

# The Contender

"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS" JUDE 3

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## Every Joint Supplieth, Part 1



Rev. Raymond M. Jackson

THE LORD HAS BEEN DEALING WITH ME FOR ABOUT 6 WEEKS NOW, CONCERNING THE FUNCTION OF THE MANY MEMBERED BODY OF CHRIST, WHICH THE BIBLE ALSO CALLS THE CHURCH. I HAVE LAID AWAKE AT NIGHT DURING MUCH OF THIS TIME, WITH ONE

CERTAIN SCRIPTURE TURNING OVER AND OVER IN MY MIND, UNTIL FINALLY THAT SCRIPTURE BEGAN TO CAUSE A PICTURE TO FORM, AND THIS MESSAGE BEGAN TO COME TOGETHER. WE ARE GOING TO TITLE THE MESSAGE, "EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH," AND I BELIEVE YOU WILL AGREE WITH THE TITLE, AS THE LORD OPENS THE THOUGHT UP TO US. THIS SIDE OF THE DARK AGES, INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN LED TO BELIEVE THE DAY THEY ARE BORN AGAIN, THEY RECEIVE ALL THAT THEY NEED. WELL IT IS A FACT, THAT WHEN YOU RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST, YOU HAVE THE POTENTIAL IN YOU, FOR ALL THAT GOD EVER EXPECTS TO MOLD IN YOU; BUT BIRTH IS ONLY THE BEGINNING. YOUR SPIRITUAL STATURE MUST BE MOLDED OVER A PROCESS OF TIME, JUST LIKE YOUR PHYSICAL STATURE IS.

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PHYSICALLY, WHEN A NEW BORN BABY LIES IN ITS MOTHER’S ARMS, IT HAS NO THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE WHEN IT REACHES ADULTHOOD, AND SPIRITUALLY, WE ARE JUST ABOUT THE SAME WAY. OUR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES, ON HOW TO OBTAIN SPIRITUAL GROWTH, MANY TIMES LEAVES US VICTIMS OF THE DEVIL BECAUSE OF THAT, AND WE FIND OURSELVES DRIFTING INTO A CERTAIN TREND, NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT. TRADITIONAL TEACHING HAS PUMPED CERTAIN IDEAS INTO OUR HEADS, AND MANY TIMES WHAT IS EXPECTED OF US AMOUNTS TO NOTHING MORE THAN REFORM, WHEN IN REALITY IT SHOULD BE A COMPLETE RENEWING, BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD WHICH WE RECEIVE. THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT WE ARE BORN SINNERS, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE NEVER TOLD A LIE, NOR STOLE ANYTHING, NOR DONE ANYTHING ELSE THAT IS ASSOCIATED WITH SIN. WHY? BECAUSE SIN WAS IMPUTED TO ADAM, AS A RESULT OF HIS DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD, AND WE INHERITED THAT FALLEN NATURE THROUGH OUR NATURAL BIRTH, BEING HIS

DESCENDANTS. IN OTHER WORDS, WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL IN US BECAUSE OF OUR INHERITED NATURE, TO BE MEANER THAN THE DEVIL HIMSELF, BUT WE ALSO HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE JUST THE OPPOSITE, AND ONLY TIME ITSELF PROVES WHICH WAY WE WILL GO. THERE ARE COMMUNITIES THAT ARE COMPLETELY VOID OF ANY CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE, AND THE IDEA OF GOING TO CHURCH IS NEVER EVEN A CONSIDERATION. THEREFORE PEOPLE IN THOSE COMMUNITIES ARE MORE PRONE TO BE DRUNKS, BRAWLERS, AND WHATEVER ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF, BUT YOU SEE NONE OF THAT IN THE LITTLE NEWBORN BABIES OF THOSE PEOPLE. YOU WOULD NEVER LOOK AT A SWEET LITTLE BUNDLE OF LOVE, LYING THERE IN ITS MOTHER'S ARMS AND SAY, THERE LIES A LITTLE DEVIL THAT WOULD JUST AS SOON CUT YOUR THROAT AS TO LOOK AT YOU. YET 15 YEARS LATER, IT COULD VERY WELL BE LIKE THAT. WHY IS THAT SO? BECAUSE IT WAS BORN A SINNER, WITH A NATURE TO REBEL AGAINST THE WAYS OF GOD, AND UNLESS GOD GETS A HOLD OF THAT LIFE AND CHANGES IT, THOSE NATURAL TRAITS

