

**The Principle**

**Of Divine**

**separation**

# **The Divine Principle of Separation**

**By  
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**All biblical quotations are from the King James Version**

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## INTRODUCTION

The following paper was originally given by the author to a Clergy Conference in 1990. The principles given then have not changed and are applicable to every church and Christian today. Some of the material has been modified in order to present a broader base, although the original introduction and main points remain intact. The original introduction may be read as appendix 1. This is intended to give the reader a feel for the original circumstances of the material being presented.

It has to be admitted that the subject is generally not viewed as being the most popular of subjects, yet it is a subject that needs to be looked at and the principles carefully applied by all who claim to be born of God. It is not a subject that is to be overlooked; it is not an optional subject, but carries with it deep and lasting implications.

With the growing threat of the European Community playing a greater part in both State and Church affairs, we need to study the matter of separation with care. It has been reported that the European Union considers the Evangelical Church as little more than a sect, with the majority church, namely the Roman Catholic Church holding sway. Do we go along with this, indeed is the Roman Catholic Church a church that we should have fellowship with? If not then what are we to do? This same question arises with the ecumenical movement as a whole; can Bible believing Christians engage in joint activities with this movement?

Then, of course, the next question is what about those groups that hold very different doctrines from those restored to the Church at the Reformation? Can Bible Christians engage in fellowship with them? These are bewildering questions and this little book is designed to give the average Christian some insight into the Biblical position. It should be pointed out that the contents are by no means exhaustive.

# BIBLICAL SEPARATION

## WHAT IT IS NOT

A word of clarification is needed first of all, for as soon as the subject of biblical separation is mentioned, the vast majority of people jump to the false idea that it means isolation, isolation from other Christians: it does not. Isolation means holding oneself aloof, of being insulated from all forms of contact with others. Those who hold this idea have never studied the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ. While on earth the Lord did not isolate Himself from the day to day affairs of the people; indeed He was fully involved in the problems of society.

However as you look at His ministry, you find that never once did He co-operate with the false teachers or false doctrines of His day. Whilst He may have had a meal in the house of a Pharisee, He never joined hands with that man in matters of the faith. The Lord Jesus remained separated from all religious compromise: Is it not said of Him that He was "*Holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners.*"

Of His people the Lord Jesus says, you "*are in the world but not of it*"; in fact the truth is as Christian men and women born again of the Holy Ghost, people who by the grace of God have been saved and called, we have become "*strangers and pilgrims*" in this world, simply passing through, no longer entangled with those things that would otherwise ensnare us. It may be that some find this a difficult subject because in reality they are not born again! If this is the case, it is understandable for: "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know, because they are spiritually discerned.*" 1Corinthians 3:14. Others, and some may have been professing Christians for many years, have trouble with this because they are unlearned and unskilled in the Scriptures, or are immature Christians, novices rather than well taught and experienced men and women of

faith.

Biblical separation simply means that the church or individual Christian disunites with and has no fellowship with those things that are specifically forbidden in the Holy Scriptures. We are not to engage in, or associate with, those things that are contrary to the truth as it is revealed in God's Word; we are to have nothing to do with those associations, peoples or so-called churches that do not conform to the divine nature as clearly delineated in Holy Writ. The biblical doctrine of separation does not mean that we are forbidden to engage in normal honest business transactions. It does not involve the neglect of our duties to friends and relations. Separation does not mean that the Christian is to become a recluse or follow the unbiblical strictures of many cults. Biblical separation does not imply or advocate the idea of isolation.

In fact just the opposite is true; the Lord Jesus said that His disciples (and that extends to all who are born again and only those, for unless a man has the Spirit of Christ, He is none of His), are the *“light of the world and the salt of the earth”*. Now we cannot function in this manner if we are isolated, any more than if we are covered with a blanket of compromise. Separation does not mean isolationism as many seem to think. However we should always bear in mind that once compromised, it is always a very difficult thing to regain one's credibility, and reassert the truth.

The Lord Jesus, who is our example, never once compromised the truth by associating with error. Never once did He give credence to false doctrine by having preachers of apostasy stand on the same platform. Yet He did not isolate Himself from them: they were always welcome to come and listen, but never co-operate. The Lord Jesus never sought, as many do today, popularity by associating with those who promoted erroneous doctrines. He did not seek to be one of the boys.

The principle followed by the Lord Jesus throughout His ministry was that of biblical separation. He did not unite with, or have spiritual fellowship with those things that were and are still forbidden in the Word of God. Neither did He get Himself engaged with or entangled in those things that were contrary to the truth. He did not associate with that which was unholy, un-

true or false. He had no official relationship with those things that did not conform to the divine nature.

## THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE OF SEPARATION

Charles Bridges in his book the "**Christian Ministry**" says:  
*"The Church Is the mirror of the Divine Character the whole effulgence (shining radiance) of the divine character".*

Now if the church is the mirror of the divine character, it is incumbent upon us who are called to the ministry of the gospel to keep the mirror clean and ensure that the church does reflect

the character of God. If, as ministers, pastors, teachers or other Christian workers we fail in doing this, then we have no right to remain in this high and holy calling. The church is also described as the "*Bride of Christ*"; when He comes to claim her, He wants a virgin, not a whore. Also the church is called the "*Body of Christ*" therefore by definition, she is holy.

The divine nature is holy, indeed this is one attribute of the Old and New Testaments that stands out above all others. "*holy, holy, holy, is the lord of hosts*" declares the prophet Isaiah. In 1Peter Ch. v16 we read "*be ye holy as I am holy.*" These are but two of numerous statements that declare the holiness of God. It is true to say that all other divine attributes emanate from this holiness.

Biblical separation, be it on a personal, ecclesiastical or inter-church level, is based upon the nature of God, God Himself being totally separated from all sin and falsehood. God hates all sin: it is abhorrent to Him. He does not take a neutral position in this matter as Psalm 45:7 makes plain; "*Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness*".

Holiness carries with it the principal idea of separation: it means to be set apart. Now if the church is to mirror the character of God, then the church itself is to be holy, set apart from that which is not holy. If a church, be it a local church or a denomination, is not separated from that which is unholy then it is not holy itself; therefore it cannot reflect the true and holy nature of God.

*"All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction for instruction in righteousness."* Now I trust that we are all agreed that is so, for according to the basis of faith of all reformed and sound evangelical churches, scripture is sufficient for faith and practice, therefore we will only look at scripture for this principle. At the same time we must bear in mind that "*No Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation*" 2Peter 1:20. The word Prophecy here not only means foretelling but also refers to all inspired writings; we will therefore allow the Scriptures themselves to speak.

The principle is first found in the act of creation, indeed it was fundamental to creation. Had God not separated light from



darkness, land from water, fish from fowl, etc. things would be in a right old mess today. Now although there is a natural interaction between all of these things, they all remain separate; they do not compromise each other. If they did mankind would never know where it stood, for God placed all of these things in a divine and unchangeable order. If the Church of Christ does not follow the set order of things how on earth can it reflect the divine character?

The principle follows into the realm of mankind. When Adam sinned, the principle of separation was again seen in action, firstly in that God separated Himself from fellowship with man: divine holiness no longer permitted the close relationship He once had with the crown of His creation. Secondly, man himself was separated from the paradise of Eden and sin caused a great and horrendous change to take place.

