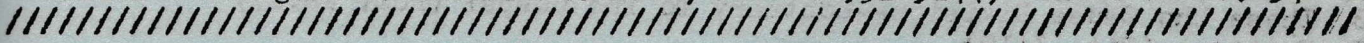


THE CONTENDER

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CHURCH DISCIPLINE!

"NOW 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." (II Thess. 3:6)

With this serious warning by an inspired apostle of almighty God before us we might soberly consider some of the reasons for church discipline.

I. That We Might Obey God: "For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things." (II Cor. 2:9) We must obey to be "of Christ".

II. That The Sinner Might Be Saved: "To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (I Cor. 5)

III. That The Church Might Be Kept Pure: The members are responsible for this (I Cor. 5:12) Note the following:

"But fornication, and all, uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you as becometh saints." (Eph. 5:3)

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (II Cor. 11:2)

"...be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (II Pet. 3:14)

"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." (Eph. 5:27)

IV. That The Faithful Might Save Their Souls: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"

Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." (I Cor. 5:6,7) The context of this chapter shows that even the spotless Son of God was sacrificed for the church, and, that being so, surely the church can sacrifice those unfaithful Christians who no longer desire to walk in the strait and narrow way that leads to life!

V. That The Church Might Be Protected: If there is no penalty for violation of law there is no respect for the law.

When a congregation practices discipline as God demands then "...others also may fear..." (I Tim. 5:20) and instill a healthy respect for the Word of God!

WHY DON'T WE HAVE IT? With these weighty reasons before us, one sometimes wonders just why elders and congregations hesitate to practice church discipline. Here are a couple of examples:

(1) Misunderstanding Of Love: Bible love is NOT toleration of sin. To fail to discipline shows LACK OF LOVE for: God, the church, the guilty one, the faithful brethren and even yourself. Note:

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chiqueteneth him betimes." (Prov. 13:24)

"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Heb. 12:5-11)

(2) Human Pressure: Church discipline is not a joy to anyone but it is necessary. (Heb. 12:11) We have to realize that the law of Christ takes president over family, friends, and even our own life and act accordingly. If we love our family more than God we are not worthy of his Son (Matt. 10:37) and will share a devil's hell with them in eternity.

WHO IS TO BE DISCIPLINED (WITHDRAWN FROM)

- A. Those Who Refuse To Correct Personal Offenses (Matt. 18:15-17)
- B. Those Who Cause Division--Contrary To The Gospel (Rom. 16:17)
- C. Fictious (Tit. 3:10)
- D. Those Who Are Guilty Of The Sins Of The Flesh (I Cor. 5:11)
 - 1. Fornicators (I Cor. 5:9)
 - 2. Adulterers (Heb. 13:4, I Cor. 5:13)
 - 3. Drunkards (I Cor. 5:11)
 - 4. The Covetous (I Cor. 5:11, Eph. 5:5)
 - 5. Idolaters (I Cor. 5:11; 10:1)
 - 6. The Railers And The Revilers (I Cor. 5:11)
 - 7. Extortioners (I Cor. 5:11)
 - 8. Busybodies And Idle (II Thess. 3:11-16)
- E. Those That Are "Disorderly" ("out of ranks, irregular, inordinate, deviating from the prescribed order or rule"--Lexicon, Thayer, p. 83)

Many things are "out of ranks" or stand out, some are:

 - 1. Forsaking the assembling
 - 2. Dress (hippy clothing, mini-skirts etc)
 - 3. Breaking the law of Christ in a public way and / or encouraging others in same.

F. The Unruly (I Thess. 5:14)

 * ORDER OF SERVICES *
 * Lord's Day: 10:00 a.m. Worship *
 * 7:30 p.m. Worship *
 * Thursday: 7:30 p.m. Bible Study *

ACTION AGAINST

- 1. No Company (II Thess. 3:14,15)
- 2. Not To Eat (I Cor. 5:11)
- 3. Mark And Avoid (Rom. 16:17)
- 4. Reject (Tit. 3:10)

We must note also that this action is to be "inflicted of many" (II Cor. 2:6), that is, all not part of the church is to observe it. If some practice discipline and some do not the effect is as if one parent whips a child and the other praises the child and tells him how mean the other parent is.

Purpose: One of the purposes of discipline is to make the guilty ashamed of his actions and repent before he goes to the judgment. (II Thes. 3:14) (Lk. 17:3, II Cor. 2:4-11)

Matt. 18:15-18

This verse teaches the steps to be taken in correcting private faults between individuals. It would not apply in a case where a persons sins publicly. If the latter is the case the church should simply put away from itself the guilty party before the guilty corrupts the innocent.

OLD-FASHIONED DISCIPLINE

"April 26, 1851. The church of Christ met according to previous appointment. The first before the church for consideration was a charge against bro. Job Metheny for drunkenness. After hearing the testimony of some 2 or 3 of the brethren and an examination of the scriptures we came to the conclusion that we can no longer fellowship him. We therefore exclude him from among us."

"The next brought before the church was that of sis. Sarah Ann Cope for dancing. After hearing the testimony of brother J. Davis with the said sister on the subject himself we came to the conclusion that we can no longer fellowship her in a church capacity."

"May 24th, 1851. The church of Christ met according to previous appointment...Bro. J.T. Murphy made his report concerning Wm. Groves. After taking said report into consideration with other testimony on the subject the church came to the conclusion that the conduct of the said Groves is unchristian like and not in accordance with the divine rules of our heavenly Master and we therefore exclude the said Groves from among us." (Gospel Guardian, Aug. 28, 1952)

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?" Lk. 6:46