

The Unity of the Church

Christ compares himself to the vine, and his disciples to its branches, saying, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Paul compares the church to our natural bodies, I. Cor. 12:12, saying, "For as the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." And in the 27th verse he says, "Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."

Everyone knows how closely our members are united in our bodies; and if the members of Christ's church are his body, how very close is that union. In Eph. 5:30, Paul writes, "We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." And in 4th Chap. 15, 16, "Which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to

the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Here the apostle took special pains to express in forcible words this spiritual unity. He also writes to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" and to the Ephesians, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

These scriptures refer directly to the temple of Solomon, which was a clear type or representation of the church, and the stones in the walls were typical of the members in the spiritual temple or church, whom Peter denominates lively stones, saying, "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house," or temple. The stones in the literal temple were dressed into proper shape, so as to fit together, as stated in I. Kings. "And the house when it was in building, was built of stones made ready

before they were brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." This comparison of the church with the temple shows how the lively or living stones are fitted, through the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to be joined together so closely that no breach or schism can exist.

This is fully confirmed in Christ's high priestly prayer recorded in John 17, in behalf of his apostles and those who believe their word: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me." The apostle John expresses the same in saying, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him." No closer union can be conceived than that expressed in these passages, which is the soul united with the Deity. This union is effected by the Spirit, according to the language of Paul, "By one Spirit are

we all baptized into one body;" and also, "Christ is the head of the body" — the church; thus making a complete union between Christ and its members; from whom they receive their spiritual life, as the branches derive their vitality from the vine.

It should be needless to refer to any other scripture to prove they are one; for beyond a doubt, Christ meant what He uttered in his prayer; and it should not be strange to any one that such a perfect union is possible, for it is essential to a free intercourse through the workings of grace by the Holy Spirit. It was under the most impressive circumstances that He offered this prayer, not long before his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and shortly before his crucifixion; and there is no doubt of its propriety and that it was heard; for on the occasion of raising Lazarus He prayed "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and I know that thou hearest me always." He did not simply pray that they might be one, but that they might be made perfect in one. This positive language ought to be so impressed on the mind of everyone, that none might pass over it lightly; for it was uttered in

solemn prayer by the Son of God; and was answered on the day of Pentecost by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and upon the thousands who believed their word and received grace; "and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."

The apostle John wrote to his brethren, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things;" (that is, all things necessary to salvation.) "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth." He further writes, "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." I. John 2:27.

Paul in writing about the new covenant, quoting from Jeremiah, says, "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; . . . and they shall not

teach every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they shall know me from the least to the greatest." Heb. 8:10, 11. And in II. Cor. 3:3, "Forasmuch as ye are declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." These Scriptures plainly show that a new law is written in the hearts of believers, the effect of which can be seen in the consecrated lives they lead. They also prove that the anointing, or Holy Spirit, is in all believers; and endows them with wisdom and understanding, by which they get a clear insight of the word, and become acquainted with the relation they bear to God and to one another; and with the duties and obligations enjoined upon them.

Some may say, if this be so, then why is it necessary to have a ministry to preside over the church? It is because the members are not equally endowed; neither is it necessary that they should be; for being the household of God, as already shown, their interests are mutual, and in a spiritual sense they have all things in common. One may

not possess sufficient knowledge to conduct the affairs of the household, but that end may be attained by each one contributing his knowledge for the general good. All having such a deep interest in each other's welfare, they are ever ready to minister to one another in giving good counsel, or a word of caution, or even in administering reproof when necessary; as all are fallible and liable to lose sight of the weightiness of their calling, and fail in one way or another, and thus all can be preserved, whether they have much or little talent.

Those brethren are chosen to the ministry who give evidence of wisdom and understanding, and thus better able to define the Word, and to present in an impressive manner the duties and obligations resting on the members, so they may not forget to discharge them. Also to adjust, without respect of persons, difficulties that may arise among them through human fallibility and the suggestions of Satan.

It is one of the most important duties of the ministry to preach the Gospel to all men. Because of sin man is naturally averse to

those things which make for peace, and on that account needs to be urged to the work; and even after becoming willing to yield himself to God, he finds himself wanting help in many ways, and it is but one of the many blessings of the Lord that He has in mercy provided the church with a ministry, who are appointed to feed and protect His flock.