At the time of the flood, righteous Noah was separated from those who perished, and later, Abraham, whom God called, separated himself from the city of his birth and literally became a pilgrim and stranger. These men, because of their love for and faith in God obeyed Him rather than to come to a compromise with the ungodly.

From the seed of Abraham, the nation of Israel was formed. This nation was to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a nation separated unto the Lord. In fact in Exodus 8:23 God Himself declared *"I will put a division between my people and thy people."* In other words a boundary was set; a clear line of demarcation was drawn: God's ancient people were separated unto God for they were to be a holy people, set apart to reflect the divine nature. We could, if space permitted, multiply these statements over and over again, but I am certain that those familiar with God's Word know them as well as I do.

This separation meant that in matters pertaining to worship and religion they were to be seen as a distinctly different people. They were under no circumstances permitted to join in the worship of unbelievers; they were not allowed to join in with any form of idolatrous practice, nor were they permitted to marry outside of their own kind. In short there was to be no compromise with unbelief or paganism.

The doctrine of separation does not stop at the end of the Old Testament era, but runs right through into the New Testament Church. You see, just as Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" so the New Testament church is likewise called: in 1Peter 2:9 we read that the church is called "*A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.*" Why have we been so chosen? "*That ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness Into His marvellous light.*" The New Testament Church has been established for exactly the same reason as the Old Testament. Church, furthermore, as the Old Testament Church was expected to be holy, so is the New Testament "*be ye holy as I am holy*" is the exhortation in the first chapter of the first letter of Peter.

As men and women born again of the Spirit of God, we are called to be obedient children, "*Not fashioning ourselves according to former lusts of our ignorance*" but according to "*Him who has called us*" and therefore as He is holy so are we to be and this holiness is to be seen in all areas of our lives. Therefore the lives of the Lord's people are to be separated from that which is unholy and untrue and which would compromise the truth for which we are to stand.

Holiness occupies the first and foremost position among the attributes of God; it was also the prime characteristic of the Lord Jesus, and therefore should be the chief objective of His Church on earth. As blood redeemed souls the habitual nature of sin has been broken in us, this does not mean we are sinless, but it does mean that by the grace of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit we are enabled to live a life separated unto God and in order to aid us He has given us the Scriptures. John tells us in his first letter that "*These things write I unto you, that ye sin not*" (1John 2:1). In other words the Bible is our standard. It is a book to be obeyed and followed if we are in any way to resemble and reflect the glory of God and His holiness.

The principle of separation is rooted in the holy character of God and it is His desire that we as His people reflect this nature. As His people we are also to reflect His love and mercy

along with the other divine characteristics, holiness however is the first and foremost quality.

## PRACTICAL SEPARATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

From what is the church to separate? The answer of course is sin, from that which is alien to God. Now there is an aspect of sin that is rarely taught today, and that is that sin itself is a great separator. Many individuals and Churches forego real spiritual blessing because of unrepented and unforgiven sin in their midst. Let me give just three brief examples of what I mean:

In Joshua chapter seven, we have the example of the sin of Achan. This one man's blatant disobedience rendered the entire Nation of Israel powerless in the face of the enemy. Why is the Church of Christ so powerless today? Is it not because it has compromised with evil and taken to itself the things that God has specifically forbidden? Unconverted men in the pulpits, unholy practices in worship, worldly methods in evangelism etc. In Hosea .5:6, we learn that sin causes God to withdraw from His people; *“They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find Him; He hath withdrawn Himself.”* Why on earth should God do that? Because, verse seven, *‘They have dealt treacherously against the Lord.’*

As I read this passage, a vivid picture springs to mind of a pastor calling his flock to prayer: they become actively involved in seeking the Lord on some great issue, but pray as they might, they cannot get through to God, they cannot find Him. It is as if all the prayers are marked “return to sender”. Sin

causes the channels of blessing to dry up, and it takes the power of the Holy Spirit, in granting His people the grace of true repentance and confession, to have those lines of communication restored.

But we digress from the main subject, for what we looking at is our duty to separate from that which is untrue. Let me first of all give three Old Testament examples of this divine principle in action:

## SEPARATION FROM ECUMENICAL COMPROMISE

In the book of Ezra we read of the return of God's children to Jerusalem after their seventy year exile. Their commission was to rebuild the Temple, chapter one verse five and forty-two thousand, three hundred and sixty people returned. For two years or thereabouts the work got underway and proceeded unhindered, however on the sidelines the enemies of God's people watching and waiting and when it was clear what the people were doing, they acted. They came and asked if they could become involved in the work; see Ezra .4:1-2. *"Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and do sacrifice unto Him"*.

Now that is, on the surface, not an unreasonable request; in fact when similar requests are made today, by people and organisations of equally dubious nature, the vast majority of Christians throw their arms around them, without even a thought to whether it is right or wrong. So long as they seem to love us, so long as they appear to be going in the same direction, so long as they say they worship the same God, they let them come in and work with us. Thank God the leaders of this company of Old Testament saints did not rely on feelings and subjectivity (fanciful ideas of the mind), but had the God-given spirit of discernment and were not afraid to apply it, for Zerubbabel answered by saying, thank you but no. The exact words he used were *"Ye have nothing to do with us to build the House of the Lord"* (Ezra 4:3). He pointedly refused to accept this attempt at ecumenical church building, for although these people were a very religious people, they were nevertheless

is it a doctrine invented by man out of the scriptures.

The subject has been entitled "**Inter-Church Relationships**". This is a somewhat different heading from the subject originally proposed, nevertheless, it is my intention to look at this matter from the original position which was that of "**Biblical Separation**", a position through which the Free Church of England came into being. despite the request not to make it "*too theological, but rather practical*" I can only say this; To make a subject such as this practical, it must be theological: if it is not, then we rely wholly on the whims, feelings and subjectivity of the individual rather than on the sure and certain principles of God's Word, which we claim is the "*sole rule of faith and practice*". If we cannot have a theological study at a Clergy Conference then I do not know where such a study can take place.

In order that we engage in inter-church relationships in the correct and honourable manner it is essential that as ministers we are fully conversant with the teaching of scripture. It is also essential that we understand what is meant by the church. Henry Woods in his book '**Our Priceless Heritage**' sums up the church in the following manner: "*That Divinely established Society among men, which worships the Holy Trinity alone; which trusts in the atoning death and righteousness of the lord Jesus for salvation; the Holy Spirit as Guide, Sanctifier, and Comforter; the Sacred Scriptures as its sole rule of faith and which proclaims the Gospel of God's grace to all mankind*" Therefore by definition, those who do not worship the Triune God, do not trust in Christ's atoning death and righteousness, who are not reliant upon the Holy Spirit, who reject the authority of Scripture and who do not preach the gospel of grace, are not Christian.

unbelievers and as such could have no part in the work of building the Temple of God, which was a holy work.

Who were these people? According to Nehemiah, they were the Samaritans (See Nehemiah chapter four verse two); of this there is little doubt. When the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity, the Assyrian Empire re-populated the area with Arab tribes which they had taken captive from other places (1Kings 27 :24-34). To this newly established nation the Assyrian King sent back one of the captured Israelite priests, to teach the new inhabitants the religion of the region, about the "*God of the land*". The result was that the people absorbed this teaching and joined it to their native religion, which of course had its roots well established in the ancient religion of Babylon. So the religion of the Samaritans became a mixture of truth and paganism, a true ecumenical hotchpotch. Now, despite their claims to worship the God of Israel, these people were in fact unbelievers and had nothing in common with the children of God.

