

Denominational Attitudes and Tactics Among Brethren

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Introduction

Ten years or so ago [1962, DM], most of the erroneous religious principles I addressed in my preaching and writing were apparent in the denominational world. Now, along with many other Gospel preachers, I find myself preaching and teaching these same principles, only with an additional purpose. We must aim them at brethren now—and not only to edify brethren in the pew. Many in the pulpit have become denominational in their general attitudes toward God's Word and in their teaching. In fact, there would not be so many in the pew with denominational concepts and vocabularies were there not those in pulpits and classrooms who are instructing and encouraging them in such ideas. Let me now cite and discuss some examples of this phenomenon.

The Concept of the Church as a Denomination

For some years I have heard brethren use terminology in conversation that indicated a denominational concept of the church. Referring to “other denominations,” “church of Christ doctrine,” “I am a church of Christ,” and such like, are illustrative. However, these and like statements were usually made in ignorance and innocence of their connotation, and when the error was pointed out, it was usually immediately corrected.

Now, however, a segment of people in the church openly refers to the church of our Lord as a denomination and a sect. They do it in their lectures, articles, books, and classes—not in ignorance or innocence—but by design. I know not what prompts them, whether to seek notoriety, to be on the crest of a “new wave” of thinking, to satisfy some devilish delight in knowingly shocking and disturbing those who love the Lord and His church, or perhaps other motives. Nevertheless, I know that if they are allowed to run loose and unexposed, because of the present sad level of Biblical ignorance in the church, they will continue to “draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:30).¹

The church, both in origin and nature, is essentially non-denominational and anti-denominational. The church was built by the Lord Jesus (Mat. 16:18), not by men. It belongs to the Christ (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25), not to men. It includes only those saved from their alien sins (Acts 2:41, 47), not any others. It is one body (Eph. 4:4), not many. It has one faith (Acts 6:7; Eph. 4:5; Jude 3), not many. It upholds the Truth and obedience to it (1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 5:9), not

mere pious sincerity. It is the one straitened way (Mat. 7:13–14; John 14:6; Acts 9:2), not many ways. It honors the name of Christ (Acts 4:12; Rom. 16:16; 1 Pet. 4:16), not the names of men.

I have observed in at least some of these false teachers that they are not only openly calling the church a denomination among denominations. They are at the same time, through their influence and teaching, doing everything they can to make sure, if possible, that it **becomes** a denomination. I had the sad experience of preaching for a congregation where, I learned not long after moving there, that the Bible Chair director it fully supported had been allowed for several years to spread his denominational concept of the church. All the while he was working to make it as much like a denomination as he could, allowing, if not encouraging, the student devotionals to become little more than “testimonial” meetings, openly declaring that he “could not tell his students that instrumental music or smoking are wrong,” supplying them with Pentecostal periodicals, and such like. This man, to whom the souls of hundreds of college young people were entrusted over the years, once said in the Bible class he was teaching, “The church of Christ is the most denominational of all of the churches.” One does not have to imagine the concept of the bride of Christ with which his students left his tutelage. Not only was the church a denomination to this blind guide—it was a sorry one at that. God be thanked that enough pressure was finally brought to bear on the elders where he worked that he was removed, but not before he did irreparable damage. When he was terminated he found his “home” in the Methodist Church!

I have a book in my library written by a brother (who was preaching at the time that he wrote it) in which he referred to the body of Christ as “our denomination” and “our sect” (Fooks, 27, 50). The whole tenor of the book is the wholesomeness of fellowship with the denominations without exposing their errors. How casually some would give up the precious ground of simple, primitive Christianity, fought for and won in many a rugged conflict and at immeasurable personal sacrifice through many centuries (especially the last two in our nation). Nay, it appears that some would even surrender it gleefully.

The Sincerity-Above-Truth Attitude

All of my adult life as a Christian I have observed that possibly the doctrine most common to all denominational adherents is that sincerity of heart is superior to allegiance to Truth. Unless one is made to see his error at this point it is not possible to lead him further into the Truth. Properly weighed, the exaltation of sincerity justifies any error and basically implies “practical universalism.” While genuineness, sincerity, and freedom from hypocrisy are all repeatedly enjoined in Scripture (Mat. 23:13–36; Phi. 1:16–17; 2 Cor. 8:8; et al.), **never** are they

so exalted as to diminish the necessity of obedience to the Truth (John 8:31–32). Were those described in Matthew 7:21–23 condemned for lack of sincerity? Verily not, but for lack of obedience to God’s Word, though obviously sincere. Love of Christ is not measured merely by sincerity, but by keeping His commandments (John 14:15, 21, 23–24). Christ saves the obedient (Heb. 5:9), not merely the sincere. Zeal without knowledge results in condemnation (Rom. 10:1–3). The behavioral balance that brings salvation is a heart that knows the Truth and sincerely obeys it (John 4:24).

