

I call your attention to 1 Cor. 1:11-13 . . . (reading text) These words of the Apostle Paul stress the unity that there should be among those who truly love the Lord, among those who are saved from their sins through faith in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on their behalf.

Paul warns here against these divisions, against disputations. There are two kinds of contentions or disputations. It is easy to find verses in the NT that say the servant of the Lord must not strive. Don't strive about minor matters. Don't make unnecessary divisions. Don't say I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas. Yet on the other hand we have verses like Jude 3 which says earnestly contend for the faith. We have Gal. 1:6-9 where Paul says that the very heart of the Gospel is in danger. "I marvel that you are soon removed from Him that called you to the grace of Christ unto another gospel which is not another but there be some that trouble you and pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than that we have preached to you let him be accursed . . ."

So we have two kinds of contention. We have the contention the Christian should take his proper place in. The standing against that which destroy faith in the Word of God. Here M. Luther certain was outstanding, the way he stood against the denial of the truth, the way he stood against all that would remove people's eyes from Christ, and turn them on to any thing human. One of the great stands Luther made was against the R.C. mass. In the mass the idea was worked out in about the 11th century A.D. and developed until it became an established doctrine that when a priest said certain words the bread and the wine were changed into the very body and blood of Christ.

Therefore the custom came about the 12th century of raising up the bread that the people might worship because here was the actual body and blood of Christ. Luther said this is contrary to the gospel. It is only through faith in Christ we can be saved. Not in any miracle that a man can perform in partaking of something that he can change this way into the body and blood of Christ. Of course they did not say it actually was changed, that is in so far as outward taste, smell, and touch were concerned. They said these are all the accidents and they remain the same. It tastes like bread, smells like bread, feels like bread, but really they said it is the actual body and blood of Christ. The Reformers stood strongly against this. Luther stood for the great things of the Gospel and deserves tremendous praise for it, but Luther had I believe one great flaw, a flaw which is common to most people which we have to watch and fight against.

But in his case Luther was such a great man and such an effective man, he accomplished so much that the effects of this flaw were magnified, and as a result of it those who came to believe in salvation through faith were divided into two great groups which did not work together or help each other. I believe thousands of lives were lost in the next two centuries, and thousands of people were forced back into superstition because of this division that came about.