Thus it was that Zerubbabel would have nothing to do with their proffered hand of help, he refused their assistance. If only the leaders of the Church today had such wisdom and discernment as he had then, the church in the United Kingdom, indeed throughout the western hemisphere and beyond, would not be in such a spiritually sick state as it is today.

## SEPARATION FROM THE MIXED MULTITUDE

We might call this ecclesiastical separation as it has to do with worship. the Old Testament church, or at least the remnant separated themselves from other ungodly associations.

Look at Nehemiah chapter thirteen; here we have an example of the Old Testament church separating from all associations of evil. The church had gathered to hear the reading of the Word of the Lord, and when they learned what God had to say they responded in obedience. When they had heard the law

they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude. We cannot be certain what portion of scripture had been read, but it almost certainly contained the twenty-third chapter of Deuteronomy. Earlier Zerubbabel had rejected ecumenical cooperation; now the people would separate from the other ungodly associations that still lingered, namely the Ammonite and Moabite whom God had specifically forbidden from taking part in the act of divine worship. Upon hearing what God had to say the people unhesitatingly obeyed.

This act did not mean that the unbelieving people here banned from hearing the Word of God, but simply from taking an active role in the ordinances: Israel did not isolate herself from them. Now it is obvious that until the congregation heard the Word of God on the matter they were ignorant, but on hearing the truth they were prompt to act. It is a great pity that many who claim to love the Lord today are so slow to act when they hear the truth, for the great sign of love for the Lord is obedience, "*If ye love me keep my commandments.*" says the Lord.

## PERSONAL SEPARATION

In chapters six and ten of Ezra and chapter nine of Nehemiah we find the children of God separating themselves from all the familiar yet ungodly associations and habits picked up during the captivity. This was a very practical yet often painful way. The reason they did this was because of their love and faith in the Lord. They loved the Lord God and love always, if it is true, corrects error. Their great desire was to serve Him and no sacrifice, no matter how costly, was too great, no hardship too severe. In our twentieth century cosseted society this reality has been lost; all too often the individual Christian - and as a result the church - has become so entangled with the world and its affairs that he or it has no desire to truly serve the Lord. The situation is quite comfortable as it is.

## Appendix 1

### THE ORIGINAL INTRODUCTION:

Before we begin, let me take the first few moments reminding this Conference of our own unique position regarding the Holy Scriptures. In our Principles we declare that "*the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and that we believe them to be the sole rule of faith and practice*". In other words the holy scriptures are the very basis upon which we as ministers lead the churches that have been given to our care.

Secondly, we, as a Church declare that we hold to the "*faith once delivered unto the saints*", not some wishy washy faith invented by man, not some private invention of doctrine that we may have thought up, but the faith taught by the apostles and which is clearly enshrined in the Bible

In our Articles of Religion we have, encapsulated, a summary of these fundamental truths; a body of doctrine which makes up the essential elements of the faith. When we were ordained as deacons we were asked by the Bishop; "*do you unfeignedly believe all the canonical scriptures of the old and new testaments?*" Our reply was, "*That we do believe them*". When ordained as Presbyters, we were asked by the Bishop. "*Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word?*" All replied, "*I will, the Lord being my helper.*" When a Presbyter is consecrated as a Bishop, he re-affirms all of these things.

I remind this gathering of these things simply to show that as a church the Free Church of England is committed to the authority of the scriptures and to the Christian Faith as is delineated in those scriptures. The subject that is before us today is a scriptural subject and not the vain empty thoughts of man, nor

great relevance to us and the subject we are looking at) *"if there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine,"*- that is the doctrine of Christ as taught by the apostles, *"receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed;"* Why on earth not? *"For he that biddeth him 'god's speed' is partaker of his evil deeds."*

It is therefore very clear that God sees promoters of error as being evil, and we are not to receive such into our homes. Such teachers are not to be given the opportunity of proclaiming their erroneous doctrines, for to allow them to do so, is to encourage them, it is giving credence to their doctrine. It is in effect saying to that person, *"yes you have something valid to say, let us hear it and discuss it."* Did not Jesus say *"He that receiveth a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward"*? It then stands to reason that if one receives a false prophet then the reward received will be the same. Then, having had fellowship with them, insult to injury is added by wishing them *"God speed"*. By doing this, one is wishing them well in their efforts to spread their false doctrines.

Those who do these things will be partners in this man's punishment, whatever that may be. Let us be very clear on this point; a church or individual who through illegal associations with apostates place themselves in great jeopardy, for they are in God's sight regarded as being guilty of sinning against the Lord and are shareholders of the iniquity. The prophet speaking to Jehosaphat about the unholy alliance he had with Ahab said *"Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord."* In this day of compromise, of weak and insipid church life, of indiscipline in both pew and pulpit, it would do well for all who love the lord to ponder long on those words.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The principles given in the Old Testament are not defunct and carry across into the New for *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,"* as Paul tells Timothy. So, lest we think that the standards of holiness given us in the Old Testament are not applicable to the new, let us remind ourselves, that just as the Old Testament church was described as a holy nation, so in the new.

The New Testament command for God's people of the New Testament era to be separated is clearly and categorically ex-

pressed in 2Corinthians 6:14-17. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."*

Most see this passage only in terms of marriage; it is often used to try and dissuade the Christian from marrying a non Christian, which is a fair application, but by no means is it the original one. What is in view here is the Church of God, see chapter one verse one, for here Paul clearly states in his greeting that this letter was *"unto the church of God which is at Corinth,"* and the church's relationship with unbelievers and that which is unholy and unclean. Here the question is asked *"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"* and the answer is clearly nothing, the two things are miles apart. Yet it would appear that the Church at Corinth was doing just that.

## FELLOWSHIP

The word Fellowship comes from the Greek 'Sug-koln-on-os' and literally means 'co-participation of' or 'partakers or shareholders with others.' It is a strong word. What Paul is teaching, is that the church cannot become shareholders with the unbeliever that there can be no co-operation with the unbeliever or the unclean and unholy works that they promote. Lensky in his commentary says this; *"The very idea should appear monstrous to you"*, the very thought of co-operation with unbelievers should be alien to us. Yet today that which Paul warns against is a common and acceptable thing.

In verse seventeen of 1Corinthians chapter six. the word 'Separate' means to *"Mark off by boundaries"* Paul is telling us that false teachers and their false doctrines are out of bounds

separation is all about.

This booklet in no way claims to be an exhaustive study but simply seeks to be a basis for further and closer study that will hopefully bring the Lord's People into a closer and more loving relationship with our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, thus enabling the remnant church to truly become *"The light of the world and the salt of the earth"*.

# THE WARNING TO ALL WHO REFUSE TO OBEY THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION

Again the Word of God is explicit on the point, turn to 2John :9-11. *"whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God"*. This confirms all we have said thus far, about those men and churches being unbelievers. The passage continues (and it is this second part that is of



His methods and will. Did not God use Balaam in the Old Testament to save Israel? Yet if you recall he perished with the wicked, in fact Balaam was in all probability a prophet of the ancient Babylonian cult, rather than a prophet of God.