In spite of such plain doctrine, in the earlier-referenced congregation that tolerated the Bible Chair heretic, an “enlightened” young couple were outspoken in public and private, declaring that the “spirit is more important than the truth,” and that they “would rather be Baptists, Methodists, you name it, with the right spirit than to be a member of the church of Christ and not have the right spirit.” Yet, they were allowed to continue in teaching and other leadership roles by naive elders while they spread their poison. They let it be known that they were greatly encouraged in their convictions by some of the writers in the ultra-liberal *Mission Magazine*. They are not alone in their views. The *sincerity-alone* doctrine is an attack on the very foundation of the Gospel. Once swallowed, one loses all regard for doctrinal purity. It must be exposed for what it is—a frontal assault on Scriptural authority.

De-emphasis on the Church

The denominational world has always minimized the importance of “the church” (as they erroneously view it) with a corresponding emphasis on one’s “personal relationship with Jesus.” I have for several years preached against the sectarian doctrine that one can as well serve the Lord, worship God, and be saved out of the church as in it. Of course, as the denominational world views the church—merely the conglomerate of denominations—the Scriptures do clearly teach that one is saved apart from that. The damning denominational doctrine of “salvation-at-the-point-of-belief” and “joining-the-church-later-if-you-want-to” is an apt illustration of the general downgrading of the church in denominational teaching.

But now we are being told by some of our more “knowledgeable” brethren that we have been emphasizing the church too much and that we have been “converting people to the church instead of to Christ.” One preacher has said that he “no longer emphasizes the church in his preaching,” but that he is “content just to preach Jesus.” I suppose it might be possible to “emphasize the church too much” in our preaching, but it is hard for me to imagine how one could do so. I deny that we have done so in the Lord’s body. How can one overemphasize something that is a result of God’s eternal purpose through Christ (Eph. 3:10–11), was the

subject of hundreds of years of prophecy (Isa. 2:2–4; Dan. 2:44), was built (Mat. 16:18), bought (Acts 20:28), and sacrificed for by Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:25), constitutes the family of God (1 Tim. 3:15), is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18), is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16), composes the saved (Acts 2:47), shall be saved by Christ (Eph. 5:23), is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22–32), and is a “kingdom that cannot be shaken” (Heb. 12:23, 28)? Because of the abominable denominational view of what the church is, we must continue with heavy emphasis on the place the Scriptures give it.

Little wonder that the denominations de-emphasize the importance of the Church. Their concept of the church is so foreign to Scripture that they can hardly afford to emphasize it except as a human social institution. It is almost incredible that some of our preachers and elders should fall into such a snare, however.

It is an utter impossibility to “preach Christ and not emphasize the church” or to convert one to the Christ **without** “converting” him to the church. One who attempts to preach Christ without preaching the church fails to fully and accurately preach Christ. Philip “preached Christ” to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5), but this included also preaching the “kingdom of God” (v. 12). The amazing thing about those who thus minimize the church is that they act as though they have discovered something “brand new.” It is not at all new; it is simply “warmed over” denominational heresy.

The Charge of “Bibliolatry”

Many years ago I had several discussions with the local Presbyterian preacher where I lived. As I constantly referred to Scripture in our discussions, he came to accuse me of “Bibliolatry.” He mistakenly thought my reverence for the Bible as God’s infallible Word constituted worship of the Bible. Now I am hearing some brethren ridicule our “Bibliolatry.” I wonder why we are so accused by some brethren. Is it because we love God’s Law (Psa. 119:97)? Is it because we believe God’s Law is perfect, sure, right, pure, ever enduring, true, righteous, more precious than gold, and sweeter than honey (19:7–10)? Is it because we know that we do not love Christ unless we keep His commandments (John 14:15ff)? Is It because we believe the Bible to be God’s inspired Word (1 Cor. 2:10–13; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:20–21)? Are we accused of “Bibliolatry” because we believe it is the Truth—and all the Truth—relating to our souls and that only by obedience to it are we freed and purified from sin (John 8:31–32; 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:22–23)? Or, are we perhaps so accused because our accusers hold no such convictions about the Bible? As I hear and read the aspersions some among us are casting upon the Bible and our unqualified allegiance to it, it is difficult to keep from

ascribing that very motive. Again, please note that this is not a new theme, but one borrowed from those who have never properly respected Biblical authority.