The minds of the members through the Spirit are able to understand the truths of the Gospel as taught by the ministry, in conversation and from the pulpit and they are therefore willing to be led and controlled by them. The labors of the ministry must necessarily tend to the edification of the body or Church, and to bring the members into the unity of the faith, through a knowledge of the Son of God, whose power they acknowledge as the means by which this great work is accomplished.

The apostle Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together

in the same mind and in the same judgment." I. Cor. 1:10. When all speak the same thing, in matters pertaining to the faith, and are perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, it leaves no room for divisions. Had it not been possible for believers to be so closely united in sentiment, the apostle Paul would not have made this appeal.

There are other passages of Scripture, as well as types to which we might refer to confirm the view that the members in the church of Christ are inseparably united as a body, and that body with Christ. Should we not all be impressed with the weighty import of these Scriptures, which so forcibly and plainly define the relation of the believer; and should it not bow down even the most faithful when they meditate upon them? Wherein do the defenders of the popular sentiment of a church divided into sects find comfort in these scriptures? Must we not all accept the language of the apostle Peter as very appropriate here? "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

Christ Has But One Visible Body or Church.

Jesus spake, "Other sheep (Gentiles) I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be *one* fold and one shepherd." This agrees with what Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both (Jews and Gentiles) *one*, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, to make in himself of twain *one* new man; and that he might reconcile both unto God in *one* body by the cross." Paul also wrote to the brethren, "There is *one* body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

The expresions, "One fold," "One new man," "One body," "One church," are synonymous; and all are in the singular number. Christ said to Peter, "On this rock I will build my church." Paul in Colossians wrote, "He (Christ) is the head of the body"—the church. To the Ephes-

ians he wrote, "Christ loved the church;" also, "That he may present it to himself a glorious church," not churches.

These plain and significant Scriptures should make it clear that there is but one visible, undivided church. But in the face of all this, which we have directly from the lips of Jesus Christ himself, and from the inspired pen of the apostle Paul, it is strange that modern professors of Christianity can be so insensible as to pay no attention to these plain passages; and dare to claim that the church of Christ consists of the good in all the different denominations, notwithstanding they differ so widely in their religious sentiments. Some believe in adult baptism only, others in infant baptism; some that immersion is the only true mode of baptism; and of these some insist on single, and others on trine immersion; others practice pouring or sprinkling; some hold the seventh day of the week to be the true Sabbath, others the first; some advocate non-resistance, but the great majority do not; some believe in the freedom of the will, others do not; some believe in predestination, others do not; some believe in the pre-

existence of Christ, others believe differently; some believe in the natural conception of Christ, the majority reject it. This great diversity of opinion has been the source of endless discussion and division; and is brought about by a foreign influence—the spirit of Anti-christ—and not by the Holy Spirit.

How can they be good in the gospel sense, who are so diverse in their views, and who maintain that the good in all the churches constitute the true church of Christ. No doubt they claim that the great majority are good. To accept this view we would have to conclude that the church of Christ is a divided church. The language of Christ and his inspired apostles clearly shows that it cannot be. This view then must be unscriptural, and hence heretical. These divisions are also of a very serious character; and are carried so far as to oblige the different parties to build separate houses for worship, and have separate schools in which to educate their ministry in their respective creeds.

Paul in writing to his Corinthian brethren reproved them on account of the divisions which existed among them, "Ye are carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? for while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" This is precisely the state of things to-day. As all members in these different denominations subscribe to the tenets held by their respective churches, they are all leavened with this spirit of division, which is a great evil; and therefore none can be good in a gospel sense who supports it.

These divisions among the churches are of a more serious character than were those in the Corinthian church; for they involve the doctrine of Christ, while theirs merely consisted in a preference of men, and not in diversity of religious views. No doubt both Paul and Apollos taught the same doctrine, as Paul wrote, "He that planteth and he that watereth are one;" that is, one in faith and in doctrine. Some perhaps preferred Paul on account of his superior knowledge; others Apollos, because he was eloquent

and mighty in the scriptures. It was said, Paul's "bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible;" and on this account perhaps some looked on him less favorably; nevertheless, their preference, together with some other things tended to division; and consequently the influence was carnal.

The popular opinion that the good in these divided churches constitute the invisible church of Christ is unscriptural.

