

“NOW YE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST...”

Al Brown (Deceased)

Some of the most beautiful passages in all of God's word speak of the unity of believers in the church of Christ. They make it clear that this unity exists because the members have the same mind; that is, they all accept the teaching of the word of God. To “have the same mind” means to believe the same thing.

It is only natural for the Lord to expect those who embrace his religion to believe what he and his divinely—commissioned apostles taught. Indeed, Jesus made it clear that if a person rejects the teaching of the apostles, he, by this very act, rejects Christ; and if he rejects Christ, he also rejects the heavenly Father (Luke 10:16). Since this is the case, anyone who has rejected the teaching of Christ and the apostles is not a Christian at all, for a Christian, by definition, is one who follows (believes in and obeys) Christ.

As strange as it may seem, some who profess to be Christians claim people cannot speak the same thing. This is a devil's lie. All humans who walk this planet could speak the same thing if they wanted to. There is nothing which prevents any individual from believing the very same thing that every other person believes. The truth is, men choose not to believe as others do.

There is not a single fact or promise in the gospel of Christ which any and every person on earth cannot believe if he chooses to do so, nor is there a single command every individual cannot obey. It is true that most choose not to believe, but in every instance, it is because they allow the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and/or the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17) to determine their beliefs rather than what God has revealed in his word. One of the most salient facts about the true religion of Christ—that which is revealed in the New Testament—is that every follower must believe what Christ and the apostles taught and all they taught. Of necessity, then, they must all speak the same thing, and the curse of God rests on all who do not (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11). Therefore, when someone insists that all cannot speak the same thing, he is only revealing his unwillingness to believe what must be accepted if he intends to follow the Lord, his refusal to obey the revealed will of God, and his lack of commitment to the religion of Christ.

We have all been “*called out of darkness into his marvellous light*” (1 Pet. 2:9) from very diverse backgrounds. Some of us grew up under the influence of the church; some came out of denominationalism; others were total reprobates—sinners of the worst sort with no religious background. Some of us are poor; others are very wealthy, and most are somewhere in between. Some brethren are well-educated; others can't even write their names.

We also come in all colors: black, brown, red, yellow and white. We come from a bewildering variety of cultures and customs. The body of Christ is comprised of people in almost every conceivable occupation: doctors, truck drivers, secretaries, mechanics, lawyers, businessmen, garbage workers, salesmen, janitors, computer programmers, professors, judges, school teachers, politicians, scientists, policemen, technicians, pilots, nurses, and on and on the list could go—ad infinitum. Yet, in Christ, all distinctions are eliminated. Paul writes: “*(You) have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all*” (Col. 3:10).

The body of Christ is truly unique. Only in the church is each one so united with all

other members and has such a loving concern for every brother that the church functions as the various members of the human body does. Paul wrote:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. ...God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof (1 Cor. 12:12,24b-27).

Since we are all one in Christ, we are told to “*speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (1 Cor. 1:10). The reason for this command is obvious: if we are careful to do this, the unity of the body of Christ will remain intact. It is not surprising, then, to learn that we are to have such unity in order that we may truly glorify God:

Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God (Rom. 15:5-7).

Because of what is revealed in scripture, we know that this “one-ness” is a very precious thing to God. We also realize its fragility. It can be destroyed so easily. Unfortunately, the devil also knows this. Throughout history Satan has used self-willed, unbelieving men, with their opinions and traditions, to tear the unity of the church into shreds, and he is still using the same kind of people, disguised as ministers of light, to accomplish this devilish work. These unwitting accomplices of Satan face a tragic destiny, as well as those who follow them into error. Let us, however, be careful to “*contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3). Let us work with all our might to “*keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Eph. 4:3), knowing that if we continue faithful unto death, we will receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).~