

the doctrines of their particular founder, than to the unmixed word of truth.

Well, therefore, might our Lord warn his disciples by the example of the Jews, to have only "one master," and that *Him* to whom all the seed of Abraham looked forward in joyful anticipation, viz., the *Messiah* or *Christ*. What had befallen the Jews in looking to any other source than the precepts of inspiration, their errors in faith and practice were surely enough to admonish Christians to avoid the mistake into which they had fallen, and to trust in no wisdom of man when they could trust in the wisdom of the infallible God. And yet, notwithstanding this pregnant example of the once favored people of God, and this plain warning of our Saviour, the early history of the Church as recorded even in the later books of the New Testament, shows that the warning, the example, the precept, were very frequently forgotten. The Apostle Paul had to write in such terms as these to the Corinthian Church: "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now, this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest any one should say that I baptized in mine own name." Here then we have a *proof* of the natural tendency of carnal men to rank themselves into parties, and to pay more attention and regard to the honor each of its own particular chief, than of him whom all profess equally to honor and revere as their real and only "master." That this sectarian spirit is a carnal and not a spiritual production, the same Apostle clearly intimates in addressing the same Church. "For ye are yet carnal," he says, "for as there is yet among you envyings and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? Who then is Paul? or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

If, then, in the primitive Church, while there were still inspired Apostles to preach, to teach, and to rule, the precept of the text was not always borne in mind, can we hope that as we descend the current of time, and consider the Church as she was left without any of the extraordinary gifts that was bestowed upon her at first; can we hope that matters were mended, that none recognized or followed any other master, any other head, than Christ? We cannot expect it; and if we did so, history would prove our expectations to be unfounded. Very speedily was the Church split up into parties and sects,

who cherished more animosity towards each other than even towards their common enemies, the heathen idolators around them. But passing over the religious contentions of the early and middle ages, let us come down to our own times, and what a spectacle does the Christian world present now? If we go to one land we find the great mass of the population professing themselves Roman Catholics, in another they are Lutherans, in another they are Calvinists, and these again are split up into endless varieties of subordinate denominations, differing from each other in some points of minor importance, but which the heat of religious controversy has magnified in their eyes into matters of the weightiest moment. Now in this consideration I shall put away the Roman Catholics, because they professedly recognize other masters besides Christ, viz., the Pope and their General Councils, which they believe warranted in laying down other precepts and doctrine besides what Christ has taught, and even in some cases *contrary* to what he has taught.

But among Protestant sects, who all equally appeal to the Scriptures as the rule of faith, and to Christ as their Head, shall we not find them, if not in words, at least in reality, following other masters than Christ. The Lutherans, for instance, though they profess to receive the Scriptures, and do actually receive them, yet will interpret and understand them only as Luther has taught. Is not this setting him up as a sort of master? nay, even a master of Christ, and who makes Christ speak things which perhaps He never meant. Again the Calvinists, of whom we are a part, follow Calvin in interpreting the Scriptures. It may not be that we follow him blindly, but use our own judgement; still, in honor of our sect, we are sometimes, I doubt not, tempted to follow him, when without such influence our interpretation might be different. No doubt we firmly believe our interpretation to be correct. And although we follow Calvin, and Knox, and other great names in our Church, we may be correct; but still our faith is not true. It proceeds from a wrong source, and is based on an improper foundation; for if we believe such and such doctrines because *they* taught them, and not because *Christ* taught them, and the Gospel of Christ records them, then, as the Apostle says, "Our faith stands in the wisdom of men and not in the power of God."

Does not such a rebellious spirit towards Christ as that I have spoken of prevail too much among us? One says, "I am an Episcopalian," and when asked in what he believes, answers, "the Episcopalian Church." Another says, "I am of the Church of Scotland;" another—"I am of the United Presbyterian Church;" another—"I am an Independent;" and so on. And all the while that that they profess to rest on Christ and