Presumably no one will deny the existence of a visible church; but the question may be raised as to the existence of an invisible church on earth. We accept that there are many persons in an isolated state throughout the world who have peace with God and are associated with Him through the spirit; and while such are heirs of the promise, yet they do not constitute a church, for they are unorganized and can not observe the ordinances. The church on earth must necessarily be an organized body of true believers. Those members who are considered good Christians scattered among the different churches, are not organized separately from the organized bodies with

which they are identified; and as little could they organize into one body, as those bodies could do to which they belong. Therefore we must conclude that they are not members of the body or church of Christ; for all true and upright Christians have been baptized by one Spirit into one body, which is the visible church.

The Gospel recognizes only one united, visible church. In order to comfort themselves with a hope of salvation in their disunited condition, men have formed the idea that the good in the different churches are members of the invisible church, which they hold is a united body. But this would be strange indeed. First we have the many sects entertaining diverse doctrines, disconnected in worship, some pulling down what others build up; yet popular sentiment would create the united church of Christ out of this disunited body of professors. We cannot with enlightened reason accept that anything so disunited can still be so united as to be one soul and one body, as the church must be. If we believe that his word is truth, then we fear that the Lord will not accept it as His Church.

The Church Must be Kept Pure.

Paul writes in Eph. 5:25, 26, 27, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

The word here is compared to water; and the expression, "by the word," indicates the means employed. The body or church is exposed to defiling influences, and its members being naturally inclined to sin, if not on their guard, will yield too much to these sinful inclinations, and thus become defiled; and if not awakened to a sense of their danger, may lapse into a cold state, and become careless in their walk, and at last become spots in the church. In yielding too much to self, difficulties may arise between or among members, causing unpleasant feelings, often followed by a loss of confidence, thus creating dangerous wrinkles; and unless these spots are removed, and the wrinkles made smooth, they would prove de-

structive to the divine life in the church; for Paul says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump;" and when the whole lump or church becomes leavened, death will ensue and the candlestick be removed.

The ministry presiding over the church are placed there as overseers of the flock, who watch for souls, as they that must give an account. In accepting the calling they assume a great responsibility, and promise that no personal or worldly consideration shall prevent them from performing the duties this obligation enjoins upon them, in preaching the word, maintaining order, peace and union among the members, without respect of persons. Hence they must be vigilant that nothing escapes their attention that would tend to make trouble; and when anything of this character appears, they must immediately take steps to check and correct it, that peace and confidence may not be disturbed. These labors are not confined to the ministry; it is also the duty of the lay members to have a constant care for one another, and to be ever ready to do their duty in minor matters that unfavorably affect them, in order to pre-

serve peace and purity in the church; but the labor performed by either the ministry or lay members must be done in love and in strict accordance with the word.

Christ commanded in Math. 18, "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee thou has gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." We notice in this command how explicit our Savior was in stating how it should be observed for the benefit of the trespassing brother so as to gain him. The first step in observing the command is, "Go, and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." But doing so is contrary to human nature, for its prompting would be to resent the act by punishing him, either by a personal rebuke, or a cool indifference, or by telling it to others. To take this course would place both at a disadvantage for future labor, and

make the one doing so guilty of trespass.

Quite often it is found upon such private inquiry that there was no trespass, but that a situation was not fully understood or was incorrectly observed or reported.

Many learn while doing their duty the force of the Apostle's words, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," and that they must set their minds as a flint against its evil promptings, and follow the leadings of the spirit as defined in our Savior's instructions. The most charitable construction should be placed upon the trespasser's conduct, and every effort made to maintain confidence until the matter is concluded, never losing sight of our Savior's injunction, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even unto them."

In Gal. 6:1, Paul instructed his brethren, saying, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." From these instructions it is plain that a brother overtaken in a fault dare not be neglected; for he may be exposed to danger by it; and the

act, if committed before the world, would not reflect a good light, and if not corrected, would bring reproach upon the church, and also affect the members unfavorably. But they whose duty it is to restore him must be spiritual, that is they must possess the meek, humble and spiritual nature of Christ, otherwise they could not restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.

The success of the labor depends much on the state of mind in which the brother goes. He may, by a critical and austere manner, succeed in getting the trespasser to acknowledge his fault and seek pardon, but yet not gain him in full confidence and brotherly love. Upon reflection his mind may react, and most likely follow its natural bent in a close and selfish criticism of the interview, and result in a wounded feeling to view the other one as a severe brother. Thus instead of strengthening those tender ties of affection that bind together the hearts of the believers, they would be weakened, leaving a cold and distant feeling which might require time and labor to overcome.