Today, because we generally follow our noses rather than God's Word, we have a form of evangelism in popular use that is alien to God's Word, and worship and missions that find no mandate in the Bible, but which all appeal to the baser instincts of the heart. A form of evangelism that converts men to the church but not to Christ, worship that is little more than religious entertainment and mission that is better done by the world. When biblical separation is put into practice reliance upon these fleshy and worldly practices is rejected and reliance placed wholly upon the Lord.

## EVIDENCE OF OUR COMMUNION WITH GOD

Just take a look at 1John 1:6 *"If we say we have fellowship with Him (God) and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth, but if ye walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with the other."*

How do we know that we are in fellowship with God? When we walk in the light, it is just not possible for darkness and light to get along together. It is not possible for us to walk in disobedience to God's Word and still claim to be in fellowship with Him, the very idea is impossible, Christians who remain in association with those things forbidden by God, are shareholders with those things and are in communion with them and not with God. Those people who claim to be about God's business, but are going about it in a way that is contrary to God's way are in truth deceiving themselves as to their relationship with God: furthermore, they are deceiving others.

The one sure way to ensure that fellowship with God is maintained, at least as far as this subject is concerned, is to walk in the light. That is, to conduct our lives, our ministry and work within the framework laid down in scripture. It is to rely upon God and His ways and not upon some subjective and vain experience or feeling. This then is something of what biblical

for the Christian church. Furthermore we must never be seen to be yoked up with them. In practical terms this means that we are not to engage in any form of ecclesiastical work with these people.

As far as God is concerned, those who deny the fundamentals of the faith are not to be given spiritual recognition. Yet, by the same token, we are not to isolate ourselves from them, but are to show them true compassion, Christian love, and then attempt to direct their footsteps along the correct pathway. These people although very religious, are in truth outsiders of the Kingdom of God and are to be treated as such: the Christian Church is not to condone their error by working with them. It is not possible for those who hold dear the *"faith once delivered unto the saints"* to yoke up with those who deny it; does not the Word of God ask *"Can two walk together except they be agreed?"*

## DOCTRINE

One of the main requirements for fellowship in the early church was the acceptance and practice of the apostles' doctrine; see Acts chapter two verse forty-two and 2Thessalonians chapter two verses fourteen and fifteen. The reason for this insistence was that the church was built upon the *"Foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets."* In the early church, despite claims to the contrary, there was no divergence - no variance in the fundamental doctrines. Error relating to the fundamental truth was not tolerated. The apostle says *"though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."*

Today many *"other gospels"* are being preached under the banner of the Christian church, but rather than the Christian Church acting in accordance with this injunction, it accepts them as being part of Christianity. To do so is both blatant disobedience to the clear teaching of scripture and also a very dangerous thing to do, because in so accepting them, one becomes a shareholder with them, and as a shareholder a joint partner in their punishment.

This then places upon us a great responsibility to be diligent and careful with whom we associate. We are to “*Try the spirits to see if they are of God*”; we are to be like the Berean Christians and “*Search the Scriptures*” to see if their doctrines are true. as Jesus says there are many “*Who say Lord, Lord, yet their hearts are far from Me.*” He also warns that on the day of Judgement many will say “*I have done this in Thy name etc. etc.*”. But, says Jesus, “*I will say unto them, depart from me ye workers of Iniquity.*”

The Apostle Paul warns us to be on guard against such people, Romans 16:17-18; “*now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and, avoid them.*” Notice he does not say, engage in friendly debate, or dialogue. He does not suggest that despite the differences, that we engage in some joint ecclesiastic endeavour, some form of ecumenical evangelism or mission. Such is completely unknown in Scripture; the command is avoid them.

we are “*Fools for Christ's sake*”? In the eyes of the twentieth century ecumenical Christian, separation from their error and compromise appears to them foolishness, it causes our reputation in their eyes to become nothing; well so be it; rather the scorn of men than the displeasure of the Lord Jesus.

## SEPARATION FROM RELIANCE ON THE FLESH

Herein lies one of the great problems of today, a matter already touched on in a previous chapter, and that is the use of worldly and fleshy methods in the doing of God's work. In Philippians 3:4 Paul says this, “*Though I might also have confidence In the flesh, if any man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.*” That is quite a statement, for what the Apostle is saying is this; “*I know what it is to have confidence in the flesh, I know what it is to rely on my own strength, in my ability, wisdom and power. I have walked that path more fully than any other man.*” then look at his testimony in the second part: “*We are the circumcision which worship God in Spirit and rejoice and have no more confidence in the flesh*”. We who are separated unto God, Paul, is saying no longer rely on the flesh for we have no confidence in it.

This twentieth century is clearly marked out as a Laodicean church age, full of fleshly and carnal activity. We need to relearn the principle laid down by Paul, which is reliance upon God and His ways, rather than in the things of the flesh. Today we use methods that have no biblical mandate. When it comes to evangelism, worship and mission the general consensus of opinion seems to be, so long as a thing works then it is all right. Results count more than the purity of methods we use, if it appears that souls are being saved, or some mission is being blessed, then the end result justifies the means. This pragmatic mentality is rejected by Paul when In Romans 3:8 in fact he speaks very clearly against the attitude which says “*Let us do evil that good may come*”. It is true that the Lord, because His Word Is not bound by human conventions or methods, continues to use people even though they do wrong and cause Him great distress, yet that does not negate our duty to conform to

could no longer walk together and the reason becomes clear when Lot chose as he did. For Abraham to separate was no easy task; he loved Lot, but for the sake of mission and pilgrimage it was an essential act, for a carnally minded man cannot walk in fellowship with a spiritually-minded soul .

## SEPARATION IS HUMBLING

It separates a Christian man from his human reputation. How we love our reputations, yet it is said of the Lord Jesus *"He made Himself of no reputation,"* He laid aside all for the sake of those He loved. As His followers this is surely to be the case with us. Two other Biblical examples immediately spring to mind.

Moses had everything to gain by staying with the nation that had nurtured him, educated him and trained him in the ways of the Egyptian. He was to all intents and purposes an Egyptian Prince and possessed all the benefits that such a position gave. What a reputation he had, what a name among men; he could have lorded it over the people and made them all toe the line, for everything was his. But he separated from it all, took to the humble life and became God's man of the hour, a servant of Jehovah.

Paul is another example: what a reputation he had, a full blown Hebrew, circumcised as the law demanded, born of the tribe of Benjamin, a great scholar, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and a fine and able leader of men. Added to this he had a good religious reputation, for he was zealous for the religion of his fathers, seeking out and imprisoning those whom he thought were destroying it. But when the Lord called him all of this went by the board, and he laid aside his reputation just as his Master had done, and was able to say *"What things were gain for me I counted loss for Christ"* Philippians 3:7. Paul no longer cared what man thought about him: all he was concerned about was his Lord.