EXPRESS THEMSELVES. OH I AM NOT ATTRIBUTING THAT JUST MERELY TO AN ENVIRONMENT. THAT WAS JUST AN ILLUSTRATION, TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT WITHOUT CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE, THOSE NATURAL HUMAN TENDENCIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE EXPRESSED IN EXTREMITY. CHARACTER, ATTITUDE, AND PERSONALITY ARE BUILT INTO THE MAKEUP OF A CHILD BY THE EXAMPLES AND INFLUENCE OF THOSE AROUND IT. THAT IS WHY THE WORLD IS LIKE IT IS TODAY; CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE HAS STEADILY DIMINISHED RIGHT ON THROUGH THE YEARS: INSTEAD OF GROWING STRONGER, AND GENTILES ARE FAST RETURNING TO THE WAYS OF THEIR ANCESTORS WHICH WERE PAGANS BEFORE THEY RECEIVED THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

### **SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE**

There is a lot going through my mind as I start this message; but let us open our Bibles to Ephesians 4:15 and read a few verses. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all

things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Out of this world of sinners by nature, God has called unto himself individuals that have responded to the wooing of His Spirit, and obeyed the gospel message according to the measure of revelation that was presented to them; and these individuals, joined together by a common bond, and the Spirit of unity, are known as the body of Christ; for he lives, and is demonstrated through them, because of His spirit that dwells in them. The process of our entering into that body, is called the new birth, or our born again experience; and in that body, which is universal, every member has a particular function to fulfill; just like the individual members as our human body; and when any member lets down on his part, the body is weakened, and fails in some area. But the whole function is built around one thing, speaking the truth in love, the kind of love God has for us, not our human love which we so often exercise our Christian actions in. The love of God looks beyond our physical appearance, right into the depths of our hearts, and deals with us accordingly; to mold us into the very image of His only begotten son. The wart on our chin, nor the freckle on the tip of our nose, has nothing at all to do with our

spiritual image. Our spiritual image is portrayed by the way we live our lives and present ourselves, in this wicked world of perversion and degradation. We have to live in the same society with Satan’s crowd; but thank God, we do not have to partake of their evil deeds. We may not have much of a voice in what goes around us, but we have the assurance of knowing that we are under the watch-care of a sovereign God that loves us, and that is able to preserve us until his purpose is accomplished in our lives. I know it appears to some that God is no longer in control; but I assure you, that Satan can only do what God allows him to do. This disease called Aids, which is striking fear in the hearts of so many people, is a curse of God; sent upon this perverted society that has locked Him out of their schools, and their governmental bodies; but they refuse to believe that it is. We never had Aids 50 years ago. Venereal disease of 50 years ago had been around for hundreds of years, and a decent lifestyle kept people free from it, but this Aids seems to reach beyond that, and touch the lives of people who have not indulged in those perverted practices. It just goes to show that when a generation of people reject Christian influence, and make laws to keep God out of the picture, he has his ways of dealing with them. He is the only one that knows what is in the heart of every individual upon the face of this earth today; therefore not one of us has the right to accuse Him of being

unjust. In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ezekiel, God had His mark set on the foreheads of those that signed and cried because of the abominations that were done in their midst; and He is still the same today. What He hated then, He still hates; and He has His own way of dealing with it, when it reaches a certain state of corruption, and he is not obligated to explain it to anyone.

