and false doctrine. Read them, and see whether he breathed the spirit of rancor, or tender love even to those who so deeply erred.

Our prayer is that now the same spirit of holy tender love may continue to mark all our steps, and the steps of Mr. Spurgeon, if the same storm of persecution breaks upon him.

It was that very sentiment that guided my steps forty years ago, "To pursue union at the expense of truth is treason to the Lord Jesus." And forty years' experience has confirmed me in its truth.

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10, 11).

* * * * *

We see from this paper by C. Stanley how Open Brethrenism is a home for those who reject the doctrine that association with leaven leavens a person. The moral contact and connection with evil was the distinct origin of their ecclesiastical position. A summary of the matter is given by one of the Open Brethren, Ian McDowell:

To sum up -- did association with Newton at Plymouth defile the Woodfalls? "Open Brethren" say, not, for they were personally free of his doctrinal errors.³⁴ "Exclusive Brethren" say, yes, for he was ecclesiastically associated with him (i.e., being "one body" with him at Plymouth).³⁵ This is "the Bethesda Question" and its divisive result.³⁶

The thing that is hidden here by Ian McDowell is the fact that some received at Bethesda did indeed hold B. W. Newton's evil teaching.³⁷

Part 3: Christian Fellowship

The Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord

. . . our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you to [the] end, unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful by whom ye have been called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:7-9).

The Christian fellowship denoted here is "of" God's Son, not "with" God's Son (which is found in 1 John 1; see below). This fellowship has to do with the assembly of God formed by the baptism in the power of the Spirit into one body, which took place at Pentecost (Acts 2; 1 Cor. 12:13; Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5). The Spirit of God is the power of the formation (and maintenance) of *union* in one body thus formed. We should note that 1 John speaks of the *oneness* of those who share in eternal life in the Son as God's family (see 1 John 2). Hence a characteristic word is "children." Each of these blessed lines of truth entails a

34. {I have disproved this oft-repeated assertion by Open Brethren, that no partisans of BWN received at Bethesda had imbibed his evil teachings, in my *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 2.}

35. {Thus there were two charges. Some who held B. W. Newton's doctrine were received, as well as that others received were linked by fellowship with him.}

36. *A Brief History of the Brethren*, p. 30.

37. See *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 2 for documentation.

corresponding responsibility in the display of fellowship. Holiness, i.e., separation from evil unto the Lord, must be stamped upon the Christian's activity in displaying fellowship. Fellowship not characterized by holiness is but the imitation of the flesh. As but one example in each area, observe that 2 John gives an example of holiness concerning family (of God) fellowship, which, of course, impacts upon assembly fellowship also. And 1 Cor. 5 gives us an example of holiness in assembly fellowship, which, of course, impacts upon family fellowship also. In both cases separation from persons is required to maintain Christian holiness of fellowship, while 2 Tim. 2:19-21 also requires separation from vessels to dishonor (persons) in order for one to be a vessel to honor.

The apostle Paul did not commend the Corinthians for anything in their walk; he commended what the grace of God wrought on their behalf. Their state was such that it was not fitting to speak well of something in their walk. So, their final state would be unimpeachable.³⁸ And meanwhile God had "called." They were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. There was nothing wrong in that fellowship into which they were called. There was much wrong in their display of it.

The calling is of individuals who compose the assembly of God (in its universal sense, not local sense). They were called into the fellowship of His Son. The fellowship, "*koinonian*, to partake of His state,"³⁹ indicates that we have His place before God. And God's Son is Jesus Christ our Lord. He is Lord of the individual. We do not find in the NT that He is Lord of the Church (or body), though that is erroneously taught. He is Head of the body, the assembly (and in another point of view He is "Son over his {God's} house," Heb. 3:6). This place before God is the starting point for the correction and teaching in 1 Cor. It is a holy place. The fellowship of God's Son, into which we are called, is a holy fellowship. God expects that this great fact will have a practical bearing on conduct. How can this fellowship be enjoyed and practiced when the flesh is at work? -- which it was at Corinth. In chapter after chapter Paul dealt with aspects of the flesh that hindered the display of this fellowship.

"He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). Each Christian, i.e., one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 4:30), because he has believed the gospel of his salvation (Eph. 1:13), is thus *joined* to the Lord. Just as a human body has members, so believers, as indwelt by the Spirit, are members of one body. "For even as the body is one, and hath many members . . . so also [is] the Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12); that is, all Christians on earth, viewed as linked with the Head in heaven by the indwelling Spirit, and including the Head, are here called "the Christ." Wondrous thought! Oh that we might really grasp what that means and how it should affect our practical association! Christians

38. Concerning their then current state, the epistle contains one impeachment after another. Their state did not answer to what God had in purpose for them.

39. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 33:42; see also 26:203.

sometimes confuse having divine life with having union with Christ. OT saints had divine life: they were children of God (John 11:52; Rom. 9:7, 8). But they were not *united* to the glorified Head in heaven. It was impossible for OT saints to be united to Christ because Christ had not been here in incarnation to accomplish the sacrifice upon the cross, nor was He exalted to be the Head before He ascended into glory.

The coming of the Spirit depended on the glorification of Christ (John 7:39; Acts 2:33). The baptism in the power of one Spirit *united* those who already were believers in our Lord Jesus (John 7:39) into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), which is the church (Eph. 1:22, 23).

Union of the believers with the Head in heaven and with one another is divinely constituted by God. That "there is one body" (Eph. 4:3) is as true today as when it was written. This union is not in the local assembly as if there were many bodies of Christ. Neither is this union in any confederacy of assemblies. All persons indwelt by the Spirit, wherever they are throughout the world, are *united* by that one Spirit into that one body. *Union* is thus in one body, one body, united to the Head in heaven; and we should put this truth into practice. Because of geography, there are *assemblies* spoken of in Scripture, though there is an important sense in which Scripture speaks of *the assembly of God* on earth (Eph. 1:22; 3:10; 5:23, 29; Phil. 3:6; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Cor. 11:22; 12:28; 15:9, etc.). There is but one divinely constituted assembly fellowship, that resulting from being called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We need to practice this truth. This fellowship has been formed by the Spirit. The unity of the Spirit is a divinely made thing. When Eph. 4:3 exhorts us to use "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace," we are not to *make* a unity but to *keep*, i.e. practice, the unity already made. "The wisdom from above is *first pure, then peaceable . . .*" (James 3:17). The purity of the Christian fellowship must be practiced and thus the unity of the Spirit may be kept in the uniting bond of peace. It has been well said that "Separation from evil is God's principle of unity." If we would all separate from evil unto the Lord and be in constant self-judgment, we would be found gathered together by the one Spirit unto the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, thus meeting in accordance with the truth that there is one body; and thus keeping the unity of the Spirit (Matt. 18:20).

What has been said is hardly a complete treatment of the large subject touched upon, but it is hoped that it will encourage examination of these things by those not much acquainted with them. Since we are considering the holiness of Christian fellowship, it is needful to speak a little of what that Christian fellowship is so that we may practice it in accordance with holiness.

What is holiness? Another has said:

Holiness is separation from evil; innocence, ignorance of evil. We do not say that God is innocent, but that God is holy; because He hates all the evil . . . and delights in the good. And God's new creation, perfected after His image, delights in what is good and hates all that is evil. God has produced this by

His own power.⁴⁰

We are living in an evil day, a time of declension, called by John the last hour (1 John 2:18) and by Paul the last days (2 Tim. 3:1). We see particularly in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement great boasting of power, a thing desired by many. But what constitutes spiritual power in an evil day?

‘Power in an evil day is shown in separation from evil to the Lord!’

Fellowship with the Father and the Son

... that *ye* also may have fellowship with with us; and our fellowship [is] indeed with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

The apostle John wrote much about light, love, life, the Father, and *oneness*. It helps minimize confusion when the word *oneness* is used of what John brings before us, compared with *union*, which has to do with the saints united together, by the indwelling Spirit, and to the Head in heaven, one body. The word *oneness* is meant to point to the great fact that the believer has eternal life in the Son (1 John 5:11). We are one with Him, one in life with Him. This was illustrated by our Lord in John 12:24:

Except a grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit.

Before the Lord Jesus died, *He abode alone*. That means that the OT saints were not connected with Him as we are now. He is like the stalk come up (in resurrection), and upon the stalk are grains of wheat in which the life of the stalk is. In Paul’s writings we are viewed (among other ways) as members of *one body* united to the Head in heaven. Here, we form *one plant* with Him. How appropriate each of these two figures are for the respective lines of ministry of these two apostles!

The Lord Jesus is the great Risen Stalk standing forth in resurrection-life. On the day of His resurrection, when with His disciples, who already had divine life, but not having that divine life in connection with the Risen Stalk:

... he breathed into [them], and says to them, Receive [the] Holy Spirit (John 20:22).

This was no more a symbolic act than when God breathed into Adam the breath of life and Adam became a living soul. Here, the risen Lord imparted to the disciples the Holy Spirit *as the power of life in resurrection*.⁴¹ And thus the Lord Jesus no longer abode alone. The disciples now stood in relationship to Him as the grains of wheat upon the stalk. Thus the life was now characterized as eternal life

40. *The Present Testimony* 8:327.

41. The sending of the Spirit in the special capacity regarding the body of Christ waited until Pentecost. Here, these two things are distinguished, which helps us in considering the distinction. Now, when a person is sealed with the Spirit, both things are true of him.

in the Son, and J. N. Darby (probably) coined the word “resurrection-life” to speak of it. The life of the Risen Stalk is the life in the grains that form *one plant* with Him!

Now, this life is the life of all who have received the Spirit, and all such are viewed as God’s family in 1 John. John 17 shows that there ought to be the display of family oneness, though we know that there has been the ruin of this in the responsibility of displaying it, as there has been the ruin of the church on earth viewed in responsible testimony. Praise God, by divine power, the children of God will be “perfected into one” (John 17:23) in connection with the display of Christ’s glory before the world in the coming day of manifested glory.

The children of God have a oneness of life and nature and enjoy family (of God) fellowship. This is spoken of in 1 John; and 1 John 1 names it.

Thus it is that we enjoy family (of God) fellowship with Christians with whom we are not necessarily expressing assembly fellowship. In this, as in all else, the claims of holiness are always to be before us. If any of the children of God are connected with, say, vessels to dishonor, as in 2 Tim. 2, that is a hindrance to fellowship in the family of God as well as in the assembly of God. Or, if their own lives dishonor the Father and the Son, that is a hindrance to such fellowship. Yes, as in our own families there may be disobedient children, so is it in the family of God.