“We Can’t All Understand the Bible Alike”

All of my preaching life I have preached publicly and privately against the old denominational cliché, “We can’t all understand the Bible alike.” I prepared a sermon a number of years ago and have delivered it many times, which asks the question, “Can we understand the Bible alike?” I specifically saw the need for this sermon because a denominational lady wrote, in response to a correspondence course lesson, “You know we can’t all understand the Bible alike.” This student assumed that I agreed with her popular excuse for believing what she wanted to believe, regardless of Biblical teaching. I most certainly did not and still do not agree.

This question illustrates a long-standing practice by sectarians to try to dodge the application of Biblical Truth by an appeal to individual interpretation—even if it directly contradicts Biblical Truth. Now I’m finding that when it becomes necessary to oppose some strange and false doctrines by brethren, their adherents are offering the same “dodge.” They say such things as, “Do you claim to know all the truth?” “We cannot know the truth, only be searchers for it,” “You surely know that there are many good brethren who disagree on this point,” “How do you know you are right and others are wrong?” “We don’t have a corner on the market of truth,” and like statements. They all sound very similar to the old denominational smokescreen that makes the meaning of Scripture subjective rather than objective.

If the Bible’s words that are necessary to our salvation cannot be understood alike by all, why did Paul urge the Corinthians to “all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10)? Was he demanding the impossible? Was our Lord praying for an impossibility when He prayed that all believers be “one even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee” (John 17:20–21)? It is yet possible—and necessary—to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good” (1 The. 5:21), to “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17), to “prove the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1), and to “know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (v. 6).

If God gave the Bible as a revelation of his will (Eph. 3:3–5), was He unable to make it understandable to us? If able, was He unwilling? If we cannot understand the Bible alike, in what sense is it a “revelation”? Are we to conclude that, although our salvation depends upon understanding the Word (Acts 11:14), we cannot all understand it uniformly? If we understand the Bible, we will understand it alike. What the Bible teaches, it teaches for all alike.

Disagreements relating to Bible doctrine are the result of man's **failure** to understand (whether or not intentionally) the Bible, not because it is **impossible** for all to understand it alike. If it is impossible for men to understand the Bible alike, then by implication, God is responsible for the world's hopeless religious division among professed believers.

The Charge of "Legalism"

Another accusation the denominationalists have made through the years (against those who insist upon Scriptural authority for their belief and practice) is "legalism." Particularly is this true of those who have been captured by theological modernism. James D. Bales suggests that modernism is actually itself only an extreme form of legalism (112). Several years ago, when Scripture began to hit its mark in a written discussion, my Methodist preacher opponent called me a "legalist." In their *Captives of the Word*, a "Narrative History" of those in the 19th century who so ably sounded forth the plea for restoration of the primitive church, Louis and Bess White Cochran, both prominent members of the Disciples of Christ sect, make much of what they call "legalism" in such stalwarts as Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, Benjamin Franklin, and J.W. McGarvey (117, et al.).

Every knowledgeable and devoted Christian opposes true "legalism." Real legalism relies not upon Christ's atoning blood for redemption, but strictly upon one's external compliance with law and commandment. We cannot be justified by merely keeping "the works of the law" (Rom. 3:28). However, the denominational liberal does not use the term in its true sense. He rather uses it to refer to insistence upon strict compliance with the requirements of Scripture. It is therefore but another veiled attack against the authority of Scripture. The frontrunners in the race to make the church of our Lord "relevant" are leveling the charge of "legalism" in the same way against those who dare defend the Faith. A young PHD who was at time a member of the liberal church I previously referenced made the following statements in a Sunday morning Bible class: "The church [meaning "us," DM] is dominated by those who have a legalistic spirit and a Pharisaical attitude. All we ever hear is the same old thing we've heard all of our lives. The preaching is a bunch of bunk. We're getting nothing from the service." The informed reader will recognize that this comment is no more than a case of parroting the old denominational attack on Scriptural authority that faithful brethren have fought for many years.

