

the ninth commandment, and commit the sin of slander. When they transgress the tenth commandment they commit the sin of "covetousness, which is idolatry." And so the violation of these principles of Church union is sin against the welfare of *His Church*, who prayed, and labored, and suffered, that its members might be all one. And as there are (it may be) many christians who are guilty (it is to be feared) of the sins of covetousness, and of slander, so is it to be feared there are many christians guilty, more or less, of the sin of schism.

Sins may be committed ignorantly. Saint Paul persecuted the Church ignorantly. It was a grievous wrong notwithstanding. God knows what deductions to make for the ignorance of the offender, and how to estimate rightly the offence. One may be in a state of schism through ignorance. But when duly admonished it behoves him to inform himself. He must not willingly continue in ignorance when he might have the means of knowing. Ignorance is but a poor excuse to him who intentionally retains it.

One may have been born in a state of schism, and may have received all his early training under its influence. However such circumstances may, in his case, extenuate the *guilt* of schism, which is not for us to decide, they do not supersede its mischiefs. An infant child may be nursed at the breast of an inebriate, and even fed with intoxicating drinks. And how far his consequent habits of intemperance are chargeable to his own fault, it is hard to say. But of the mischiefs of drunkenness, there can be no question. God only knows how to distribute the responsibility with perfect accuracy, and how to dispense a righteous judgment. There is great danger lest one bred in schism should never be persuaded to renounce it. The strong influence of early convictions involves the soul in a snare from which reason and truth may not be able to deliver.

Associated as we are in society, there is great danger of partaking in the errors and wickedness of those around us. Thus many of the primitive christians were so situated in the midst of surrounding idolatry, as to make it exceedingly difficult to take and maintain such a course as should not involve them at all in the idolatrous practices of their relatives and neighbours. So is it difficult for us always to avoid giving encouragement to the prevailing schism with which we unavoidably come in contact. The holy Scriptures are not wanting in admonitions on this subject. Saith Saint John, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that