Part 4:

The Holiness of Christian Attitudes and Activities

The Holiness of Judging

Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate (Amos 5:15).

‘Well,’ one remarks, ‘I know Rom. 12:9 says, “abhorring evil; cleaving to good”: yet, concerning judgment -- that seems contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Remember that Amos 5:15 appears in the OT, not in the New. Besides, “God is *love*”; and also “*Grace* and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). I don’t think it is right to judge people.’

In this section we shall see from God’s Word that Christians are required to judge the acts of people. Rom. 12:9 says, “Let love be unfeigned; abhorring evil; cleaving to good.” If you confess yourself unable to abhor evil, you cannot help prevent showing feigned love. Abhorring evil is absolutely necessary to showing unfeigned love.

Now, the cross is the basis for God’s unfeigned love going out, but there

all the light that God is (1 John 1:5) was brought to bear in dealing with Christ made sin. The order in the revelation of God's nature as light and love is that He is first declared light (1 John 1:5), then love (1 John 4:8, 16). This order, we shall fully discover, if subject to the Word of God, is not only consistent with the gospel but consistent with the very nature of God. It is consistent also with the revelation of God and is found in the very nature He communicates in the new birth.

As to grace being put first in John 1:17, it is because grace had to come in order for us to receive truth. Once saved, what does grace teach us? What is the *order* of spiritual learning that grace teaches us? Exactly the order of Rom. 12:9; abhorring evil; cleaving to good. Thus Titus 2:11, 12 says, "For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that, having denied impiety and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things . . ." We see that the order is this:

1. Deny:

Impiety -- wrong attitude toward, and relationship with, God.
Worldly lusts -- wrong personal conduct and relationship with others.

2. Live:

Soberly -- refers to our personal conduct
Justly -- righteousness towards others
Piously -- right attitudes toward, and relationship with, God.

This is the educative value of grace. It does not include overlooking evil and refusing to judge. The grace of God never will make anyone think lightly of sin and unrighteousness, whether in ourselves or in others. True love and grace never set aside godly judgment. Let us now consider in detail the NT teaching concerning judging.

In connection with the subject of separation from evil in order to maintain the practical holiness of Christian fellowship, an objection is often raised by reference to the following passages: "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). "Judge nothing before the time" (1 Cor. 4:5).

It will not do to learn some small expression and not understand its true application and context, and then apply it to those who seek to walk in separation from evil to the Lord. Take an example which obviously makes this point. Some of us were asked to find the Scripture which contained the words, "a window in a basket." Of course, we all wondered what peculiar kind of basket that was. It turned out that when Paul escaped from one city, the brethren let Paul down the wall through a window in a basket (2 Cor. 11:33). The window was in the wall and the basket was let down through it. Our thoughts

did not embrace the context and thus we did not grasp the true significance of the words. So it often is with the word *judging*. The passages that speak of not judging are not always understood in their context; or, sometimes, one may prefer not to know the true meaning in order to have an easy-going path.

We may examine the NT use of the word judge (*krino*) by tracing the passages that use it with the aid of *The Englishman's Greek Concordance*, p. 433. This will help us to understand the subject of judging -- when to judge and when not to judge.

And Simon answering said, I suppose he to whom he forgave the most. And he said to him, Thou hast rightly judged (Luke 7:43).

And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? (Luke 12:57).

Judge not according to sight, but judge righteous judgment (John 7:24).

But Peter and John answering said to them, If it be righteous before God to listen to you rather than to God, judge ye; for as for us we cannot refrain from speaking things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:19, 20).

Wherefore I judge, not to trouble those who from the nations turn to God; but to write to them to abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood (Acts 15:19, 20).

And when she had been baptized and her house, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there (Acts 16:15).

For I, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged as present (1 Cor. 5:3).

For what have I to do with judging those outside also? *ye*, do not ye judge them that are within? (1 Cor. 5:12).

I speak as to intelligent persons: do *ye* judge what I say (1 Cor. 10:15).

Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman should pray to God uncovered? (1 Cor. 11:13).

Let us now examine some of the passages used to set aside godly acting of those who desire to carry out the Word of God.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). Does this mean that we are not to judge what is suitable acting for God? No: Acts 4:19 shows this as well as 1 Cor. 11:13. Does it mean that we cannot judge when one acts faithfully? No, Acts 16:15 shows that there is competence to do that.

Perhaps it means we shouldn't judge when a person does something wrong. Not so: 1 Cor. 5:3, 12 shows that we must judge *acts*, and when those acts are of that class, i.e. leaven, those that call on the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 1:1, 2) must put it out or separate from it, as the case may require. We are also to judge that teaching (doctrine) is in agreement with God's mind (1 Cor. 10:15). Well, what does Matt. 7:1 mean then? It cannot contradict these passages. And notice this statement in the same chapter in Matthew: "But

beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravenous wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather a bunch of grapes from thorns, or from thistles figs? So every good tree produces good fruits, but the worthless tree produces bad fruits. A good tree cannot produce bad fruits, nor a worthless tree produce good fruits. Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. By their fruits then surely ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:15-20). If we may know them by their fruits, then we are competent to judge the character of the fruits (because we are taught by the Word of God) and we are able to judge when men are ravaging wolves. We are authorized (not given infallibility, because "man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart") to judge what is suitable to a good tree (the new nature that God gives) and what results from a bad tree (the natural man, whether he professes religion or not). God says so, and that settles it for the obedient. Of course, our discernment increases when we feed on the Word of God. "But solid food belongs to full-grown men, who, on account of habit, have their senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

But what, specifically, does "Judge not, that ye be not judged" mean? It means that we are not to judge what we are not authorized to judge. Are we authorized to judge *acts* of persons? Yes, we have seen that this is so. Matt. 7:1, therefore, does not apply to acts. It applies to *motives*. We have no guidance from the Word on how to read the heart, except as it manifests itself. We must guard against imputing motives.

The mote and beam in the eye (Matt. 7:2-5) have to do with blockages of discernment. In Scripture the eye signifies discernment and thus intelligence. A man may have a mote, a small blockage, in his discernment. Someone who has a beam in the eye wants to help the one who has a mote. The beam blocks his vision. The beam blocks his discernment. *The beam is the attitude of judging motives*, and judging motives drastically affects discernment also, but we believe that the subject of Matt. 7:1-5 is confined to judging motives. And the beam, the attitude of judging motives, must be judged and put away, before one can see clearly, discern clearly, to help another with his mote.

But let us not use Matt. 7:1-5 to defend having motes in our eyes. We think, how could anyone be so foolish as to want a mote in his eye? Yet, in the spiritual sense, how often we do not want any "interfering" with what may, after all, block our discernment! Self is at the root of this. Matt. 7:1-5, then, has to do with judging motives, not acts.

1 Cor. 4:5 says, "So that do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord shall come, who shall also both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of hearts; and then shall each have his praise from God." Again we see the same truth. The judging has to do with what is not manifest, i.e. the *hidden* things of darkness and the counsels of the heart. In the very next chapter the Spirit of God, using the same writer, tells

us to judge acts.

James 4:11, 12 says, "Speak not against one another, brethren. He that speaks against his brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law. But if thou judgest the law, thou art not doer of the law, but judge. One is the lawgiver and judge, who is able to save and to destroy; but who art thou who judgest thy neighbor?" So we cannot divinely pronounce the end result nor determine it by our will or power. We are not God, Who alone is able to save and destroy. And this last expression helps us understand what this passage in James is about. It is a warning against taking the position of God, Who alone is able to *pass sentence* and execute it. He alone reads undisclosed motives.

The passages concerning judging that are used to set aside judgment of evil are, therefore, ignorantly so used or else it is an effort to deliberately tolerate evil that the Word tells us to judge and purge out.

J. N. Darby remarked:

The words, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," are often employed to hinder a sound judgment as to the plain path of right and wrong. If a person is walking in that which I know by the word of God to be *wrong*, I must judge that he is walking wrongly, or give up my judgment of right and wrong. I may trust he may be misled, or that difficulties and temptations may have overcome him, and consider myself lest I also be tempted, think the best I can of him; but I cannot put evil for good, nor good for evil. There can be no right motive to do what is wrong to do -- a thing contrary to God's will. There may be ignorance, want of light in the conscience, and I may and ought to take all this into account, but I cannot say that the person is not doing wrong. Woe be to me if for any personal consideration I enfeeble my own sense that a wrong path is a wrong one. The saint must be very careful not to allow any sophistry to modify his submission of heart and conscience to God's judgment of good and evil. As regards the church of God, the Scriptures plainly declare we are to "judge them that are within, but them that are without God judgeth." This is no imputation of motives, nor habit of forming an opinion on other people's conduct, which is an evil habit; but the duty of not allowing evil in the house of God. It is positively commanded to us not to allow it.

Again, many apply this to judging whether people are Christians; but this is founded on a fundamental mistake. It is assumed that people are supposed to be Christians unless proved to be the contrary. If the faith of the soul be a personal thing, and I value Christ, this cannot be. I am not called upon to be volunteering to pass a judgment on the point whether such or such an one is a Christian; the person who blames me for saying such an one is a Christian, *is judging* that he is so of course, which is quite false. The apostle says, "*The love of Christ* constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, *then were all dead*." Believing this, it is a joy to believe that any one has passed from death unto life. That is not a judgment: it is the rejoicing of the heart that faith in that person has brought him into the blessed place of a child

of God. It is a most horrible principle that we cannot know who are God's children, Christ's disciples: it *destroys all godly affections*. If the children of a family were told that they could not know and ought not to judge who are their brothers and sisters, what would become of family affections? The Lord has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." How can this be if I do not know who are disciples, and towards whom this love is to be exercised? We must know each other to love each other as children of God, to "love as brethren." He who objects to judging that such and such are God's children objects to the love of the brethren; he is rejecting the spiritual affections on which the Lord and Scripture so much insist.

There is a wrong spirit of judgment: if I occupy myself needlessly in thinking of others, and expressing an opinion of them; if in questionable cases I ascribe, even in my mind, wrong motives; nay, if I do not hope in such cases that the right motive is at bottom, I am in the spirit of judgment, and away from God. If severity of judgment on the person, when I am bound to judge he is faulty, possesses my soul, this is not the Spirit of God. But to weaken the plain, unequivocal and avowed estimate of right and wrong under the pretence of not judging; or to deny the knowledge of one another, and mutual love among the saints, under pretense that we have not a right to judge, is of the enemy, and a mere cover to a man's conscience to avoid the conscious pressure of that judgment on himself. If I am to maintain a divine standard of right and wrong, I must judge those who do wrong to be doing so.