Were he first to consider himself, as Paul teaches, by reflecting on his own fallibility,

manifested in his repeated missteps and daily shortcomings, in thought, word and deed; and consider the patience, long suffering and mercy, which God is daily extending towards him, it would strongly tend to modify his feelings, and create sympathy, kindness and forbearance toward his offending brother, and an anxious desire for his restoration, lest he perish. In such a frame of mind, he would approach him carefully, and address him in a meek and gentle way, which would tend to make a favorable impression, and quite likely awaken a regret within him for having committed the trespass, followed by an acknowledgment of his fault and a petition for pardon, in true sincerity of heart. Thus the brother would be cleansed from his defilement, and mutual love and confidence would be fully restored; effected wholly by a strict adherence to the word through the healing influence of divine love.

But in case the offending brother will not hear, then the next step must be taken. The offended brother must "take with him one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be estab-

lished." But, feeling a deep interest in his brother's spiritual well-being, he will in selecting these brethren exercise care and by mutual consent select such as are possessed of good judgment and proper talent for such labor, and with them will labor carefully to make the brother sensible of his wrong, and try to impress him with the serious consequences if he persists in justifying himself, and refuses to make reparation. If they succeed in enlightening him, that he gets a clear sight of his wrong-doing, and humbles himself, acknowledges his fault, and begs for pardon, this is all the offended brother would seek, and from his heart should willingly and cheerfully forgive him, and extend confidence. This would end the matter, and peace and confidence would be restored, the offending member would be cleansed, and with feelings of gratitude would thank his brethren for dealing so kindly and considerately with him.

But if the offender should neglect to hear the brethren, disregard their kind efforts to enlighten him, reject their counsel and advice, and manifest tempted feelings towards them, then the brother would have to tell it

to the church, or to the ministry who represent the church. If the offender would appear before the ministry, and listen to their counsel and advice, and submit by frankly acknowledging the charge preferred against him, the wrong he did in disregarding the brethren's counsel, and in manifesting unpleasant feelings towards them, and would ask for pardon, then unitedly all would forgive him and receive him in confidence; and thus peace and quiet would be restored, and the church would remain unblemished.

If he should not hear the church, nor submit to its counsel, the witnesses would testify to his unwillingness to listen to their admonition, or to regard their advice, and that he manifested an unchristian temper, this, with the refusal to hear the church, would be sufficient proof that he had lost the love of God, and that the inner life was wanting, and consequently, had become a *spot* in the church. If permitted to remain he would be detrimental to the purity, peace and sanctified condition of the church. Therefore, for the sake of the preservation of the church, and as a rebuke and correc-

tion, he would have to be separated from it; and according to the command must be held as the Jews held the heathen and publicans. This would be to keep no company with him, as Peter remarked to Cornelius, the Roman centurion, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or to come unto one of another nation." As Paul wrote in II. Thes. 3:14, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

It is necessary to withdraw from such an one, whose heart is leavened with evil feelings, and generally with unkindness towards all that labored with him; for had he access to the members, and free intercourse with them, he would in all probability disturb the peace and tranquility of the church. In withdrawing from him, as Paul instructs in the same epistle, chap. 3:6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly," he would have no opportunity to leaven the members, for in being left alone

to his own reflection, it might create a reaction in his feelings, and awaken a sense of shame within him for his unbrotherly conduct, and thus be brought to repentance and to an acknowledgment of his fault, which would lead to his restoration.

From the foregoing it is plain that Christ designed his church to be holy and without blemish; for He has given her an unerring rule, which if implicitly followed, will work out the happy end of promoting peace and purity in the church.

The offender persisting in his course and refusing to hear the church gives sufficient cause for his separation from it, and for being held as an heathen man and a publican; but it may be said, the command applies to the offended brother only, and not to the church. From the wording we might infer that to be the import; but we can not evade the conclusion that Christ meant that the church should put him under the *ban*; for the very next remark He made was, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in

heaven," which no doubt has direct reference to the offending brother.

The object of banning, aside from keeping the church undefiled and blameless, is to reclaim or restore those who have fallen, as has been shown; and which the apostle makes very clear in I. Cor. 5:5, in the case of the fornicator whom the Corinthians retained among them. He commanded them, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." It must be the design of Christ that the church shall hold him as a heathen man and a publican; for in telling it to the church, the members all become fully acquainted with his unwillingness to hear the church; and all having the same love for him, and consequently the same desire for his restoration, would, with the offended member, feel to avoid or shun him for the purpose of restoring him. This certainly would be more effectual in gaining that end than if only the offended brother were to avoid him, which would be out of order and would lead to confusion.