### **WE EACH HAVE SOMETHING TO DO**

People try to excuse their ungodly ways by saying, I was born that way; I cannot help what I do. But I would like to say this, You were born a sinner; that is true, but time itself has made you what you are today. It takes time for the devil, the god of this world, to mold in us and manifest things through us, that God despises. Likewise when we become a child of God, we are not immediately what God wants us to be, but we immediately have every potential in us, and over a process of time, God molds us into the very image of his only begotten Son. Every advance in our spiritual stature moves us a little closer to that ultimate goal. I have been a Christian for thirty some years, and I am still learning some things from the word of God; so do not ever allow yourself to reach a place where you feel there is nothing left in

God's word to be revealed. Many have done that through the ages; that is why we have all these denominations out here. But the true child of God knows he must keep an open mind and move on with the revelation that is given him, and according to the apostle Paul, every member contributes something. We are joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth. In this great body of believers, we each have a job to do. There is a spiritual something that we each one contribute to the body as a whole, that serves to make that body a little more into the image of what Jesus is coming back after. This building is not the Church; it is only a place where this element of the Church meets to worship God, and to receive further instructions for our journey. Of course, these buildings where we meet should be treated with proper respect, because of what they are set apart for; but the only thing holy about them is the holy people that assemble within, to worship. Well, how can we know what we are supposed to do? Some will say. First let me say this, Our example in this Christian walk was the very Son of God himself. He left us an example not only of how to face temptation and overcome by the word of God, but also how to conduct ourselves in a social way. It is only after we learn how to follow His example in their areas, that we stand in a place where God can truly lead us into a place of service. Otherwise we many times, just simply try to do good works according to how

things look to us. Brothers and Sisters: We have got to accept the fact that we are living at the end time. The leadings of the spirit of God are not exactly the same as what they were in the days of the early church. The Christian era is running out, and Christianity is losing its effectiveness in the world at large. Two thousand years ago when Jesus told his disciples, Ye are the light of the world: He was pointing to the fact that the Church (His mystical body) was to be the only means by how truth and the virtues of a divine life would be expressed to the world; to bring hope to those who ignorantly sat in spiritual darkness. But here in the end time, when the Spirit of conviction is fast leaving the Gentiles, and it is becoming more and more obvious that God has just about gleaned the last ones, it seems that the Spirit of God is leading more and more toward perfecting those who truly are born again believers. No that does not mean that we should stop witnessing of God's saving grace; but we should be led of the spirit, instead of just getting out, trying to tell everything we know, as some have been guilty of doing. Nevertheless it is still important that this perverted society be able to see something in us, as they did in those first Christians, that caused them to say, They have been with Jesus. Why did they say that about them? Simply because they were looking at some people that wanted to live like Jesus, talk like Jesus, and be led of the father like Jesus was. That is what this

Christian life is all about. God is seeking to mold within us those very virtues. Satan will always put up road blocks; hoping to sidetrack us, and defeat us, but the Spirit of God in us is our assurance that we can overcome, no matter what the old enemy throws at us.

### **WE SHOULD EXAMINE OUR MOTIVES**

Alright, I am still on verse 15, here in Ephesians 4, that speaks of growing up in the stature of Christ. "But speaking the TRUTH in LOVE, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." To speak truth is one thing, but our motive for speaking is equally as important. We can speak truth either to help someone, or in an effort to cut someone down, or just simply to let someone hear how much we know; so I believe you should be able to see that our motive for doing what we are doing, should be right at all times. Why did you come to church this morning? Was it just because you felt like it was the proper thing to do? Or do you have a hunger for the word of God, and a desire to fellowship and worship God with other saints? Every time we come through those doors; we should have a desire to gain something that will add to our spiritual stature; and also to contribute something to the

body as a whole, that will cause it to reflect more of the image of Christ Jesus. People are not necessarily children of God, just simply because they went to a church house somewhere this morning. A lot of preachers went to a building, stepped up into the pulpit, and fulfilled a religious ritual, this morning, that never benefitted anyone the least bit. Furthermore most of what came there to hear them, came only to fulfill a religious ritual, not expecting to gain anything spiritually. They went home just as spiritually ignorant, as when they came. If there really is a true child of God caught in a situation like that, sooner or later, they get so hungry they have to go looking for some spiritual food, and God eventually leads the hungry ones to a place where that food can be found. In other words, we are living in an age, when God is calling his people out of these religious systems, to be perfected; and the people who have sold out to the systems are perishing with them, for it is the blind leading the blind. All those systems are preaching an easy gospel that anyone can accept without having their normal way of life interrupted; but in spite of that fact, the letter of the word of God that they do use, sometimes falls upon the ears of a soul that is hungering for a new meaning in life, and God uses that to get such a person started His way. In other words, God can save us anywhere, but we will never gain much spiritual stature sitting in the assemblies of those