Letters of J. N. Darby 3:312-314.

The Holiness of Love

And this is love, that we should walk according to his commandments (2 John 6).

The intimate connection between love and holiness is shown in Rom. 12:9, concerning which W. Kelly remarks:

"Let love be unfeigned" (ver. 9). Love is of God. Therefore it is of the deepest moment that it should ever be genuine and incorrupt: for the higher its source, nature and character, the more dangerous where that which is spurious usurps its place and name, misleading others and oneself under a fair but false pretension. It is not the same as the brotherly kindness of v. 10; and the reality of the distinction reappears in 2 Peter 1:7. On the other hand it is far from being that kindness to all men, the perfection of which we know in the Savior God as witnessed in Christ the Lord. Love is the activity of the divine nature in goodness, and hence is inseparable from that nature as reproduced in the children of God. Nevertheless this does not absolve them from the need of self-judgment that it be sincere and undefiled, seeking others' good according to God's will unselfishly. The letting in of hopes, fears, or objects of our own falsifies it.

Hence in the same verse the connected injunction, "abhorring evil; cleaving to good." It is a word the more needful in our own day especially,

because we live in Laodicean times of sickly sentiment where latitudinarian charity abounds, the essence of which is a spirit of indifferentism toward evil, in particular evil against Christ. And the danger as well as the sin is the more extreme, because it is and has long been that "last hour" of which John warns so solemnly, the hour not of Christianity prevailing but of many antichrists, though not yet of the Antichrist. But where love is real, there is and must be the detestation of evil, no less decidedly than the close attachment to good. If the latter attracts, the former offends and is often ill received in the world as it is. But the Christian must cherish the instincts of the new nature and be subject to God's word who has called him out to be a witness of Christ here below where evil meets him at every step and turn. The amiability which would shirk difficulties and apologize for sin is thus proved to lack the salt of the covenant of God, and will soon be seen to be honey and to end in leaven, instead of being the flour and oil which God looks for in such offerings.⁴²

J. N. Darby has written about the difference between brotherly love and love, and explains that "there is no true love apart from righteousness":

LOVE AND BROTHERLY LOVE

2 Peter 1:7

The common notion is that brotherly love is charity, and indeed its most perfect form. This is a mistake, as this passage shows. That brotherly love is a most sweet and precious fruit of grace is most true -- precious in the heart that is filled with it, and precious in its mutual development; but it is not charity. We are told to add to "brotherly love" "charity." The reason is simple: if brotherly love, brethren are the object, and though when genuine and pure it surely flows from grace -- it easily in us clothes itself with the character which its object gives it, and tends to limit itself to the objects with which it is occupied and be governed by its feelings towards them. It is apt to end in its objects, and thus avoid all that might be painful to them or mar the mutual feeling and pleasantness of intercourse, and thus make them the measure of the conduct of the Christian. In a word, where brotherly love ends in itself, as the main object, brethren become the motive and governing principle of our conduct; and our conduct as uncertain as the state of our brethren with whom we may be in contact. Hence the apostle says, "Above all these put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness"; and another apostle, "And to brotherly kindness charity."

Now charity is love; but will not this seek to exercise brotherly kindness? Undoubtedly it will, but it brings in God. "God is love." "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Hence it brings in a standard of what true love is, which mere brotherly kindness in itself never can. It is the bond of perfectness, for God, and God in active love is its measure. Brotherly kindness by itself has the brother for object: charity is governed by, exists in virtue of the conscious presence of God; hence whatever is not consistent with

42. *Notes on Romans*, pp. 243, 244.

His presence, with Himself, with His glory, cannot be borne by the heart who is filled with it. It is in the spirit of love that it thinks and works, but in the Spirit of God, by whose presence it is inwardly known and active. Love was active in Christ when He said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers"; in Paul when he said, "I would that they were even cut off which trouble you."

Charity, because it is God's presence, and that we feel His presence, and look to Him in it, is intolerant of evil. In mere brotherly kindness, the brother being the object before my mind (and, if God's presence be not felt, we do not realize it, nature coming in so easily and here in its most unsuspected and kindly shapes), I put man before God, smother up evil, keep kindness going, at any rate so far exclude and shut out God. Charity is His active presence though it will be in love to man; but it gives to God all His rights. He it is that is love, but He is never inconsistent with Himself. His love to us was shown in what was the most solemn proof of His intolerance of evil, the cross. There is no true love apart from righteousness. If God is indifferent to evil, is not righteous, then there is no love in grace to the sinner. If He abhors evil, cannot suffer it in His presence, then His dealings with us as sinners shows the most perfect love. If I have ten children, and they go wrong, and I say, "Well, I am to shew love to them," and I take no account of their evil ways; or if some of them go wrong and I treat them as if there was no difference to my mind in their well doing or evil doing; this is not love, but carelessness as to evil. This is the kind of love looked for by unconverted man, namely, God's being as careless as to evil as they are; but this is not divine charity which abhors the evil, but rises over it, dealing with it either in putting it away or in needed chastenings. Now if God were indifferent to evil there is no holy being to be the object of my love -- nothing sanctifying. God does not own as love what admits of sin.⁴³

The reason that some of these thoughts may startle us is because we may have our brethren before us in a fleshly way; i.e., we are not really seeking their ultimate good. True love for one's brethren demands holiness just as much as true love for God demands holiness. Another has said:

We are often taken up with that which is an injury to many, regardless of that which is done against God. Many can contend earnestly for love to the brethren, and warmly resent failure in this respect, yet remain unmoved when the truth of God, on which it is based, is sought to be undermined. We cannot hold the truth, without love to the brethren being a consequence . . . There is positive declension in soul . . . when saints can be grieved for lack of right deportment to themselves from their brethren, yet indifferent as to right thoughts about God in Christ. . . . Let us beware of dishonoring Him, and of that which is as bad, if not worse, assuming a neutral attitude; judging the wrong ways of many who are contending for the right, instead of identifying ourselves with those on the Lord's side.⁴⁴

The fact is that truth, knowledge, obedience, holiness and love go together (see

43. J. N. Darby, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 8:155,156.

44. *The Present Testimony* 2:30,31 (1850).

Phil. 1:9). The love to the brethren, noted in the quotation above, coupled with remaining unmoved when God's truth is undermined, seems more like self-love than anything else. It is mere sparing of self; presenting *self* as kind and loving so as to be well thought of as a 'kind', 'gracious', 'loving' brother.

Often "love" is used to set aside holiness in associations. Another has said:

The semblance of love which does not maintain the truth, but accommodates itself to that which is not the truth, is not love ACCORDING TO GOD; it is taking advantage of the name of love in order to help on the seductions of Satan. In the last days the test of true love is the maintenance of the truth. God would have us love one another; but the Holy Ghost, by Whose power we receive the divine nature, and Who pours the love of God into our hearts, is the Spirit OF TRUTH, and His office is to glorify Christ. Therefore it is impossible that a love which can put up with a doctrine that falsifies Christ, or which is indifferent to anything that concerns His glory, can be of the HOLY Ghost -- still less so, if such indifference be set up as the proof of that love. Compare also 1 John 5:2, 3, and 2 John 6.⁴⁵

Sometimes the one that truly desires to act pleasing to his Lord feels some tension between the demands of holiness and the demands of love. Here is a helpful word concerning this:

In this present day, and with the light of God's peculiar principles in our minds, we may be painfully perplexed, when we think, for instance, of the claims of *purity* on the one side, and of *largeness* on the other. The peculiar holiness of the house of God is to be maintained, and yet the greatness and abounding of divine grace is as surely to be exercised and testified.

Does Scripture afford a direct help in this difficulty, and cast a clear and steady light by which we may distinguish things that differ, and know our answer to each of them? I believe so. I read 1 Cor. 8:10; and there I see that the apostle would sacrifice *himself*; but not *God's truth*, to love. He would not eat meat while the world lasted, if it offended a brother; and yet he would not open the door of God's house to one who came from an idol's temple, even though he were a brother. He was ready to sacrifice himself, but not God's house, to love. The grace or largeheartedness that becomes saints called for the sacrifice in the one case, but holiness refused it in the other.⁴⁶

We turn now to some brief comments on 1 Cor. 13.

If I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, but have not love,

"The apostle begins with the superiority of love to the gift of tongues in any conceivable degree." (W.K.)

I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Without love, one merely gives forth lifeless sounds even if he speaks much of love -- because love is seen in obedience (2 John 6) and in acts (1 John 3:18).

45. *The Remembrancer* 16:80 (1907).

46. *Things New and Old* 3:190.

And if I have prophecy	As Balaam and King Saul
And know all mysteries and all knowledge,	“an inward consciousness and not merely acquired knowledge” (W.K.) 1 Cor. 13:9, 10 shows this to be hypothetical, but compare Rom. 15:14 and 1 Cor. 1:5.
And if I have all faith,	The gift of faith (cf. 1 Cor. 12:9)? See also Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:3.
So as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.	Matt. 17:20.
And if I should dole out all my goods in food,	This could easily appear to be love. Is it merely human philanthropy or is God the spring?
And if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but have not love, I profit nothing.	As Vietnamese Buddhists did? -- fanatical zealots, not Christian martyrs.
Love has long patience, is kind;	Eph. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:14; Col. 3:12,13, Patience in trial due to others, and kindness instead of vindication.
Love is not emulous of others,	cf. 1 Cor. 3:5. Love has not self as its object so as to surpass others. See Ezek. 28:17.
Love is not insolent and rash, or, ‘vainglorious’	Love is not self-assertive and does not seek renown.
Is not puffed up,	Love is not filled with self-importance. cf. 1 Cor. 4:16,18,19; 5:2; 8:1.
Does not behave itself in an unseemly manner,	Love is not ostentatious.
Does not seek what is its own,	cf. Phil. 2:21; 2:5. Love does not act so as to need the rebukes found in 1 Cor. 6 and 14.
Is not quickly provoked,	Love is not sensitive in what touches <i>self</i> . (I do not mean love is unfeeling as to insult.)
Does not impute evil,	See Rom. 13:10. Where there is no evidence (Matt. 7:1-5). Beware of noting evil for the purpose of retaliation. See 1 Thess. 5:15; Rom. 12:17.
Does not rejoice at iniquity,	Aha! says superior flesh, at someone’s fall. This rejoicing is a cover for self. Can a Christian rejoice at the fall of another?