If we are to serve the Lord then our reputation among men is of no importance. We are to become men of no reputation for the sake of the Gospel of Christ, for does not Scripture say that

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION TODAY

From what we have said thus far, I would have thought this would be very obvious, nevertheless, we will look at the Scripture and let it speak. There is to be a separation in the first instance:

### FROM THE HEATHEN

Yes, as much as it goes against the grain of today's liberalism this is a fact. I give just one reference, although many can be added to it: Exodus 33:16. Now this covers a great deal of things, but primarily it covers involvement with those pagan religions which are idolatrous as indeed all are, in one way or another. This means in practice that the Christian Church cannot engage in joint religious projects with the many religions that proliferate in the nation today. The Christian Church cannot co-operate with Islam, Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, or any such religion. It is our duty to witness to them the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus; we are to take the gospel to them, to preach the word of life, we are also to show compassion and care for them, indeed we are to show them love not hostility, but that love does not extend to co-operation, for that gives their religion credence. God will not share His glory with any other deity.

### FROM FALSE PROFESSORS

In 2Timothy 3:2-5 we read; *"Men shall be lovers of their own selves .... Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."* Who are these men and associations? Those who pretend to be Christians, yet who in practice deny and reject the fundamental

truths of the Christian faith. Those who walk contrary to the clear teaching of scripture and promote ideas and doctrines that are contrary to the teachings and doctrines of the Apostles. Those so called Christian leaders and denominations that deny the authority and inspiration of scripture, despite the fact that the Bible itself is clear on this point for it says all "*scripture is of the inspiration of God.*" Once this is denied then one is open to all manner of heretical ideas. Then there are those who deny the virgin birth of Christ, others who attack His deity and resurrection. There are others who cast doubts on the miracles as well as His life, not forgetting those who denounce the vicarious and substitutionary death of Christ.

From such men we are to turn away; we are not to engage in any form of ecclesiastical effort with them, but treat them as one would an unbeliever, which in fact is what they are. No true Christ loving person can engage in any form of spiritual fellowship with these unbelieving men. To do so is to act in blatant disobedience to God's Word. This also applies to those who "*preach another gospel*"; of these Paul says "*let them be Anathema*" that is excommunicated, to be treated as an outsider. Today there are many groups who preach another gospel, yet they are accepted in the ecumenical movement as being bona-fide Christian Churches. There are those who preach a bloodless gospel, the gospel of good works, the gospel of prosperity, the liberation gospel (the latter is vigorously promoted by the World Council of Churches and its sister bodies, i.e., the National Councils of Churches now called in the United Kingdom, Churches Together, along with the Church of Rome.

Then there's the social gospel which in effect says that we can save ourselves by improving the society in which we live and this we do by following the example of the greatest religious teacher, namely Jesus Christ; this heretical gospel is rampant in the numerous modernistic churches that make up the main members of most of the ecumenical bodies of this country. These gospels are gospels that are contrary to the apostles doctrine and therefore we are commanded to avoid them.

## FROM THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL

# SOME RESULTS OF SEPARATION

## SEPARATION MEANS SACRIFICE

There is a heretical teaching rampant in the Church today that teaches a good life, that promotes the idea that once one becomes a Christian all problems and difficulties will be taken away, leaving a life of ease and luxury, a feather bed ride into glory. This is a dangerous doctrine, produced out of the vain imagination of man's wicked and deceitful heart. The Bible clearly teaches that the Christian life is one of warfare, sacrifice and persecution, and the Christian who is obedient to the law of separation will find all of these things true, particularly in the realm of sacrifice.

Biblical separation separates the spiritual man from the carnal man and this can mean a great deal of personal sacrifice. We are all familiar with the story of Abraham and Lot, and of the strife that rose up between them. Abraham, who was the chief, could have taken a number of different steps in order to try and resolve the problem, but chose to apply the principle of separation and gave the choice to Lot. Lot, as all know, chose the apparently rich and fertile valley close to the city of Sodom.

Lot's choice revealed his true nature; clearly he was carnal, he had an eye for a good thing and chose the prosperous looking place. A difference of outlook had meant that these two men

do not consider this to be wrong.” Despite the clear biblical teaching to the contrary) or as is the case in point, *“I do not see anything wrong with associating with this ecumenical group”* This is nothing short of unbelief, of thinking that we are better than God, that our ways are better than His, our thoughts higher and wiser than His. It indicates, that in truth, our love for the Lord Jesus is at best highly suspect and at worse non-existent.

If the Word of God says that a certain thing is to be done a certain way, then that is the way it is to be done, despite all our feelings. The only mandate we have to follow is that as laid down in Scripture, so if we truly love the Lord we will follow Him and do things His way. Such obedience is sure evidence of our love and devotion to Him. Our personal feelings, hopes and aspirations do not count but are to be laid on the altar of love, for His glory.

This all leads up to the main point under this heading, namely that of service itself, for we are told that we are to *“Serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”* This principle is *fully* endorsed in the New Testament by the Lord when He says In Matthew 4:10 *“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve”*. Undivided service is the service required by the Lord: those who seek to serve Him in this manner, esteem Him above all other; they consider His glory as their highest interest and communion with Him their supreme happiness.

There can be no effective service without love and *“love is the fulfilling of the Law.”* Love for the Lord will produce self-denial, encourage us to take up the cross and follow Him. Serving the Master because we love Him will mean that we will actively avoid those things, methods, doctrines and associations, which are expressly forbidden in His Word.

Turn to 1Thessalonians 5:22. Here the Apostle admonishes the Church to *“abstain from all appearance of evil”* The word appearance means *“external form, fashion, shape or manifestation”*. In practical terms this means that the church or individual believer is not only to withdraw from actual evil but from anything that gives the slightest semblance of it. We are not to place ourselves in a position where an accusing finger can be pointed at us. The church must be, to use a modern phrase *squeaky clean*. Our position in terms of evil, doctrinal error and practice must be so clearly defined that even a show is avoided.

Maybe some examples from profane history will underscore this point: Scipio was after the capture of Carthage, placed in a difficult position. In the city lived a beautiful virgin of noble birth. Afraid of being raped by the soldiers and thus losing her good reputation, she sought Scipio’s personal custody, which he refused to accept. However, he did place her under the assured protection of her father. The reason he did not accept the responsibility was firstly, because of the temptation it placed him under, and secondly because of the girl’s apparent loss of reputation. The good, pure reputation of the Church is a matter that should always be uppermost in our minds as well as the temptation that wrongful associations might place in our way.

There’s an old Chinese proverb which goes like this; *“Do not stop in a cucumber field to tie the shoe”* Why? Because someone will very likely think you are stealing a cucumber. As Christians we are to give no appearance of evil. To be associated with churches and church leaders who deny the fundamental truths of the gospel is to give the appearance of evil. For a Church that professes to uphold the reformed, evangelical and Protestant faith to be seen embracing churches or organisations that teach things contrary to this faith, is to be seen as condoning their error. Such association gives credence to them. When you have men in church federations going round representing member churches at gatherings which envelop all these ungodly doctrines and practices, it gives to others the appearance of evil.

# THE POSITIVENESS OF BIBLICAL SEPARATION

There are those who tell us that Separation is negative; this is an idea that has been widely promoted by the modern evangelicals who are called the new evangelicals. The doctrine of these people is very much to the fore in many once-sound evangelical establishments. The promoters of this new philosophy, claim to be Evangelical Christians, yet they have very little respect for the doctrine of inspiration of scripture. These people also promote the unbiblical philosophy of 'infiltration'. That is, a doctrine which says *"The best way to win souls and promote the Church of Christ is to Infiltrate the enemy strongholds."*

ways" and be wholly dedicated to Him. See also Micah 6 v8.