religious systems. They do not even have a motive to try to be more like Jesus; they just want to excel in fulfilling their part of the particular religious ritual, and then be free to partake of whatever the world has to offer. Bro. Jackson: are there any exceptions? Yes, there are a few here and there, but remember, Satan himself is the founder of all those systems of organized religion, so no matter how sincere a person may be, if that person is tied to one of those systems, they will never reflect very much of the true image of Jesus Christ.

### **THE HEAD MUST CONTROL THE BODY**

Saints: There are a lot of things to consider when we determine to take stock of our own general outlook and spiritual stature. For just the mere fact that you have come out of denominational religion does not necessarily mean that you are growing in the image and likeness of Christ. Some people never get serious enough for the lord to do very much for them. Being humorous is one thing, and there is nothing wrong with that, but just constantly teasing each other, and gouging one another is not a Christian virtue; that is the nature of an unregenerate person, and we should grow out of it somewhere along the

way. God does not tease, and he certainly takes no pleasure in seeing His redeemed children always teasing, and many times hurting people who are more sensitive to that sort of thing. In other words, we can go too far with anything, and God expects us to grow to the place where we realize that; and allow Him to deliver us from it. By speaking the truth in love, we grow up into Him (Jesus) in all things. Not instantly, but over a period of time. We are not able to see Him with out natural eyes, because He is no longer here with us as a person; but from the scriptures, we still have Him as our example. The Holy Ghost in us is able to take our lives and lead us into the very image and likeness of Jesus Christ, if we will just become sensitive to His leading. I do not know how many of you have actually thought this thing all the way through, but the apostle Paul used the human body to illustrate this unique relationship between Christ and the Church; Christ being the head, and the Church the body. Therefore knowing this, we ought to think some very sobering thoughts. A healthy body is completely controlled by the head; so if the head is not in control, the body is in trouble. It takes the whole body of believers to make up the complete stature of Jesus Christ, for no one person possesses it all. But the Church functioning as God intended for it to, exemplifies all the qualities and virtues that Jesus Himself possessed; and that is the only hope for a lost and dying world. As we go about from day to

day, we have no way of knowing whether we are rubbing elbows with predestinated children of God or not; therefore the Holy Ghost should be able at any time to lead us to speak a few words to people along the road of life. When we grow up into Him who is the head, we realize that it is the head that does the thinking, the seeing, and the directing of the body. The physical body functions like that; and the day will soon be that the mystical body of Christ will again function in that way. As long as tares and true believers sit together, the body of Christ will never function completely as God ordained it to; but the time is coming when it will; because that is the kind of church the Lord is coming back for. But in the meanwhile, true children of God should be growing, and learning how to be directed by the head. We do not just sit back and wait until God gets all the tares out of our way, before we start growing. Our lack of growth is what makes it possible for tares to sit among us, and feel right at home. When the Church started out it was pure. There were no tares in it, and the head was in complete control; and as long as that generation remained in positions of leadership, the tares could not get in. They only got in as a new generation came upon the scene; that did not have a complete revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and were not completely led by the head. Therefore to turn that condition around, and get the church back in its true function once again, the Lord first had to restore it to a true



revelation of every doctrine and precept, and get it once again, looking to the head for its instructions. Then as the individual members of the body take on more and more of the image and likeness of Christ, tares will begin to get very uncomfortable sitting among them, for they will be recognized as being void of the genuine. God knows every true child of His, and he also knows the whereabouts of every tare, and at the proper time, all the tares will be separated, and the little bride will be dealt with to prepare her for her catching away.