	Oh, shame, my soul; such a thing is in thy very heart!
But rejoices with the truth;	2 John; 3 John 4; Eph. 4:15. “That false charity lets anything become of God’s truth, rather than speak out faithfully, and disturb the robber in his prey.” (<i>The Present Testimony</i> , vol. 3, p. 161.)
Bears or ‘covers’ all things,	Covers up? <i>all</i> things? Compare 1 Cor. 9:12 and Gal. 2:11. Do not yield on what is due to God!
Believes all things,	Love believes <i>anything</i> ? Compare Acts 5:3. Love is not suspicious -- receives what is true -- whether the truth is convenient or not. See also Rev. 2:2.
Hopes all things,	2 Cor. 10:15.
Endures all things,	Patience is the strength of love. cf. Heb. 12:1, 2; 2 Tim. 2:10; James 5:11.
Love never fails, . . .	This does not mean love always works (gains its end), but that love continues eternally.
The greater of these is love.	Comparative degree. Greater in the sense that it continues after faith realizes its object and hope is swallowed up by sight, at the Lord’s coming.
Often 1 Cor. 13 and Matt. 7:1-5 are used as mere tools (perhaps unknowingly) against some seeking to walk in holiness and love. If the reader desires to practice separation from evil to the Lord, he will find this to be so over and over. He will sadly learn that those who make such use of these Scriptures are amongst the first to “impute evil” to others when they are personally crossed, and fail to “rejoice with the truth.” They become “quickly provoked.” Such are lax about what is due to God and easily personally “offended.” Though pressing love, they often have (strange as it may seem) difficulty with grudges when personally “offended.” These things must be borne by those who would walk in separation from evil to the Lord. Love “bears all things.”	
The moral spring of the misuse of these Scriptures is, not love, but unjudged flesh.	
Now, although we should allow for different stages of growth in the family of God (1 John 2:12-27), that is not the issue here. But while touching on the subject of stages of growth in God’s family, let us ask ourselves this: are fathers allowed to be unholy? are young men allowed to be unholy? are babes allowed	

to be unholy? Of course not.

The true issue here is the false principle of allowing the flesh and its will to work unrebuked and unchecked under the plea that it is “judging others” and “lack of love” to object to this false course. And when reaping time comes, we often seek to put the blame elsewhere. The wicked Ahab called Elijah “the troubler of Israel.” You say that Ahab was not a child of God? Granted, but Ahab’s flesh is in us and it finds comfort in blaming that just reaping on the godly. One of the first manifestations of the flesh in Adam after God called him from his hiding place was to blame someone else: “the woman *Thou* gavest to be with me . . .” (Gen. 3:12). He even dared to blame God! It is idle to think that the flesh in a Christian would not do the same thing. It is a characteristic of the fallen nature ever since Adam’s fall.

In connection with misuse of these Scriptures we should notice that if a man’s tendency is to looseness and unholiness in collective matters, we may be sure that he also tends to be and/or is loose and unholy in his personal and family affairs. The moral principle is this: “He that is faithful in little is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10).

May God our Father enable us to bring our children three days’ march into *the wilderness* (Ex. 3:18), that they learn that there is no sustenance in this world for their souls. If we desire for them money, place, power or popularity, they will smell of the leeks and garlic of Egypt. How easy it is to allow them the parties, the social events, the proms, etc. and plume ourselves that we are generous and kind. Avoiding “being too strict” becomes our object instead of holiness to the Lord. “Unite my heart to fear thy name” (Psa. 86:11). “I am the companion of all that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts” (Psa. 119:63). A fragmented heart will reap what it sows. “God is not mocked.” Think of *mocking* God! We mock Him by setting aside, or ignoring, His moral ways.

Do we not know that there are moral principles of the soul just as there are physical principles that apply to the body? Do you expect to walk off the edge of your house’s roof and not get hurt? Do you expect not to put a moral restraint around your household and yet no one get hurt? Restraint! We do not like that. Eli’s house was swept away in judgment because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not (1 Sam. 3:13), though he admonished them (1 Sam. 2:23-25). David did not displease Adonijah at any time (1 Kings 1:6). Sad to say, Isaac’s mind was on his stomach (Gen. 27).

Allowing the manifestation of the flesh to go unrebuked is a sign of having allowed the workings of the flesh in self. It is made worse by using “love and grace” as a cover because that seeks to make God the author of the indifference to evil. The moral principle of recovery is humbling, confession, and self-judgment, certainly not putting the blame on others. The grievous insensitivity

and selfishness of blaming others is certainly not a fruit of the Spirit.

What a sad (but true) picture has been painted of what we are naturally. How could God ever have loved such a wretch as I! There is only one reason. He found resources within Himself and not in us as the objects of His love: He demanded full satisfaction for the outrage against His nature, His glory, and His majesty (and rightly so) and then in grace provided the Lamb of God. And our Beloved was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father and seated above. There is no name too high for Him. And, overwhelming grace, God has accepted us in the Beloved. I am accepted with Christ’s acceptance. His acceptance is the very measure of mine. Oh, how we ought to walk for the glory of God the little while remaining!

I desire to add something concerning 1 John before closing this section, referring by several references to the way the truth is presented.

1. We are told that God is light (1 John 1:5) before we are told that God is love (1 John 4:8,16).
2. In 1 John 2:3-11 the order is this:
 - (a) Walking in obedience; verses 3-6.
 - (b) Walking in love; verses 7-11.
3. In 1 John 3:4-24 the order is this:
 - (a) Walking in righteousness; verses 4-9.
 - (b) Walking in love; verses 10-24. Note how v. 10 combines the two things.

In the *Synopsis* on 1 John 5, J. N. Darby wrote,

Love for the brethren proves the reality of our love for God. And this love must be universal, must be in exercise towards all Christians, for whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and he who loves a person will love the one who is born of Him. And if the being born of Him is the motive, we shall love all that are born of Him (chap. 5:1).

But a danger exists on the other side. It may be, that we love the brethren because they are pleasant to us; they furnish us with agreeable society, in which our conscience is not wounded. A counter-proof is therefore given us. “Hereby we know that we love the children of God, if we love God and keep his commandments.” It is not as children of God that I love the brethren, unless I love God of whom they are born. I may love them individually as companions, or I may love some among them, but not as the children of God, if I do not love God Himself. If God Himself has not His true place in my heart, that which bears the name of love to the brethren shuts out God; and that in so much the more complete and subtle manner, because our link with them bears the sacred name of brotherly love.

Now there is a touchstone even for this love of God, namely, obedience to His commands. If I walk with the brethren themselves in disobedience to

their Father, it is certainly not because they are His children that I love them. If it were because I loved the Father and because they were His children, I should assuredly like them to obey Him. To walk then in disobedience with the children of God, under the pretext of brotherly love, is not to love them as the children of God. If I loved them as such, I should love their Father and my Father, and I could not walk in disobedience to Him and call it a proof that I loved them because they were His.

If I also loved them because they were His children, I should love all who are such, because the same motive engages me to love them all. The universality of this love with regard to all the children of God; its exercise in practical obedience to His will: these are the marks of true brotherly love. That which has not these marks is a mere carnal party spirit, clothing itself with the name and the forms of brotherly love. Most certainly I do not love the Father if I encourage His children in disobedience to Him.

In addition to this, it would be well for us to weigh these statements by W. Kelly:

“For I rejoiced exceedingly when brethren came and bore witness to thy truth, even as *thou* walkest in truth” (3 John 3). Truth delighted the apostle’s heart. Gaius was walking in truth. This indicated his soul’s prospering. Kindness to the brethren, thoughtfulness about others, prospering in his affairs and in bodily health: what were they all to holding fast the truth -- “thy truth,” and his own walking in truth? And such was the witness that brethren bore to him; so that it was exceeding joy to the apostle. Gaius sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all else was added. His heart was not set on his own things. There was no compromise of Christ, no making truth a secondary consideration, but he kept walking truthfully. It was a matter of plain testimony on the part of others. “Brethren came and bore witness to thy truth [or, that is in thee].” Had it been Gaius talking about it, it might have been questionable; for who has ever found men whose love for the truth was unwavering and unstinted -loud about their own fidelity or service? The more a man loves and values truth, the more he judges his own shortcoming in his service and his daily life.⁴⁷

We can see also the Spirit’s wisdom in giving both tests, and in the order in which they stand; first obedience, then love. You may generally find as I have done, that when Christians talk about one another, they are apt to give love the first place in their practical scheme of Christianity. Their confidence rests on their opinion that such a one is a most loving brother. It would be wretched indeed not to be a most loving brother; but what about his obedience? Is he, once self-willed, now marked by obeying God?⁴⁸

The Lord give us grace that we, taught of God, may abound in love still more. Thankfulness always accompanies love. Anything else is but “good-nature”, as people call it, a kindly benevolent spirit that does not like to trouble or be troubled, and is willing to let everyone have his own way; and this is

47. *The Epistles of John* London: T. Weston, 1905, p. 412.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

accounted love! May the Lord enable us to discern the things of the Spirit of God.⁴⁹

Finally, we should note two other things. First, the believer should have put on the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14). Thus he will not be vulnerable to the false views about love that we have been considering. Second, in Rev. 1:13 the Lord as Judge walking in the midst of the assemblies is seen “girt about the breasts with a golden girdle.” The angels who had the seven last plagues were likewise attired (Rev. 15:6). The loins are girded for service (Luke 12:35). The two passages in Revelation are connected with judgment rather than service. The requirement of divine righteousness holds love in when evil must be judged for Christ’s honor.

The Holiness of Impartiality

Keep these things without prejudice, doing nothing by favor (1 Tim. 5:21).

But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin . . . (James 2:9).

In 1 Tim. 5:21 we are instructed to do “nothing by favor.” And this is connected with public rebuke. There must not be favoritism! God wants a just weight and a just balance (Lev. 19:36; Prov. 11:1; 20:10, 23; Ezek. 45:10). To have an unjust weight and/or balance marks a man as a cheat and a thief. Can we be upset if the merchant cheats us, but suffer our brother to be cheated, perhaps not monetarily, at our own hands? Can we be upset when we feel by-passed because of favoritism at our place of employment and then turn about and practice the same unjustness against our brother? A false balance is an abomination to Jehovah (Prov. 11:1).

In James 2:1-4 we are warned against partiality in connection with the material position of our brother. It is not a listing of items wherein we might show partiality. What of partiality based on education, intelligence, appearance, employment, social standing, and even gift?

“But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin . . .” (James 2:9). “Ye shall not respect persons in judgment” (Deut. 1:17; 16:19). See Prov. 24:23; 28:21; Lev. 19:15; 2 Chron. 19:7. Rom. 12:16 tells us to “have the same respect one for another.” This does not mean that we may not find more joy in the godly path of one brother compared to another, but that we are not to show partiality. It does not mean that we must have the same fellowship with every Christian regardless of his walk. The same Scripture says, “not minding high things, but going along with the lowly.” It is false to say that all Christians are lowly; for why did the Lord say, “Learn of me for I am meek and lowly”? But it does say that no partiality should be shown.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spoke to me,
The ruler among men shall be just,
Ruling in the fear of God” (2 Sam. 23:3).