It is intriguing to see how accurately the errors of history seem destined to repeat themselves, especially in those who disdain its lessons. Almost exactly 100 years ago the battle over "rationalism" and "modernism," was raging among brethren. R.C. Cave, J.H. Garrison, Alexander Proctor, and George Longan, leaders in the "rational" school, came under heavy

attack from a number of staunch defenders of the Truth. Among those who devoted much of their writing abilities to heading off the malignancy were J.W. McGarvey and Moses E. Lard in the *Apostolic Times* a widely read periodical of the day. The best response that the rationalists could martial, it seems, was to accuse Lard and McGarvey of "legalism." After failing to get a satisfactory definition of what was meant by "legalism" from the accusers, Lard finally wrote what he thought they meant by the term in the following paragraph:

Now to insist on obedience to these commands is legalism. Against it, of late, not a little has been said, and nothing wisely. The term *legalism* I do not like. It is an offensive term, with a bad sense, as popularly used, and should, therefore, not be employed. Obedience to the commandments of Christ is its exact equivalent, and should always be used in its stead. But few men, however, could be found bold enough to speak against obeying the commands of Christ. The result would be too glaring. None could fail to see it, and few would hesitate to pronounce it infidelity. A more insidious method is adopted. *Legalism* is the thing inveighed against. But the act amounts to the same. *Legalism* and *obedience to Christ's commands* are the same [in the mind of the rationalists, DM]. Hence to speak against that is to speak against this. Nor have I any respect for the man who masks the Law of Christ, and then speaks against it, than I have for him who insults it indirectly (West, 269).

The distinct impression I get from those who are quick to accuse their brethren of "legalism" nowadays is that they mean exactly what the rationalists of a century ago meant by the term. They like to think that they have outgrown "commandment-keeping" and "obedience to law," all the while demanding that others goose step to their own adopted "laws" of "relevance" (as they view it), scholarship (as the world views it), and newness and change-for-the-sake-of-change (as they lust for it). Scripture continues to clearly teach (for those who care to learn) that, while we are saved by grace apart from meritorious works (Eph. 2:8–9), yet we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. 2:10). Freedom from Moses' Law in Christ does not mean license or freedom from all spiritual law (Gal. 5:13). In the absence of law there is no such thing as sin (Rom. 4:15). There is such a thing as "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2), also styled "the perfect law of liberty" (Jam. 1:25). With Paul, we are "under law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21). Discipleship is dependent upon abiding in the Word/Law of Christ (John 8:31).

I suppose we should ever expect those who have grown tired of the authority of Christ to pompously hurl *legalism* at those who are set to defend the Truth, as was Paul (Phi. 1:16). But let us remain aware of what they really mean by the term.

A tactic of the denominationalist, when his error is exposed, is to try to intimidate his exposor by calling him uncomplimentary names. This maneuver also serves to shift the emphasis from the issue involved, hoping to make the discussion appear to be more of a conflict of personalities than of principles. In the aforementioned discussion, besides calling me

a "legalist" when he began to feel the heat of Truth, my Methodist friend employed some additional epithets, including "false witness," "Pharisee," "user of Communistic tactics," "judge," and others. Until recent years in our brotherhood it was understood that it is Scripturally incumbent upon every Gospel preacher to expose and oppose false doctrine and its purveyors, wherever they were found. Rather than extending fellowship to them, we are to reprove "the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11). God's servants are to "contend earnestly for the faith," rather than sitting around singing "Kumbaya" with false teachers (Jude 3). The Scriptures that taught us to defend the Faith have not changed, but it is apparent that many of the brethren have changed.

In my observation and experience it has become all but impossible to call into question in the kindest way the most radical departures—in doctrine or deed—from the Faith without bringing an avalanche of uncomplimentary names upon oneself. I have heard some of the noblest and most dedicated of God's servants uncharitably called "watchdogs," "witch hunters," "keepers of orthodoxy," "troublemakers," and many other prejudicial terms. I have received such misnomers from brethren, along with "legalist" and "ultra-conservative." I've been accused of "playing God." The upshot of the matter is that such terms are often employed by those who so plaintively deplore the way brethren "label" one another.

