

adopted the practices here contended for as scriptural and binding. It were a truth to be deeply lamented, that the mere circumstance of stricter conformity to what seems to be of divine authority in these respects, should produce schism and a scattering of the flock; and if true would only evidence how much even with the professed disciples of the Lord the offence of the cross had not ceased.—But admitting the evil effects alluded to, to arise, a very responsible inquiry rests upon us, whether we be not wholly the cause of them, who oppose sentiments, as peculiar and erroneous, some of which at least (if not convined that they are obligatory) we must know to be of reasonable doubt and inquiry, and to have been held and enforced as scripturally binding by the wisest and the best of men in every age.

Whether we be not strengthening prejudices in ourselves and creating them in others, who themselves careless or uninformed on the subject, rely implicitly on our esteemed truth and knowledge, by the spirit of our opposition or even by our silence when others are reviled for holding these sentiments.

Is it surprising, that those we seem to denounce as holding erroneous sentiments should be avoided by others, in proportion to our influence over these, and that the causes producing the alienation and schism we profess to deplore and desire to avoid should be misunderstood and misapplied.

Thus besides the seeming disengenuousness of such conduct in itself; may we have made (it is believed often unintentionally) our very character for rectitude to subserve the purpose of misleading the unwary, of injuring the feelings and impairing the usefulness of many of the Lord's sincere disciples, whose only desire for themselves and others in the conduct objected to, is to know and consistently to practice what they believe (and what is even often conceded to them) to be scriptural.—Ah how much schism and injustice has been directly or indirectly