There are other things mentioned by David following this and then he said, “although my house be not so before God” (2 Sam. 23:5).

This is a fine confession, an admirable confession, morally right and beautiful. But in the assembly in connection with oversight, this condition is not allowed. A man may be gifted in the way of ministry of the Word; and if his house is in disorder it will effect the power of his ministry, but not necessarily bar it. Not so with overseership! “Conducting his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if one does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God?)” (1 Tim. 3:4, 5). “Having believing children not accused of excess or unruly” (Titus 1:6). Such is true of those who serve otherwise also (1 Tim. 3:12). Let us begin being impartial with ourselves, for failure in this is what leads to treating others partially. Ah, brother, you say, if we were to really act on 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12 and Titus 1:6, where would we be at? Well, we can always fall on our faces before God, can’t we? We can always mourn and sigh, and cry, can’t we? It is ever right to have it out before Him and on this basis implore Him to help us.

A special snare is partiality in connection with those who minister the Word of God. The Lord has those whom He has raised up to labor in the Word and doctrine amongst His saints. It is well to receive their ministry for our profit and blessing, and for correction too. We easily err with regard to them concerning partiality. W. Kelly made the following general remarks regarding suspicion and partiality:

We sometimes misconstrue things, and endeavor to give, as we take, a very somber impression, where evil was but in appearance. Let us beware of judging according to the first blush, where the reality may prove to be otherwise; it is not righteous judgment. We should seek to judge things by a higher standard, and in the light of God. In these serious matters we are bound to be sure, and never to yield to suspicion. All judgment, if it be according to God, must proceed upon what is known and certain, not upon what is a surmise -- too often the effect of an unfounded pretension to superior spirituality. We find the importance of this constantly; and, were our souls more simple about it, fewer mistakes would be made.

Christ has the first place where the heart is true; and next, “all the saints” become the object of our love. If there are two cases of persons in fault, and the one were a prime favorite, and the other but little liked, the latter is in imminent danger, I need hardly say, of going to the wall. My object of aversions would labor under a cloud which obscures the truth, no matter how evident it might be to the dispassionate; whereas, on the contrary, the favorite would derive that which outweighs the proofs of guilt from the unwillingness on the part of his friends to pronounce anything wrong about him. Both these

feelings are thoroughly at issue, in such circumstances, with the mind of God. Indeed, both favoritism and prejudices are plainly condemned by His blessed word. “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).⁵⁰

In connection with the Lord’s servants, the “object of aversion” often is one who corrects us and exhorts us, whereas the “favorite” very infrequently disturbs our conscience.

J. N. Darby wrote the following regarding those servants of the Lord who have no regular employment:

I do not believe that a servant of God, sent by the Lord Himself to work in His field, ought to be the servant of men, but free from all to follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost. But if he works faithfully, being really called by the Lord, and walks humbly and blamelessly in the ways of the Lord, I believe that brethren are under an obligation to support him, an obligation of Christian love, and a real privilege of Christians; thus they are helpers of the gospel itself. Thus the faith of the servant is exercised; he depends immediately on the Lord, and is entirely free to follow out the will of the Holy Ghost and to follow His guidance. *On the other hand, if he walk badly, brethren are also free to keep the Lord’s money which has been entrusted to them. As to brotherly love, it is exercised without suggestion, likewise all gifts.* Without doubt, for such a life, faith is needed, and that is the only difficulty. Brethren cannot promise help; it would not be faith; also love or money might fail; but the Lord, who is ever faithful, cannot fail us.

Here is another comment:

Ques. Could you work with every one who is breaking bread?

Oh dear, no; I break bread constantly with some with whom I could not go to preach at all.⁵¹

Here is another helpful comment:

Q. -- Is it true that a servant of the Lord, acting out of his own zeal without God’s word, must be left free of remonstrance beyond private? C. H. R.

A. -- Nothing can be more opposed to both letter and spirit of Scripture. Of all who call on the Lord’s name, Christ’s true minister is bound to be the most submissive to His word. For with what face could he enjoin the saints to submit to the word, if he himself claimed exemption, instead of being an example in faith, obedience, and humility? All alike are sanctified by the truth, all chosen in sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, on the pattern of our Master, in its perfection. “If any one think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you are the commandment of the Lord. But if any one is ignorant, let him be ignorant” (1 Cor. 14:37, 38). Condemnation more cutting cannot be of those who

50. *Lectures on Ephesians*, pp. 47, 48.

51. *Notes and Jottings* (Stow Hill ed.), p. 39.

pleaded their little gifts for setting up personal independency or some new thing.

No doubt, we are bound not to be hirelings of denominations, and should not seek to please men, as is done by adopting human methods. If the church is one, it does not admit of men's ways (1 Cor. 4:16,17; 7:17; 11:1, 2). We have to persevere in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, remembering that ministry means not mastery but service, the service of Christ, and of every one for His sake. But, even the greatest gift and highest office, if it went wrong, was liable not only to private remonstrance but to public rebuke. So we find Peter solemnly blamed before all for what many, and very probably the great majority, must have thought the venial charge of ceasing to eat with the Gentiles. To Paul it was dissembling, and an offence against the truth of the gospel.

Who of us ever heard so egregious and unfounded an assumption since the days of 1845? Then a like piece of ministerial irresponsibility was sought to be based on the metaphor of a shepherd. His place was to judge the sheep, not they him!⁵²

To what lengths will partiality go in connection with teachers and preachers? Not only are teachers of evil doctrine condoned, but teachers of the truth are attacked. G. V. Wigram knew something of this and remarked:

All my blunders, whatever they may be, notwithstanding, the honor of being identified with _____ in these attacks upon him seems to me too high an honor altogether. The attack upon him is chiefly as to dispensational statements; as to me it is as to what forms the groundwork of my soul's rest.⁵³

It IS a privilege, not to speak of duty, to be identified with the truth and those that stand for it at the expense of self. Love rejoices with the truth (1 Cor. 13:7). How shameful, unrighteous, unholy, and unloving it is to refuse to rejoice with the truth because we esteem brother so-and-so!

The Holiness of Peace and Peace-making

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful . . . (James 3:17).

Have salt within yourselves and be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50).

If the purity is lacking, it will not be surprising if godly peace is lacking. If the salt is lacking, it should be no surprise that godly peace with one another is lacking. Salt figures the preservative character of separation from evil unto the Lord. Why expect godly peace if we ignore God's way of securing it? There is a divine order in these verses that must needs be followed. We are exhorted to

52. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series, vol. 2, p. 96.

53. *Memorials of the Ministry of G. V. Wigram*, vol. 2 and 3, p. 212.

be of one mind (Phil. 2:2,3; 1 Cor. 1:10), and as we need humbleness of mind for godly peace, we need one mind *in the Lord* (Phil. 4:2). If purity and salt are lacking, we might reach one mind on the basis of compromise and accommodation, but not one mind *in the Lord*.

There are many who have views on peace and peace-making that undermine holiness. Usually actions betray the false ideas, but sometimes the false ideas come out in the form of teaching. For example, some, as we saw above, no longer bow to the order in James 3:17.

W. Kelly well remarked:

Never reverse this order; it is not only that this wisdom is pure and peaceable, but it is *first* pure, *then* peaceable. It first maintains the character and glory of God, and then seeks the fruits of peace among men.⁵⁴

This order is in accordance with our Lord Jesus viewed in His Melchizedek priesthood, the priesthood in which He now functions on our behalf (Heb. 7:11). "For this Melchizedek, King of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from smiting the kings, and blessed him; to whom Abraham gave also the tenth portion of all; first being interpreted King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of peace" (Heb. 7:2).

But the fruit of righteousness in peace is sown for them that make peace (James 3:18).

There is a fruit to be enjoyed in peace and that fruit is righteousness. It is foolishness to think that we may act on the peace-at-any-price idea, or yield God's claims of purity, and yet have peace wherein the fruit of righteousness may be enjoyed. The peace in James 3:17 is godly peace, not man's peace where he has nothing divine for which to contend. How is godly peace, wherein is enjoyed the fruit of righteousness, brought about? James 3:17 is the context and tells us. Ask God for this wisdom (James 1:5). Peace among the saints (holy ones) must have a righteous basis. A true peace-maker (Matt. 5:9) seeks for this. Where there is sin, he seeks that it may be judged and that there may be repentance (Prov. 28:13).

"But no chastening at the time seems to be matter of joy, but of grief; but afterwards yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). The peaceful fruit yielded to those exercised by chastening is righteousness. As we saw that love is not to be separated from righteousness, so neither is peace to be separated from righteousness, (cf. Col. 1:20). To separate these things is so far to deny the true character of the cross and the nature of God as light and love! Love, judgment, purity and the fruit of righteousness are all brought together in Phil. 1:9-11. Let us seek to display these things simultaneously, concurrently, in our walk.

54. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Acts, Catholic Epistles, and the Revelation*, p. 209.

One of the great snares abroad today in Christendom is love and peace at the expense of purity and righteousness. It sounds generous to many; and men think highly of themselves as loving, tolerant, gracious, and peaceable. But it is *not* the wisdom from above.

One may, and ought, to yield where matters of personal convenience and right are in question. This is meekness, and “pursuing the things that make for peace.” It is loving and righteous to do so. It is purity to do so. Here is where we get things reversed. One may yield his own rights, but never Christ’s. It is ever wrong to yield His. “Let your yieldingness be known to all men” (Phil. 4:5) concerns my convenience, my rights, never God’s rights.

This is also true concerning Rom. 14:19; “So then let us pursue the things which tend to peace, and things whereby one shall build up another.” Does this mean we should compromise the truth and yield the rights of God? Did Paul err when he withstood Peter (Gal. 2:11)? Was he being a troublemaker, a peace disturber? Indeed not! Never yield the rights of God and compromise the truth. Rom. 14:19 has a context. It is Rom. 14:15, and yield your own rights! This will help us in practicing Heb. 12:14 and 1 Pet. 3:11 also.

In speaking about the meekness and gentleness of Christ, we should note that meekness means not insisting on one’s own rights. Gentleness is yieldingness. A sister remarked to me that when a reed was placed in the hand of our Lord Jesus He *held* it! Amazing! Precious, precious Savior! What meekness! But He never yielded what was due to God. *Our* hearts naturally like to yield God’s rights and will and then insist on our own will, sometimes hiding it under pious phrases. We want to remember, too, that our blessed Lord, the Holy and True, “loved righteousness and has hated iniquity; therefore God, thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy companions” (Heb. 1:9).