I do not deny that some may have been overly judgmental of their brethren. Nor would I defend a spirit of bitterness or pride in correcting a brother. It never occurs to them that on the very same grounds that some are currently hurling the intimidations mentioned above, they would also have to classify the Only Begotten of the Father (along with John the Immerser, Peter, Stephen, Philip, Paul, James, Jude, and all of the other New Testament worthies). They issued so many warnings against false teaching and teachers that it is superfluous even to cite them.

If being a watchman for wolves in the flock makes one a "watchdog," then one is so with the Lord's approval (Acts 20:29–30). If exposing false brethren and their doctrines that cause division and stumbling makes one a "troublemaker," then we should willingly accept that moniker (Rom. 16:17). If earnest contention for the Faith makes one a "keeper of orthodoxy," one is so at Heaven's direction (Jude 3). If holding the pattern of sound words means I am an "ultra-conservative" in the eyes of some, then I will consider myself in good company (2 Tim. 1:13). Such attempts at intimidation will doubtless work on some (and no one enjoys receiving them, but hopefully, said attempts will no more silence the anguished outcries against today's

apostasies than did the wicked efforts of Judah and Israel completely silence the prophets they so much despised.

Broadening the Fellowship “Circle”

The denominational world has made an art of ignoring doctrinal and organizational differences in their human religious orders. The "Ecumenical Movement" of the 1960s was a natural outgrowth of such earlier federations as the Federal Council of Churches (1903) and the National Council of Churches (1950). The spirit, if not all the principles, of theological liberalism has gained such control of the denominations that some have surrendered their own identities in various mergers in the last few decades. It seems likely that more such mergers will occur as the lines of tolerance and fellowship are ever broadening. I suppose there is hardly a limit to what the liberal denominationalist will fellowship. This is humorously illustrated by a conversation between a liberal Catholic and an Atheist. The Atheist asked, "What is a Catholic?" The Catholic theologian replied: "Being a Catholic means awareness of community—awareness of human unity related to Christ." The Atheist correctly concluded that by such a nebulous definition even he could be a Catholic (Bales, 112)! Indeed, it appears that within a few years Catholicism and Protestantism may even be largely indistinguishable—or at least that the two groups will grant each other fellowship. It is no surprise that this is occurring. For, having little Scriptural basis for most of their doctrines and practices, they have no cause to argue that one was more—or less—Scripturally credible than the other.

Over the past several years it has become increasingly apparent that some in the Lord's church are bent on widening the borders of fellowship. When in 1962 Carl Ketcherside began his compromising overtures to the innovative segments of the Restoration, he was not taken seriously by some. I, among others, thought that few, if any, would pay much heed to a man who had sown seeds of division for several years with his pet hobbies at every opening he could find. We were mistaken. I am not sure that all of the similar cries for "fellowship" with errorists we are now hearing are directly traceable to Ketchersidian influence, but I also doubt that the similarities are all coincidences. Several books authored by brethren in the past ten years have sounded this call for "wider fellowship." "Unity Forums," especially among supposed representatives of various segments of those whose forbears pled for restoration have become commonplace. If these were for the purpose of trying to arrive at some Scriptural settlement of the significant issues that have caused severance of fellowship, then they have validity. If they are merely to bring men together who think matters that divide us (such as instrumental music in worship, missionary societies, et al.) are optional after all, then they are wasted effort or worse.

The desire for broader fellowship is not only directed at our innovating brethren, but beyond. One wrote as follows, after mentioning everything from Catholics to Pentecostals: "I am suggesting that all of us who believe in the lord Jesus get together to discuss our common faith and rejoice in it!" (Fooks, 28). He continues: "A believer is one who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God regardless of his denominational affiliation or lack of it" (42–43). "In these groups [discussion groups with denominationalists, DM] we do not in any way attempt to determine what is the truth for someone else," brother Fooks explains (48). He further reveals his generous ecumenism by stating that "...in America we are so involved in our own limited faith and the brethren within our sect, that we have little or no time to spend with other believers" (50). His ideas on *fellowship* and his definition of *believers* are plain enough to make interpretation superfluous.

At a recent "Unity Forum" in Cupertino, California (July 1972) it was not enough to deny that instrumental music is a valid test of fellowship, but additionally, a Roman Catholic priest was invited to make one of the major addresses. Some of our "generous" brethren present could not decide what relationship they sustained to him, so they called him both "Father" and "Brother"!