There are no half measures in this matter, it is all or nothing, no divided loyalties, no hanging on to the world with one hand and to the things of God with the other; for as Jesus says, *"he that Is not with Me is against Me"*, *"No man can serve God and mammon."* In our present generation there appears to be a total lack of godly fear; at one time this was a major characteristic of the Christian Church, but it has been replaced by ungodly familiarity. There seems to be very little respect for God or for the things of God. The Lord Jesus tells us in Matthew that we are to *"Fear the Lord"*, and Peter tells us that *"the time of sojourning here should be spent in fear of the Lord."* Until the Christian once again knows this holy fear, then the second precept namely that of *'Walking in His ways'* will remain a missing factor.

If we have so little fear, so little respect for God, why should he walk In His ways? Are not God's ways old fashioned? Are not His methods antiquated and of little relevance today? Are not our modern methods more up to date and effective? Why should we preach the whole gospel, when we can get results by leaving out the unpleasant bits about punishment and Hell? Why should we separate from those who reject the fundamental truths of the gospel, when by working with them we can give the world an impression of unity, and thus hope to win others? To be seen in the company of these apostate church leaders makes us feel good; it gives us a an ego trip and it satisfies a corrupt heart, whilst all the time it is doing the work of the Lord a great disservice. If we are truly serving the Lord, then we are to walk the way He walked, to do the things He did; see 1 John 2:6.

The motivation of service is love for the Lord; the verse before us tells us that not only are we to walk in His ways but that we are to love Him. We cannot serve the Lord in truth unless we love Him and to love Him is to obey Him. Again our Lord Jesus tells us in no uncertain terms that *"If ye love Me keep My Commandments."* Today there are many church people in all areas of church life who say they believe in the *"Sufficiency of Scripture for Faith and Practice"* yet how often do we hear the words from their lips: "I think this is the way to go" or "I

the day in order to build the church. They simply obeyed the Lord, did His work His way and left the rest to Him. We could almost say that we could do with a good example of the Ananias and Sapphira in the church today, it may wake us up to the truth.

Today in some churches there are people who defraud the church accounts, thus defrauding the Lord's work of that which has been given to it, and are often allowed to get away scot free with little or no disciplinary action being taken. The reason often given for this unbiblical and cowardly way out is *'It will give the Church a bad name'* or *'It will cause unnecessary bad feelings'*. This is nonsense. It is when biblical principles are applied and are seen to be applied, that God is honoured and a holy fear is engendered. Only when we relearn these principles will we see the hand of God working in our midst.

## DIVINE SERVICE DEMANDS SEPARATION

As we have already implied, service will be a barren and fruitless thing if the Lord's people are not a separated people. There can be no half measures in this matter; just take a look at Deuteronomy chapter 10 v12; *"Israel, what doth God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God to walk in all His ways and to love Him and serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul."* Notice what service of the Lord requires of us, we are to; *"Fear Him"* *"Walk in His*

This idea is foreign to the teaching of the Bible, yet it is one of the most popular ideas in evangelical circles today.

It is not the intention of this paper to get involved in this matter, but simply to point out the danger. The doctrine of New Evangelicalism was invented by Dr. Harold Ockenga In the 1940's. He stated that *"the new evangelicalism has changed its strategy from one of separation to one of infiltration."* New evangelicals believe that this is the best way (and I quote) *"for reaching the masses of professing Christendom"*. Whilst this may be the best answer that man can invent, it is diametrically opposed to the clear teaching of the Word of God, which states that Christian and by definition the Christian Church is to *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them."* Ephesians 5:11.

To get back to the subject under this heading, the possessiveness of Biblical Separation, there are a number of reasons why this should be seen in a positive light:

**FIRSTLY**, it is positive in respect of the Church's position in the world, which is that of Light. The Lord Jesus said *"Ye are the light of the world"*. It is true to say that light is very negative where darkness is concerned - darkness does not like light - and as Jesus said *"Men prefer darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."* Light, however, is very positive when it comes to the truth: Truth has no fear of the light, it can stand all the scrutiny that can be levelled at it.

Scripture also tells us that if *"We walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other."* That is, we are in fellowship with the Lord, we are shareholders in His blessings. Therefore, to be obedient to the command to separate from all that we have mentioned has the dual effect of bringing us into closer fellowship with the Lord and at the same time bring the light of truth into the world. I can think of nothing more positive than that.

In the same passage the Lord Jesus also says that we are the *"Salt of the Earth"*. Again salt has a negative aspect, in that it is negative to those microbes and organisms that would destroy, for salt destroys them. On the other hand it is very posi-

tive for it preserves that which is good. As Christians we are called to 'contend for the faith' not compromise it, we are to be the salt that acts as a preservative. Again this is a very positive thing; would we not rather preserve the faith in all its wonder, than help the infidels destroy it with their vain and false doctrines?

**SECONDLY**, biblical separation is positive, because it is a sign of our love and devotion for the Lord Jesus Christ. To separate is just one of many commands that the Lord through his word has given us, and did He not say that the sign of our love for Him was obedience to His commandments? *'If ye love me keep my commandments'*; Nothing can be more positive than this.

**THIRDLY**: biblical separation is positive for it equates with the holiness of God and is a sign of our desire to be Holy. We are called to be holy as He is holy we are to put into practice those things which will reflect that holiness. The Christian is called *'the temple of God'* the dwelling place of *"the Holy Ghost"*, now to desire and strive to be holy cannot, by even the greatest stretch of the imagination, be called negative.

**FOURTHLY**: biblical separation is positive because it speaks of our commitment to Christ. Obedience to this law implies a taking up of the cross; it speaks of a true and committed following of the Lord. When the church in the United Kingdom begins to live in accordance with this precept it will begin to know something of what it means to be a Christian Church. Not only will blessing follow but so will persecution. Suddenly, we will become unpopular with the religious folk of the day, then woe betide us. Maybe it is fear of this that causes us to seek popularity with those who deny the faith and preach another gospel!.

**FIFTHLY**: biblical separation is positive because of the glorious promise attached to it. We have already discussed the great separation passage in 2 Corinthians ch6, what we have not looked at is the promise attached to it. Just take a look at verse eighteen; *"I will receive you and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."* Can anybody, with hand on heart, say that is negative? Who in his right mind would be foolish enough to jeop-

of God. What a difference it would make to our worship on the Lord's Day, if before the service the Lord's people spent time and effort honestly searching their hearts in the light of scripture, rather than spend time in puerile and inane chatter.

Practical sanctification is not, however, limited to the Old Testament; it is very much a New Testament requirement. In 2 Timothy chapter two verse twenty-one we read *"If any man purge himself from these"* (that is, those who cause strife, those who subvert bearers, profane babblings, teachers of error and those who deny the Resurrection see verses -18-19.) *"he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use"* If we are to be used by the Master we are called upon to separate from those things which bring dishonour to Him and it is a task that we are to do ourselves.