Oh, how we delight to think of the Holy One Who knew no sin! How His soul must have felt the evil of the scene in which He moved. How little we are like Him! Oh, to be more like Him! Thanks be unto God; the precious blood lets not one spot abide.

We must beware of presenting Christ in a false way when speaking of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. We hear “preach Christ” and we hear lovely ministry concerning His walk. Now, His walk is set forth in the meal offering and God has told us,

Neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thine oblation: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt (Lev. 2:13).

The lack of this involves the presentation of what is not truly Christ as God views Him as the food of His people. This will produce a faulty growth and walk in the hearers. Meditate on Gen. 19:26; 2 Kings 2:21; Ezra 7:22; Ezek. 43:24; Col. 4:6.

1 Tim. 6:11 says, “. . . pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, endurance, meekness of spirit.” There are many things we need to pursue. Let us pursue them all.

Why is it that we might instinctively reverse the order of whose rights are to be yielded? There is a story about a child who went to a Sunday School where there were collections taken. She had two nickels, one for herself and one for the collection; and on the way one dropped and rolled into the sewer. ‘There goes the Lord’s nickel,’ she said. We are just as prone to so use these verses concerning peace. Just yield a little on the Lord’s principle, suggests the old nature. Peace is one of the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit. The indwelling Spirit leads us to yield what is our own, but to be faithful to what is Christ’s. See also Mark 9:50; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:13. “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).

Hezekiah said to Jehovah, “I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight” (2 Kings 20:3), and no doubt there was a measure of truth in this claim. How unspeakably sad though to hear him say to Jehovah later, “if only there shall be PEACE AND TRUTH in my days”! (2 Kings 20:19; cf. Isa. 39:8). Here is the root of declension, an inversion of moral order, and Judah bore the bitter fruit that inevitably springs from this root. How many a soul, loving the Lord, has said however, -- if only we can have peace and truth! Such words may not actually proceed from our mouth, but is it there in our hearts?

Was it right for Mordecai to sanction Esther’s marriage to a Gentile while at Jerusalem these things were mourned and judged (Ezra 10)? Indeed not! And thus it is no surprise that Mordecai reversed “peace and truth” also (Esther 9:30,31). Cf. Zech. 8:16.

And they have healed the breach of the daughter of my people lightly, saying, Peace, peace! when there is no peace. Are they ashamed that they have committed abomination? Nay, they are not at all ashamed, neither know they what it is to blush (Jer. 6:14,15; 8:11, 12).

“Blessed are the peace-makers” (Matt. 5:9). They follow the moral order and ways of God. All others who make ‘peace’ on another basis are really declension-makers.

“Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another” (Mark 9:50). Salt represents here the preservative power of holiness, of separation from evil to the Lord. Of course He had salt in Himself.

The Holiness of Forgiveness

If he should repent, forgive him (Luke 17:3).

In 1974, the United States' President Ford gave former President R. M. Nixon a pardon and in connection with granting this pardon he invoked the name of God in relation to the idea of forgiveness. An article in a national secular magazine said that since there was reference to God in connection with forgiveness, it should be remembered historically that Judaism and Christianity have required that repentance precede forgiveness. Of course, R. M. Nixon had admitted no real wrong, but perhaps indiscretion only.⁵⁵

It is a sorry spectacle when men of the world point out what Christians sometimes forget and should know. That brings us to the WHEN of forgiveness. There is a time to forgive and to forgive before this time is unholy.

Forgiveness must be consistent with holiness. We need instruction from God, therefore, concerning when to forgive. There are at least two things necessary for a scripturally based forgiveness: repentance, and confession.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9).

If thy brother should sin, rebuke him; and if he should repent, forgive him (Luke 17:3).

He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy (Prov. 28:13).

See also Lev. 5:5; Num. 5:7; Psa. 32:5; Josh. 7:19; Neh. 9:2,3; Acts 8:22.

The principle that repentance must precede forgiveness is true even on a national scale, as seen in God's dealing with Israel. God must ever be true to Himself as light and love, and ever acts consistently with what He is. Thus there is coming a grand seventh month for Israel (cf. Lev. 23) when on the first of the month Israel will be regathered. On the 10th will be the day of atonement, and, oh, how they shall be bowed before Jehovah for their sin! See Zech. 12:10-14. Then on the 15th day of the month shall the full millennial blessing be brought to them. Cf. Dan. 12:12,13 for the 1335th day which brings in the blessing.

God's thought about forgiveness applies to His way in salvation. It marks His dealing with His family. He expects the same practice in our dealings with one another. It is also His order in connection with assembly discipline. And certainly He expects this of His ministers of government to whom He has given the sword. What? Pardon may be granted without acknowledgment of guilt? NEVER! This order of forgiveness applies to all relationships.

"Forgiveness" without repentance and confession is unholiness. Such "forgiveness" has easy-going self at the bottom; "nice" flesh is at the bottom. Such "forgiveness" results from a lack of self-judgment. We excuse evil workings of the flesh in others because we do not judge it in ourselves.

55. We are not judging whether or not he did wrong. That is not the point here.

When a child sins does the father say, "I will just forgive him"? Or, if the child avoids the father, does he transmute this avoidance into repentance and say, "that is evidence that he has repented, and I will forgive him"? Or, if the child rather acts as if nothing is wrong, does the father say, "he wants to get along well; I will forgive him"? If the child disobeys only once, does the father say, "since he hasn't done it again, all is well"? Surely such a procedure is obviously contrary to the above Scriptures, but analogous to kinds of 'forgiveness' one observes among Christians. It can only contribute to lowering the state of God's people. Where is love to the child, or to our brother, in such a course?

The case of Philemon and Onesimus is relevant also. Could Paul have so written if Onesimus had decided to stay at Rome? Obviously not. "By His actions are weighed" (1 Sam. 2:3) and the return of Onesimus was evidence of the repentant state. He would return to the point of departure. Thus there were grounds for forgiveness by Philemon in the submissive return of Onesimus.

Repentance is in evidence when the guilty goes to the one he has wronged and confesses the wrong. THEN is the WHEN of forgiveness. This is the time of rejoicing and removal of hindrance to practical fellowship.

There are Scriptures that exhort Christians to forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; Luke 17:3; Matt. 6:12-15; 18:21,35). It is a sign that the grace of God is not very active when a Christian will not forgive. An unforgiving spirit is condemned in the Scripture (Matt. 18:23-35; 6:15). If forgiveness is withheld when the Scriptural time to forgive has come, it is neither love nor holiness to withhold it. These are divinely ordered ways and they surely apply corporately as well as individually.

Let us beware, also, of holding grudges when we are personally offended, but at the same time dealing lightly with offenses against our Lord!

These wrong thoughts about forgiving prior to repentance (seemingly) make our path easier. We desire "peace." We "don't want to make trouble." Whereas, the truth is that we don't want to reprove the wrong. We are not really looking out for our brother's true good. It is an unscriptural thought and an unscriptural love that motivates us! We would be even wiser than God and His precious Word of truth!

It is true that there may be such a local, or general, state that what ought to be reprov'd cannot be reprov'd. That is not the point. We are speaking of notions of forgiveness that are contrary to Scripture and subversive of order and holiness in the house of God.

In connection with the pardon of former United States President R. M. Nixon, a campaign of sending stones to those who objected to the pardon was started. "Let him that is without sin among you first cast the stone . . ." (John 8:7). You see how easily the worldling and the Christian abuse the moral ways

of God? Christians do it all the time. It is the flesh in us that even subconsciously takes forethought for ITSELF (cf. Rom. 13:14; 8:7). This abuse of John 8:7 would bring an end to all holiness among God's people. Even if John 8:1-11 is not understood by the Christian, the new man in the Christian, as empowered by the Spirit, should instinctively recognize this abuse as an attack on holiness.

In John 8 the scribes and Pharisees approached the Lord on the ground of self-righteousness and sought to pit Moses against Him. Little did they realize that the finger that wrote on the ground was "the finger of God." It was "the finger of God" also that gave the law. Thus He had to deal with their self-righteousness and expose them because that was the *spirit* in which they came. This in no wise sets aside the godly practice of the requirements of God's Word.

The Holiness of Correction

Whoso loveth discipline loveth knowledge; but he that hateth reproof is brutish (Prov. 12:1).

There are those who recognize that God would have us dwell on the things noted in Phil. 4:8. Sadly, this Scripture, along with Rom. 16:19, is sometimes pressed into a service inconsistent with the claims of holiness in God's house.

The assembly at Philippi was in a generally good state. This is why we find Phil. 4:8 in this epistle. Just think how out of place it would have been especially in Galatians or 1 Corinthians. It would have been out of place because God would have the Corinthians and Galatians take serious account of their state.

In Phil. 4:2 we read that those two sisters should be of one mind *in the Lord*. 1 Cor. 1:10 was written in view of schism in the assembly which leads to heresy (sects) without (1 Cor. 11:19), a different line of things. Where the general state was good, as at Philippi, the Spirit would remove even such a defect as described in Phil. 4:2 that nothing might mar that bright testimony. Being, then, free from things that so plagued some assemblies, the Spirit was free to correct along such a line as this. Correction is ever in order and that correction takes various forms in the epistles, from which it is our privilege to learn. There is correction proper to the various states of God's people as both the OT and NT show. To use Phil. 4:8 and/or Rom. 16:19 to set aside needed correction is an unholy thing.

We are now in a day of failure and ruin. The apostle John wrote to assemblies in Asia, which Paul's ministry and those associated with him had planted. John's words came from our Lord Jesus Christ walking as Judge, addressed to those assemblies when the last hour (1 John 2:18) had already arrived. There is encouragement and correction. We need encouragement. Let

us remember, too, that correction is always in order. The last epistles addressed to assemblies are corrective in nature. There is a voice in this and where this is resisted there will rise a corresponding unholiness. The voice of the Spirit repeatedly said, "Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." What did the Spirit say? Are we listening and do we also profit by learning from His ways? Or do we say, "that is not Christ"?

1 Cor. 10 warrants us to learn from the OT lessons for our instruction. We restrict our comments just to Malachi, a voice for us now. Read it and note the indifference to the correction. How sad! The many went on with the offerings and forms of Judaism, but God saw the true state. A good state of soul desires God's corrections and a poor state of soul, an unholy state, does not want correction. A situation even worse than that in Malachi's day can arise now to the degree by which grace is greater than law. We plead love and peace and grace, yea even the name Christ, to set aside that corrective ministry which our state so much requires. We want our privileges and blessings preached to the exclusion of correction.