The reader may think that we would have to possess angelic natures to comply with this command. A truly Christian spirit is of this nature; only the angels are not encompassed with sinful humanity as we are, and for this very reason Christ gave this commandment. The Holy Spirit which every child of God must possess, and which the apostles received on the day of Pentecost, as had been promised them, fully qualifies them, not only to keep the commandments, but also to give proper instructions how they should be kept, the care that must be taken and the disposition they must possess in observing them. In the case of members who are found guilty of committing gross sins, such as fornication, adultery, drunkenness, etc., it is not necessary to labor, as they are spiritually dead, and must be separated from the body. For them to remain would be contaminating, as other members might become infected with the deadly virus of their crimes and endanger the life of the body; therefore the church must, as Paul directed the Corinthians, "deliver such unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh," and not keep company with them, not even to

eat, lest they leaven the body, and not be brought to feel their shame.

Many claim this eating does not mean at ordinary meals, but only at the Lord's table. Paul had written to them in a former epistle not to keep company with fornicators; and then in this epistle writes, "Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, etc., with such an one, no not to eat." The apostle makes a distinction between the fornicators of this world and the one that is called a brother. No one, however liberal in his views, would hold that known fornicators, adulterers, etc., should be admitted to the communion table; and even had Paul made no distinction between worldly fornicators and one that is called a brother, he would have had no need of writing anything about his communing; as after separation he would stand in the same relation to the church as the worldly fornicators. Consequently, it is very plain that he meant eating at ordinary meals, the same as the Jews

who refused to eat with heathens and publicans.

The apostle Paul wrote to Titus, "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." With such but little labor is needed, more than to admonish them as stated. Generally they are persons wise in their own conceit; and having proud hearts, they delight in making a display of their knowledge by advancing their perverted opinions of the doctrine of Christ. To some members, not so enlightened, their views may appear reasonable, and they may in a measure accept them; while others may look upon them unfavorably. This would naturally lead to disputations, dissensions and divisions. If the heretic or the author of discord, after the first and second admonition, will not desist and accept the pure doctrine of Christ, he must be dealt with as Paul directed his Roman brethren: "Mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ and avoid them." This class must especially be avoided, for the spirit which actuates

them is very destructive.

It is Christ's design that his church should be without spot or wrinkle; for He has gives instructions, and his inspired apostle also how those whom He has chosen to preside over it are to proceed in bringing about that desirable end.

It makes the matter more comprehensible and impressive, when we group together the parts of those passages bearing upon the avoidance of members placed under the ban: "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man," etc. "Mark them who cause divisions and offenses," etc., and "avoid them." I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, . . . with such an one no *not* to eat." "*Withdraw* yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no *company* with him." "A man that is an heretic reject." Here are quotations from six passages; three of which are alike, not to *keep company*; one is *avoid*; another is *withdraw*; and the last is *reject*.

The sentiment expressed in these terms is the same, and the proof is positive that they are applicable only to the united church of Christ. They are also imperative, and require strict obedience; for on this depends the purity, safety and perpetuity of the church.

In looking over the divided condition of those who claim to be members of the church of Christ, we find these specific commands almost entirely discarded; which would indicate that the principle underlying them, which is the love of God, must be wanting. The apostle John wrote, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments; for this is the love of God, that we keep his comandments." If we are in possession of this love, and love Him whom we have not seen, then we will also love our brother whom we see, and will have much concern for his spiritual welfare, especially when he is exposed to danger. If natural love prompts us to risk our lives in rescuing a natural brother or sister from death, which is only the death of the body, how much greater should be our concern for a

spiritual brother or sister, to whom we are bound by stronger ties than the ties of natural love; for the death to which they are exposed by giving way is nothing less than an eternal separation from God, and being cast into outer darkness.

Hence this deep solicitude; for it is the same love and concern that prompted the Son of God to forsake for a season the glory of heaven and the society of angels, to come on earth and suffer shame and reproach from his creatures, and to suffer them to nail Him to the cross to die a cruel and shameful death. This love must and will move us to employ every means within our power to prevent a member from falling; and these means are the commandments given in the Word. But after all these have been employed unavailingly, then this same love will prompt all the members to employ the last expedient, that of withdrawing from such who will not hear or obey, that they may be led to reflection and get a sight of the shame they have brought upon themselves, and which may be a means whereby they can be restored.

But popular Christianity in its divided