This practical sanctification is fundamental to church building; without it we are bound to fail. We can ring all the changes we like in order to try and attract people to church - sermons can be shortened, choruses introduced, psalms added or deleted, drama, dance, mime. These things are however nothing more than mechanical and are changes often introduced to cover up the lack of holy living. It is only when the Lord's people become a holy people, a sanctified people and by definition a separated people that the church will be real spiritual blessing and God-glorifying growth.

As God's separated people, we are to be on display to the world, not hidden away, not isolated, but on public view, wondrously showing forth the Glory of God. The result of such a witness will be a great fear, blessing and growth. How do we know this? God's Word tells us so. In Acts chapter five verse fourteen, we have a wonderful example of this very thing. There is no doubt that the apostles and the early church were a separated people, as the story of Ananias and Sapphira indicates. When God dealt with the sin of these two professing Christians, we learn that *"Believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of men and women"*.

The leaders of that church did not go out of their way to attract or make membership easy, they did not seek a worldly answer to the problem, they did not compromise with the infidels of



made ready to receive it. What a lesson there is here for us to-day, for before the Lord can use us, be it individually or as churches, we must be made ready. God will not bless or use us unless we are set apart, sanctified for His use.

Notice how Moses set about the task. He did not go amongst them laying hands on them and then pronouncing them sanctified; rather he called the people from their daily pursuits, from their worldly business, to true religious exercises. This involved real practical application, clothes had to be washed, love making ceased, all distractions were to be laid aside and the entire nation was to concentrate on that which was holy.

As Christians, we often wonder why the blessings of the Lord never seem to materialise and in order to compensate for this we try and short circuit the system by working up a blessing, or by engaging in a form of worship that placates the flesh and gives us a nice cosy feeling. These forms range from the aesthetically pleasing such as found in the Roman Catholic and High Anglican circles, to the sensual and equally erroneous worship found in the Charismatic Fellowships. This also applies to the work we seek to do for the Lord, often we will try and do things in the power of the flesh, using methods, which on the surface appear to work, but in reality fall to do the job. One of the great problems of the present day is that by working in this way, people are being attracted and even converted to 'Christianity', but very few to Christ.

Worship that is acceptable to God is *'Worship In Spirit and In Truth'*: this can only come from a people that are truly sanctified. When we engage in worship or indeed work for the Lord, we must be ready, ready to meet Him and be used of Him, ready to do His bidding His way and for His glory. When by His grace we draw near to God, we are to do so with hearts set apart unto Him. This will mean that we are to engage in some form of practical sanctification.

This will mean the gathering together of those wandering and ungodly thoughts, the actual forsaking of those impure thoughts and affections, the abandoning of those disquieting passions, the putting aside of all associations that are unholy, so that heart and mind can be wholly engaged with the things

ardise such a wonderful blessing? Do not forget, this is a promise to the Christian; Dr. Peter Masters of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, expounds this verse in a most helpful way when he writes: *"The Lord says in effect; I want to receive you, I want to have you exclusively. I am embarrassed by your alliances. I cannot move among you and bless you as I would. I cannot make my presence manifest amongst you. I long to move among your congregations and bless all your families in a mighty way'."*

Our unholy alliances grieve the Holy Spirit of God as we have seen, and as a result we forego many rich and glorious blessings. To work, co-operate and associate with those who scorn Calvary and all that it stands for, to disobey the Holy Word of God is the negative thing, but to live for the Lord in obedience to His Word is positive.

The only people who can possibly deem biblical separation as being negative are those who are either unlearned in the Word of God, and thus continue in the way of ignorance, or those who wilfully disobey because they prefer the ways of darkness.

# THE LAW OF LOVE AND SEPARATION

Two things must be looked at under this heading, they are our Lord's High Priestly Prayer, and the love chapter of 1Corinthians 13. The reason we must look at them is because both passages are extensively used in support of the ecumenical movement. John ch17 v21. This is a verse used by all in the ecumenical movement as their proof verse that it is the Lord's desire that all Christians should come together in visible unity. When the latest ecumenical instrument, Churches Together, was in its infant stages in the United Kingdom, (then called 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims') John 17:21 v21 was used as the basis of coming together. The report of the British Council of Churches, declared under the heading 'Aims and Principles' that it was the Aim of the proposed new instrument: *"To be a visible sign of our commitment to each other in obedience to our Lord's Prayer, that they may all be one that the world may believe."* John 17 v21.

Now it may surprise many to learn that the above quotation supposedly from the Bible, is not to be found anywhere in scripture. Although given as a direct quotation of our Lord, the truth is that Jesus Christ never uttered these words. Even if one searches all the modern translations, these words cannot be found, yet many 'Christians' accept them as being Biblical. This so called proof verse for ecumenism is in reality nothing more than a spoof verse, a very loose interpretation in order to try and accomplish something that is foreign to scripture.

The correct version is as follows; *"That they may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."*

When this verse is seen in all its beauty, it becomes clear that nowhere in view is the ecumenicals dream of church unity seen. The Lord Jesus is praying that just as the Father and Son are one, so the believers are one in them. The late Bishop Ryle sees this verse as meaning; *"I pray that both these my disciples, and those who hereafter shall become my disciples, may*

# THE PURPOSE OF SEPARATION

Separation being as it is a biblical principle, means that there must be a practical purpose behind it. We have already referred to the matter of holiness, and in truth is this not the bottom line? Is not biblical separation about both personal and corporate holiness? In 2Corinthians chapter seven and verse one, we read: *"Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."* This relates to the preceding passage which speaks of separation from evil associations; we can subtitle this section under five different headings:

## IT IS EVIDENCE OF SANCTIFICATION

The word sanctification simply means to be set apart for holy use; now in real terms, this is an act of grace, it is something that God does in us, we cannot of our own right set ourselves apart for holy use. Yet if a soul is sanctified then there is a practical outworking of that in their lives.

It is true to say that separation can become a very legalistic and carnal thing if carried out through the wrong motivation, for example salvation by works, or pride. Therefore we can say that separation does not necessarily relate to sanctification, but on the other hand, sanctification always equates with biblical separation. Sanctification as we have seen before simply means to be set apart for holy use, to be separated unto God.

In Exodus chapter nineteen and verses ten and fourteen, we have a very clear picture of practical sanctification. Almighty God commands His people to be sanctified and it falls to Moses to sanctify them. The reason behind this act was the giving of the Law, but before God could do this the people had to be

forsaken the whole truth, but has become mixed up. He is to be dealt with kindly and lovingly whilst at the same time he can no longer take part in the affairs of the church. He is not to be permitted to teach; the idea is to bring that man back onto the straight and narrow way, back into sound doctrine.

This is a matter of great importance, for today there are many para-church organisations that appear to be unaccountable to any Church authority. Before allowing them to become involved in church affairs or before we become involved with them, we need to closely examine them. Simply because they claim to be evangelical is not sufficient; they may have a good basis of faith, but are they putting it into practice? If, after having analysed it, we find them wanting it is our duty to confront them with the findings and point out the correct biblical way. If they fail to comply after a suitable period of exhortation, see Matthew 18: :15-20, we are to have nothing to do with them.

*be of one mind, one doctrine one opinion, one heart and one practice, closely united and drawn together as Thou, Father and I are of one mind and one will."*

The Lord Jesus is not praying for an outward - visible - organic unity; no such thing is in view at all, but rather He is praying that all believers will resemble that unity which exists eternally between Father and Son and this is a spiritual unity.