We have forgotten that the very first thing that the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us is to say NO; to deny impiety and worldly lusts (Titus 2:11,12). To overlook this, to indulge in these things, and then to say we want Christ ministered to us . . .! No wonder that we do not learn by grace to live soberly, justly (righteously) and piously in the present course of things, if we have not denied impiety and worldly lusts. Oh, the Lord look upon us in mercy! Oh, may He raise up conscience-searching ministry that will cause us to see ourselves in our true state before Him that He may lift us up through repentance. This is divine order and God's way of restoration. Repentance precedes restoration -- ALWAYS!

What answers to Rom. 16:19 is Matt. 10:16. We ought to be here without mixture of evil. God does not overlook it where it is not so. Where we refuse correction, there will be unpleasant consequences, but we may be too dull of hearing to *hear the rod* (Micah 6:9), though feeling it.

*The Holiness of Qualified Oversight*⁵⁶

But if one does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God (1 Tim. 3:5)?

A form of worldliness is the introduction of democracy into the assembly. On one occasion in a meeting of brothers for the care of affairs of an assembly, one began to solicit opinions about a problem. A brother intervened and pointed out that we do not “count noses” to settle a matter. This is not a democracy. Every man’s opinion does not carry the same weight. On the other hand, he said, anyone that has an exercise before God is free to state it for consideration.

When there is worldliness of mind, i.e., partiality, abuse of love, grace and forgiveness, etc., God’s Word regarding rule in His house will also be violated. It will manifest itself in men assuming a place of leadership and rule in the guidance of the assembly who do not meet the qualifications laid down in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1. In some countries the rich may think their riches override these requirements. In other countries the formally educated may think they have an overriding qualification. Perhaps one in a supervisory position at his job may feel he is thus qualified. No, none of such things are in the qualifications; but neither do they disqualify anyone.

There is a great difference between “gift” and overseership. A gift is a gift wherever the person is, but overseership is local. An overseer may be gifted or not (1 Tim. 5:17), though all overseers need to be instructed in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). A Christian may be disqualified for overseership but may not be disqualified in the function of his gift -- though the nature of the disqualification *might* take away from the effect of the gift, especially in those that preach.

This bad effect on ministry is likely to be true where a man has not conducted his household well (1 Tim. 3:5). It is said (rightly) that David was a good ruler and a poor father. But this is not allowed in God’s assembly. The assembly is not a kingdom to be ruled by *physical* power. What is needed in the assembly of God is *moral* power and this must be first evidenced in the home sphere. If a man wants to preach the gospel in, say Tibet, we may have to say, “But you have not been active in the gospel around here.” If a man does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of God’s assembly (1 Tim. 3:5)? The apostle asks the rhetorical question. Even sense tells you something so obvious and evident: that the home sphere is a proving ground.

Why is it, then, that Christians disqualified by these Scriptures seek to lead in the assembly, and involve themselves in interassembly difficulties? When there is a general worldly state among the Lord’s people, such doings are

56. See *Ruin of the Church, Eldership, and Ministry of the Word*, available from the publisher.

accepted; and where the state is right it is rejected, because such will not be “known” as taking the lead (1 Thess. 5:12). When the state is bad, the democratic idea gains a hold, and false ideas of qualification obtain. And then we refuse to judge the flesh in others because we do not judge it in ourselves. Finally, it is all covered with nice phrases about “love.” How sad! And thus true leadership is suppressed and our ways become unholy. How it must grieve our Lord who walks in the midst with His eyes as a flame of fire and His breast girt about with a golden girdle. His outflow of love (the breast) is restrained by the requirements of divine righteousness (the golden girdle). See Rev. 1:13.

The Holiness of Unity

Pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart (1 Tim. 2:22).

A BROAD PATH IS NOT A BROAD HEART, BUT A BROAD CONSCIENCE.⁵⁷

Is *unity* more important than righteousness? Is outward unity to be maintained at the expense of righteousness? No. That would not be the practical unity of which Scripture speaks. It would be inconsistent with the very nature of God, and inconsistent with the constitution of the church of God.

J. N. Darby wrote:

My dear Brother, -- My letter to Mr. _____, though private, concerns us all. There is a principle at work which puts external unity before righteousness -- uses unity to hinder righteousness. Now to me righteousness goes first. I find that in Rom. 2, let grace be what it may in sovereign goodness, it never sets aside righteousness . . . The question goes far deeper than local claims: whether christian profession, and so-called unity, to which in its place I hold thoroughly as ever, as plain scriptural truth, is to go before righteousness -- God’s claim to fidelity to Him . . . I do not think that any church theory, however true and blessed when walking in the Spirit, can go before practical righteousness.

Such is the substance of my letter as to principles, what I have gone on all along. . . .

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Apr. 20th, 1881.⁵⁸

57. *The Bible Treasury* 6:304.

58. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:146

Conclusion

It is written

He that is faithful in the least is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in the least is unrighteous also in much (Luke 16:10).

Holiness will begin with self-judgment in the “little” things of life, will permeate our families, and every assembly of believers in all that is said and done. Correction and discipline characterize the fellowship to which we have been called. First, let us have grace to receive correction, and to humble ourselves under discipline. Second, admonition and corrective ministry should be valued as we value what is due to Christ and His honor. Third, when an assembly gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ takes a decision of discipline or correction (short of excision), that assembly decision has the authority of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ attached to it. Holiness in Christian fellowship is not found in the rejection of such decisions.

Where correction and discipline are exercised, saints of God will know how to shut the door against doctrinal evil (2 John), how to separate themselves from vessels to dishonor (2 Tim. 2), how to put away from among themselves wicked persons (1 Cor. 5), and how to use carefulness in reception at the Lord’s table. *This holiness does not seep down into the little things of life, it starts there.*

Appendix 1:

1 Cor. 11:18, 19: Schism -- Heresy -- Division

For first, when ye come together in assembly, I hear there exist divisions among you, and I partly give credit [to it]. For there must also be sects among you, that the approved may become manifest among you.

First, we will be instructed by 1 Cor. 11:18, 19 concerning the difference between schism and heresy.

But let us weigh the apostle’s words. “Now in enjoining this I praise [you] not, because ye come together not for the better but for the worse. For first, when ye come together in an assembly, I hear that divisions [schism] exist among you, and in some measure I believe [it]; for there must be even sects [heresies] among you that the approved may become manifest among you” (vv. 18,19). We have here important help toward deciding the difference between these terms as well as the precise nature of each. Schism is a division within the assembly, while they all still abide in the same association as before, even if severed in thought or feeling through fleshly partiality or aversion. Heresy, in its ordinary scriptural application as here (not its ecclesiastical usage), means a party among the saints, separating from the rest in consequence of a still stronger following of their own will. A schism within if unjudged tends to a sect or party without, when on the one hand the approved become manifest, who reject these narrow and selfish ways, and on the other the party-man is self-condemned, as preferring his own particular views to the fellowship of all saints in the truth. (Compare Titus 3:10, 11).⁵⁹

Schism is a crack or rent, not the formation of two separate pieces. Compare Matt. 9:16; Mark 2:21; John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19; 1 Cor. 1:10; 11:18; 12:25.

Heresy is sect, a break into a path of self-will in separation from others. Compare Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 26:5; 28:22; 1 Cor. 11:19; Gal.5:20; 2 Pet. 2:1; and the heretical man of Titus 3:10, 11.

It is not true that a heresy is inside of that which expresses the truth of the one body. This cannot be deduced from “among you” (1 Cor. 11:19). Suppose some at Corinth went down the street and broke bread in separation: they would still be part of the church of God at Corinth, just as much as there was but one assembly in Thyatira, though Rev. 2:24 indicates that all were not in fellowship together.

The heretical man of Titus 3:10, 11 is one gone out to form a party. After a first and second admonition, have done with such!

59. W. Kelly, *1 Corinthians*, p. 177, 178.

Q. -- Titus 3:10, 11, kindly explain, giving the significance of “heretic” and “reject.” Is there any reference to reception or to excommunication? W. D.

A. --“Heresy” is used by the apostle for a party of selfwill, a faction which severs itself from the assembly. Such is the usage in 1 Cor. 11:18, 19: “I hear that there are schisms among you (i.e., divisions within), and I partly believe it. For there must also be heresies (i.e., external division or sects), that the approved may become manifest among you.” (See also Gal. 5:20 and 2 Pet. 2:1.) The precise meaning here comes out incontestably. Bad doctrine (the later ecclesiastical sense of “heresy”) does not of necessity lead its advocate to form a party without; but schismatic feeling directly tends to this. A split within ere long issues in a split without; whereas heterodoxy seeks shelter within in order to leaven the lump if possible. So in Titus 3 the apostle directs Titus to have done with a man stamped as heretical after a first and second admonition. He had gone outside and was forming a sect. It was no question therefore of putting him without; for he had gone out himself, and refused admonition, perhaps repeatedly. He condemned himself in despising and abandoning God’s assembly. You cannot put away one who has already gone away, though it may be announced for the profit of all. The word translated “reject” is not to excommunicate, but altogether general, and capable of application to persons inside (as in 1 Tim. 5:11) no less than to the outside maker of a school or sect; also to fables and foolish questions wherever they might be (1 Tim. 4:7, 2 Tim. 2:23). From its primitive meaning of deprecating and making excuse, the word acquires the force of refusing, rejecting, or avoiding. In no case is it applied to putting out, which is the function of the assembly and expressed by a totally different word. Among the Jews “heresy” was used indifferently for the parties of Sadducees, Pharisees, and Nazarenes.⁶⁰

A heresy does not necessarily involve fundamental evil as 2 Pet. 2:1 shows. This in 2 Pet. 2:1 refers to *destructive* heresies, i.e., heresies which attack the foundation of our most holy faith. There are heresies that have to do with truth which is not part of the foundation, i.e., not part of what might be called fundamental truth.

60. *The Bible Treasury* 20:256.