None of us should have the desire—and we certainly have not the authority—to make the lines of fellowship any narrower than God has made them. Such is the character of Pharisaism and the nature of Diotrephes. What some brethren are completely ignoring in their mad rush to fellowship the sects is that no one has the right to make the scope of fellowship any **wider** than God has made it, either. The question, "Who is my brother?" really leads us to the more basic question, "Who is God's child?" Men are brothers only because of a common parentage. Spiritual brotherhood (fellowship) is therefore based upon spiritual sonship. Have we so outgrown the simplicity of the Gospel that we can no longer determine how one becomes a child of God?

A heart that is sincere in believing that Christ is the Son of God is commendable, but does such make one a child of God, thus a brother or sister in Christ? If so, then the evil spirit of Acts 19:15 was Paul's brother, as I suppose all the evil spirits would be as well (Jam. 2:19). A charitable spirit and works of benevolence must characterize God's children, but are they a substitute for the new birth (John 3:5)? How close we may feel to a person, how much we may admire or love him or her, has not one thing to do with indicating that person's relationship to God. Everyone who seeks to smuggle citizens into the kingdom on more or less than the Lord's terms does direct spite to the sin offering of Christ! Either Christ is the only way to the Father

(John 14:6) or He is not. If He is not, then He was a deceiver and we may as well use our Bibles for fire kindling. If He is, however, only those are His **whom He says are His**, even if every man on earth should take exception. The Lord Jesus did not hide the fact that His Way, the Way of Life, is narrow and that only a few will find it (Mat. 7:14). Since we cannot perfectly judge hearts, those truly in it may be even fewer than we may perceive, but it is certainly narrower than the avant-garde liberal brethren increasingly aver.

The obedient response of the sinner's faith to God's grace, revealed through Christ, is the means by which one enters the family of God. This includes the oral confession of belief in Christ as God's Son and of one's Lord (Rom. 10:9–10), repentance for one's sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30) and immersion in water for remission of those sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Such is the operation of the principle of faith in making us sons of God (Gal. 3:26–27). Such is the fullness of the new birth by which one becomes a citizen of the heavenly kingdom (John 3:5). Since the New Testament speaks nothing of sonship or salvation after Pentecost for any but **baptized** believers, such are the only ones in fellowship with God—and with one another. It is significant that all of the New Testament pleas for unity were directed at those **already in fellowship with each other—members of the body**, commonly called "brethren." The believer (synonymous with *Christian*, beginning with Acts 2:44) was/is to **have no fellowship** with unbelievers (Eph. 5:11). Believers are God's children, therefore brethren; unbelievers are neither, and with them we can have no spiritual yoke, fellowship, communion, concord, or portion (2 Cor. 6:14–18).

John wrote that we have fellowship one with another if we "walk in the light as he [Christ] is in the light" (1 John 1:7). Only as men are content to practice and preach revealed Truth can they have a Biblical fellowship with each other. Light and darkness have nothing in common; Truth and error can never be in fellowship. Those who spew nauseous platitudes inviting sects to a phony fellowship powwow on the plains of Ono, only make fools of themselves in the eyes of lovers of the Truth. Their kind of union, bought at the price of compromise of the Truth, is not deserving of the terms *unity* or *fellowship*, and it is subversive to the whole scheme of redemption. Brethren, let us be content with the boundaries of fellowship set by the Lord, regardless of the enlargements some would like to make.

Conclusion

I see a tragic irony in all these matters: Some sincere people in the denominational world seemingly have become disenchanted with the liberalism and general lack of respect for Scriptural Truth they see on every hand, but at the same time many of our brethren have grown tired of that very Truth that others may be seeking. At the very time when more and more

preachers are finding their way out of denominationalism into the glorious light of Truth, some of “our” preachers, professors, publishers, and increasing numbers of elders, have determined that the times have passed “the kingdom that cannot be shaken” by, we are irrelevant, and we must therefore “restructure” after the pattern of the denominational machinery. Verily, it is a peculiar circumstance when those who are being converted from denominationalism to true Christianity are met on the way “in” by some who are on the way “out” as they exchange the Lord’s body for the churches of men, all of which, sooner or later, will be uprooted (Mat. 15:13).

Perhaps no more fitting conclusion for these thoughts can be found than in Paul’s words: “Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ” (Col. 2:3).

Endnote

1. All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

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