It is the result of the spiritual unity that exists between the believer and the Lord, that will be the witness that Jesus Christ came into the world. It is this unity that will enable the unbeliever to believe. It is when the believer shows in his or her life, the fruit of the Spirit, that those outside will see that they belong to Christ, for this clearly shows forth the presence of the living Christ. When the world sees this, then they will sit up and take notice and will believe that God sent Him. What is in sight then, is the personal and spiritual unity of the individual with the Lord Jesus, and that relationship will be reflected in a life of holiness, truth and love, witnessing to all the fact that Jesus came into the world and is alive in His people.

It is essential for a better understanding of this verse that we ask several questions:

- For whom is the Lord praying in this magnificent prayer?
- Who is it our Lord desires to see in unity?
- Is the Lord praying for all who call themselves Christians?

It should be obvious to any first year Bible Student what the answers are to these questions, yet so entrenched has the ecumenical idea become in the minds of even the evangelicals of today that many cannot see the real facts.

The Lord Jesus is clearly not praying for the pretend Christians; these so-called followers He describes in Matthew 7 :22-23. They said; *"Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name .... and in Thy name done many wonderful works?"* These folk, very religious as they were, saw themselves as His followers. They thought they would get to glory, yet the truth

was, despite all their good works, all their talking and preaching, they were not the Lord's. They were not true Christians; they had a show, even maybe some external subjective religious experience, but they were not born again; their hearts were in reality *'Far from God'*. These men were professors of religion, but not possessors of saving grace; this is made painfully clear by our Lord's own words, for He declares that on the judgement day He will say to them; *"I never knew you depart from Me, ye that work Iniquity."*

These people were not, indeed could not, have been included in the Lord's prayer. They are reprobates, despisers of His Word, those who add to or take away from the Word of God. Now only a casual observation of the ecumenical movement shows that most of the leaders fall into this category. Indeed all of the present ecumenical agencies comprise men and churches that in practice fall into this group.

Who then did Jesus Christ Include in His prayer? If we go through the prayer itself we will quickly see;

:2-3 *For those who know God and have eternal life.*

v6. *For those who have come to Him and have kept His word.*

:7-8 *Not for the world, but for those God has given to Him.*

:14-15 *Not for those of the world.*

v21 *For those united with Christ in God.*

v22 *For those who have tasted of the Glory of God.*

v23 *For those indwelt by Christ.*

v24 *For those destined for Heaven.*

v26 *For those in whom dwells the love of God.*

Can anything be plainer than this? Our Lord's great prayer is not an inclusive prayer, it does not include all who simply call themselves Christians. It is a prayer prayed exclusively for born again people, those whom God has called and saved in Christ, those who know and love Him as Lord and Saviour and who implicitly and unreservedly believe and trust His Word.

The unity for which Christ prayed was and is a unity which can only exist between true believers. It does not, indeed cannot embrace the nominal 'Christian'. The Lord Jesus did not pray for the liberals and modernists who deny the very fundamentals of the faith. He did not pray for the idolaters, or blas-

and in that church both wheat and tares grow together. Now whilst it is true that the visible church will always consist of true and false professors, it is not the church that is in view in this passage, as our Lord explains in verse thirty-eight; the Lord says *"The field is the world"*, not the church. In truth what this parable is teaching is that the saved (the kingdom of heaven) will exist alongside the unsaved until the harvest is gathered in. To bring the church into view as the field, is an elementary, yet major mistake in exposition and can lead to all forms of false teaching.

We cannot leave this point without a glance at the problem of separation from a brother. Until now we have in the main been considering those churches and church leaders that claim to be 'Christian' but by their doctrines and practice clearly are not. There is however a time when it is necessary to separate from those who are true believers. This is clearly a very contentious subject today. Sometimes this is termed as secondary separation, but is in truth a matter of church discipline.

Turn to 2Thessalonians. 3 :6 and 14-15: The problem here is that of a Christian, a born again soul, being disobedient to the clear commands of scripture. Some had come into that church and were spreading a false doctrine in respect of the second advent, a doctrine contrary to that which Paul had taught. In chapter two he rectifies the problem and then chapter three warns about walking with brethren who teach doctrines that are not in keeping with those of the Apostles. Look at verse six of chapter three; *"We command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."*

Notice, these false teachers had at one time been taught by the Apostles, but were now teaching things that were untrue. It is with the full authority of the Lord Jesus Christ that Paul commands a total withdrawal from these false teachers. Despite the fact they are to be loved as brethren, those who value the truth of the apostolic doctrines are to separate from them.

But why? Because, as v15 tells us, we have a responsibility to that brother. He is not to be seen as an enemy, for he has not

show what I mean: In the last verse, which is the most quoted verse, we are told that "charity" agape or love, is the greatest of all virtues, and so it is. It is also the most enduring, for while 'faith and hope' will vanish when time ceases to be, 'love' which is eternal will continue. However, because it says that love is the greatest of the three, we cannot simply say that love supersedes everything else, as most 'ecumaniacs' say it does.

A close look at the beginning of the chapter brings the whole issue into focus and gives clear perspective, for here we learn that: *"charity, (Agape). rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"*. Divine love is not happy with or in the company of iniquity, it is not comfortable in the presence of untruths, but on the other hand it is glad and happy in the presence of the truth. Love is in full sympathy with the gospel but has no sympathy with error. Truth and error are two opposites, where unrighteousness prevails, truth is of necessity absent, for if *"we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk In darkness, we lie and do not the Truth."* Truth and error cannot live side by side any more than darkness can exist where there is light, so where unrighteousness prevails divine love has no sympathy, for it is intolerant of error.

One other passage needs a brief consideration and that is John 13:35; *"by this shall all know that ye are my disciples that ye love one to another."* Now how is this to be shown? Verse thirty four says *"As I have loved you"*. The love of Christ was a compassionate love, a patient love, a self-sacrificing love, a love of deep humility, yet it would not tolerate the error and false doctrines that were promoted and taught by the false shepherds of His day. Such is the love that we are to show forth, (this is however a subject in its own right), but suffice to say, the love that we are to show is that same love that Jesus showed, that is spoken of in 1Corinthians chapter 13. It is a love disciplined and protected by the truth as, revealed to us in Holy Writ; love keeps God's rules.

Whilst we are considering this matter, It is worth our while looking at another passage which is frequently used to support illegal associations. That is Matthew 13: 24-30; now the assumption is that the *'field'* in verse twenty-four, is the church

phemers, but He prayed for His own, for those whom He was about to purchase by the shedding of His own Blood.

## LOVE BIRDS

The great motivation in ecumenical circles is love. It is in the name of love and for the sake of church unity that many of today's Church Leaders have betrayed the cause of Christ and His Church. The most common passage quoted is of course 1Corinthians chapter 13. None would argue that this is a wonderful passage, yet it is so often misquoted and misapplied. As a result, many Christians have been caught up in a love gospel that is foreign to scripture and instead of exercising divine love, which is the love that should fill our souls, what we see is soft, uncontrolled and dangerous sentimentality which embraces every whim and doctrine.

A love that is indifferent to the truth as revealed in God's Word is not divine love, love that is tolerant of error is not the love of God. Such love is a phenomenon not found in the Bible. A careful reading of 1Corinthians chapter thirteen will