Scripture Index

Old Testament

Gen. 19:26	57	Esther 9:30, 31; cf. Zech. 8:16	57
Gen. 3:12	48	Neh. 4:7	26
Ex. 3:18	48	Ezra 10	57
Lev. 19:36; Prov. 11:1; 20:10, 23; Ezek. 45:10	51	Psa. 86:11	48
Lev. 2:13	56	Psa. 119:63	48
Lev. 21:18	11	Prov. 11:1	51
Lev. 21:21, 22	11	Prov. 12:1	60
Lev. 23	58	Prov. 24:23	51
Lev. 5:5	58	Prov. 28:13	55, 58
1 Sam. 15:23	1	Isa 52:11	20
1 Sam. 2:23-25	48	Jer. 50:8; 51:6-9	24
1 Sam. 2:3	59	Jer. 6:14,15; 8:11, 12	57
1 Sam. 3:13	48	Hag. 2:12, 13.	20
2 Sam. 23:5	52	Malachi	61
1 Kings 1:6	48	2 Kings 20:19; cf. Isa. 39:8	57
1 Kings 11:26, 27	26	2 Kings 20:3	57

New Testament

MATTHEW		MARK	
Matt. 5:9	55	Mark 7:18-23	17
Matt. 7:1	38, 39	Mark 9:50	54, 57
Matt. 7:1-5	47	LUKE	
Matt. 7:2-5	40	Luke 11:47-51	22,23
Matt. 7:15-20	39	Luke 11:50, 51	22
Matt. 10:16.	61	Luke 12:57	38
Matt. 13:57	2	Luke 16:10	64
Matt. 15:17-20	17	Luke 17:3	58
Matt. 16:19	5	Luke 3:19	3
Matt. 17:20.	46	Luke 7:43	38
Matt. 18:15-20:	1	JOHN	
Matt. 18:16	4	John 1:17	37
Matt. 18:18	4, 5	John 7:39	34
Matt. 18:20	4, 35		
Matt. 18:23-35; 6:15	59		

John 8	60	1 Cor. 12:13	34
John 8:29	4	1 Cor. 13	45, 47
John 11:52; Rom. 9:7, 8	34	1 Cor. 13:7	54
John 12:24	35	1 Cor. 13:9, 10	45
John 17:23	36	1 Cor. 14:37	19
John 20:22	36	1 Cor. 14:37, 38	53

ACTS

Acts 1:5	33	2 Cor. 2:7	4
Acts 2; 1 Cor. 12:13; Matt. 3:11	33	2 Cor. 6:3	2
Acts 24:16	2	2 Cor. 6:14	22
		2 Cor. 6:14-18	20

ROMANS

Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 4:30	34		
Rom. 11:11	2	GALATIANS	
Rom. 12:16	51	Gal. 2:11	56
Rom. 12:9	2	Gal. 5:9	19
Rom. 14:13, 20	2	Gal. 5:20	66
Rom. 14:17	57	Gal. 6:1	6
Rom. 14:19	56	Gal. 6:6	10
Rom. 14:20-22	2		
Rom. 15:14	3	EPHESIANS	
Rom. 15:3	4	Eph. 1:6	21
Rom. 16:17	16	Eph. 1:13	34
Rom. 16:17, 18	14	Eph. 1:22, 23	34
Rom. 16:19	60, 61	Eph. 4:2	3
Rom. 7:14	7	Eph. 4:3	34
Rom. 16:17, 18	12	Eph. 4:31, 32	3
		Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13	59
		Eph. 6:14	51

1 CORINTHIANS

1 Cor. 1:7-9	33		
1 Cor. 1:10	60	PHILIPPIANS	
1 Cor. 2:15	6	Phil. 1:9	44
1 Cor. 3:1	7	Phil. 1:9-11	56
1 Cor. 3:3	7, 8	Phil. 1:10	2
1 Cor. 4:16, 17; 7:17; 11:1, 2	54	Phil. 2:2, 3; 1 Cor. 1:10	55
1 Cor. 4:5	38, 40	Phil. 3:19	15
1 Cor. 5	1, 4, 33	Phil. 3:20, 21	15
1 Cor. 5:12	39	Phil. 4:2	55, 60
1 Cor. 5:13	11	Phil. 4:5	56
1 Cor. 5:3, 12	39	Phil. 4:8	60
1 Cor. 5:4	4		
1 Cor. 6:17	34	COLOSSIANS	
1 Cor. 7:39	21	Col. 3:12, 15	3
1 Cor. 9:19-22; Phil. 3:8; 1 Pet. 3:1	3	Col. 3:13	3
1 Cor. 10	17, 61		
1 Cor. 10:15	39	1 & 2 THESSALONIANS	
1 Cor. 10:16	19, 20	1 Thess. 5:12	63
1 Cor. 10:32	2	1 Thess. 5:14	8
1 Cor. 11:18, 19	15, 65, 66		
1 Cor. 11:19	60, 65	2 Thess. 3:6 and 14	9
1 Cor. 12:9	45	2 Thess. 3:6-16:	9
1 Cor. 12:12	34	2 Thess. 3:6, 14	12

1 & 2 TIMOTHY

1 Tim. 2:22	63	1 John 5:11	35
1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9	62	2 John 6	42, 45
1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12	52	2 John 9, 10	26
1 Tim. 3:4, 5	52	2 John 10, 11	19
1 Tim. 3:5	62		
1 Tim. 3:12	52	3 John	27
1 Tim. 4:7	66	3 John 3	50
1 Tim. 5:11	66	3 John 4	46
1 Tim. 5:17	62		
1 Tim. 5:20	3, 10, 11	1 & 2 PETER	
1 Tim. 5:21	51	1 Pet. 3:11	56
1 Tim. 6:11	57		
		2 Pet. 1:7	42, 43
2 Tim. 2	36	2 Pet. 1:10	2
2 Tim. 2:22	25	2 Pet. 2:1	66
2 Tim. 2:23	66	2 Pet. 3:14	24, 25
2 Tim. 3:1	35	2 Pet. 3:18	3
2 Tim. 3:1-5	31		

TITUS

Titus 1:6	52	JUDE	
Titus 1:11	13, 14	Jude 23	26
Titus 2:11, 12	37, 61	Jude 24	2
Titus 3:10, 11	15, 65, 66		

HEBREWS

Heb. 1:9	56	REVELATION	
Heb. 12:11	55	Rev. 1:13	63
Heb. 12:14	56	Rev. 3:19	3
		Rev. 15:6	51
		Rev. 18	22
		Rev. 18:4	23
		Rev. 18:4, 24	23
		Rev. 21:10, 12	26

JAMES

James 1:13-15	19
James 1:5	55
James 2:9	51
James 2:10	2
James 3:17	25, 35, 53, 54, 55
James 3:18	55
James 3:2	2
James 4:11, 12	40

1, 2, & 3 JOHN

1 John 1:3	35
1 John 1:5	37, 49
1 John 1:9	58
1 John 2	33
1 John 2:3-11	49
1 John 2:12-27	47
1 John 2:18	35, 61
1 John 3:4-24	49
1 John 3:18	45
1 John 4:8, 16	37, 49
1 John 5:2, 3	45

Subject Index

a broad path is not a broad heart, but a broad conscience	63	heresy does not necessarily involve fundamental evil	66
Abel's blood	22	heretic	15
Adam	48	Hezekiah	57
admonition	9	holiness	64
Adonijah	48	holiness does not seep down into the little things of life, it starts there	64
Ahab	47	holiness is separation from evil; innocence, ignorance of evil	35
An Allegory: Things Supposed to Illustrate Things That Are	28	holiness of correction	60
assembly of God on earth (Eph. 1:22; 3:10; 5:23, 29; etc.)	34	holiness of forgiveness	58
Barker, H. P.	25-27	holiness of impartiality	51
Bethesda	27, 29	holiness of judging	37
binding and loosing	4	holiness of love	42
carnal	7	holiness of peace and peace-making	54
carnal man	8	holiness of unity	63
contumacy	4	humor the flesh	14
convict	12	impartiality	51
create divisions and occasions of falling	14	indifferentism toward evil	42
defilement, what the Lord said about	17	interassembly difficulties	62
democracy, not a	62	judge not, that ye be not judged	39, 41
Diotrephes	27	koinonia	18, 19, 20, 21
disorderliness	9	koinonian	33
disorderly	10	<i>Lake Geneva Conference Report</i>	3, 17, 19, 21
disorderly walk must be distinguished from leaven	10	<i>Lake Geneva Conference Report</i> , caricatures	18
division	65	<i>Lake Geneva Conference Report</i> , effect of	17
Eli's house	48	<i>Lake Geneva Conference Report</i> , goal of the doctrine in	18
Elijah	47	<i>Lake Geneva Conference Report</i> , systematized effort to overthrow	21
Esther's marriage to a Gentile	57	Laodicean times	42
exclusivism is not built only on 2 John 9, 10	27	love	461
family (of God) fellowship	33	love and brotherly love	43
fault	6	love, semblance of	44
favoritism	51	love the children of God	49
favoritism and prejudices	52	love to the brethren	44
fellowship, called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord	33	love with regard to all the children of God	50
fellowship with leaven	3	McDowell, Ian	32
flesh	7	Melchizedek	55
forgiveness	58, 59	moral contact and moral identification with the evil	18
forgiveness, repentance must precede	58	moral contact with the evil	19
forgiveness without repentance and confession is unholiness	58	moral contact with the evil tolerated	19
Gaius	50	moral identification through fellowship with evil	19
Gaius and Demetrius	27	moral principle of recovery	48
gift and overseership	62	moral principles of the soul	48
Groves, A.N.	30		
grudges	3		
heresy	65, 66		

moral touch	20, 21	schism	65
moral ways of God	60	self-judgment	64
Nehemiah	26	self-seeking and self-importance	15
neutrality	21	servants of the Lord	53
neutrality and indifference to Christ	19	silencing	14
Newton, B. W.	30, 32	silencing an unprofitable speaker	14
Nixon, R. M., president	58, 60	silencing, whose mouths must be stopped	13
obedience to His commands	49	smallpox	28
offence	2, 6	spirit of meekness	8
offended	3	spiritual	7
one mind	55	spots	25, 26
oneness	35	Spurgeon	30-32
Open Brethren	32	suspicion and partiality	52
Open Brethrenism	3	Thyatira and Laodicea	24, 27
overseership is local	62	time; the passage of time does not alter the moral character of a moral action	23
oversight	62	touch not what is unclean	17, 20
patience	46	trespass	6
peace	55, 56	union of the believers with the Head in heaven	34
peace and truth in my days	57	unity	63
peace-maker	55	unity of the Spirit	34
Philemon and Onesimus	59	whose god is their belly	15
power of life in resurrection	36	withdraw	10
proximity	19, 21	withdraw from the disorderly	9
proximity to those who sin	17, 18	withdrawal from the assembly does not relieve a person from	16
purity first, never reverse this order	55	Wright, James	30
Rankin, J	27	yieldingness	56
rebuke before all	11, 12		
remonstrance	53		
restore	6		
righteousness	63		

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