### **WE ARE OVERCOMERS**

Alright, there are many things to be said about what we are looking at here in Ephesians. It is Paul's description of the unique way the Church of the living God is put together. Notice verse 16 as Paul moves on, speaking of our growing up into the head, (Christ.) "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted (how?) By that which every joint supplieth." Every joint speaks of every member of that great spiritual body; and when each one of us fulfills our place in the body, what will be the result? We will be joined together and compacted just like a jigsaw puzzle that is interlocked. Being compacted does not mean that

we will be pressed down. It simply means that we will be knit together in such a unique way, that nothing the devil does can tear us apart. The natural world about us says that such an idea is only a myth, but the true people of God know that we are moving toward a reality that the people of the world are not supposed to understand. People of the world have never seen the true church in action. All they have ever seen of the church, was a sick body; existing in an abnormal state, waiting to be healed. In its spiritual sickened state, with tares on every hand, it could not function in the way the original body was intended to function. God allowed the devil to get it in that state, but He does not intend to leave it like that. Here in the end of the grace age, God will have a body of people who have been tried and tested by the devil, and have overcome him by the very word of God he has tried so hard to destroy by perverting it. Naturally he (the devil) will have people pointing their finger at you, and accusing you of all sorts of things, just like the Pharisees did the disciples of Jesus, almost two thousand years ago; but we know from the scriptures that the true children of God are overcomers; no matter what the devil throws at them. We have to learn how to deal with the devil though, as we grow in grace, for we are not born into the family of God knowing all about dealing with him, in this spiritual warfare. It is only after we have been through many battles and overcome,

that we begin to fit together as a body, and are compacted in such a way that the devil cannot get between us. It is the working of the Holy Ghost that puts everything together into such a beautiful picture; and it has to be apart from organized religion. The Catholic Church could never do it; for she is the furthest thing away from what the true body of Christ is to be like. Now when I say, Catholic Church, I am talking about the system itself; not the individuals in it, that are imprisoned by her teaching, for some of them will yet come out of her; into this wonderful light. Brothers and Sisters: do you ever take time just to realize how blessed we are, to be privileged to walk in this beautiful truth? Except for the grace of God, we could all still be in spiritual darkness, heading for the great tribulation. But because our eyes were opened, we are being fitly joined together in this great body; in an inseparable way, with every member fitting into place, just like a jigsaw puzzle. You know how a jigsaw puzzle is, before it is put together; it is just a bunch of individual parts, all mixed up together in a box; but somewhere, there is a picture that shows you what all of that is supposed to look like; once every part is in its proper place. Well, the Bible shows us what the Church is supposed to look like, when every individual member is finally in their proper place, with the head (Jesus Christ) in complete control. Only then, will we be that inseparable body of people that the devil cannot shake

apart. If the devil has us locked up in jail, we will pray for each other, and we will not deny the faith, nor squeal on each other; trying to save ourselves. If you have never seen the picture of the kind of church we are talking about, open your Bible to the book of Acts and start reading, and before you go very far, you will begin to get a vision of the kind of church Jesus is coming back for. He is coming back for a body of people that have no selfish motives, and that are willing to die for their faith in God, if necessary. To the world, that sounds crazy; but to the true child of God that knows where the real value is, it makes good sense.

### **HOW SPIRITUALITY IS MEASURED**

I want to make a statement right here now, while we are talking about what the true body of Christ looks like. Do not look at your brothers and sisters of the faith and try to measure their spirituality by their fleshly self that you see. For in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew, Jesus spoke of seed that fell upon good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. All three categories pertain to the body of Christ; and the thirtyfold can be just as spiritual as the hundredfold; for their spirituality is measured by what they

do with the abilities they have. The thirtyfold is what the apostle Paul spoke of in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, as the feeble part of the body, and in verse 22 he said, "Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor." In other words, we have to have something in us that can see the qualities of Jesus Christ in another person, apart from their fleshly appearance. None of us will ever be anything more than what the grace of God gives us the ability to be. We may look at someone and say, That person is far from being like Christ; but if we will look at that same person and recognize the fact that he, or she is a member of the body of people that desire to be like Christ, we will cease to expect that one person to display every attribute of Christ. We do not all have the same abilities, and we do not all have the same opportunities; but He who knows our hearts, and our every thought and motive, is the only one that can make a true determination of our spirituality. Time alone will prove who is what; for God's purpose is not all accomplished in one day. Furthermore the fact that we are all fitly joined together, and compacted, does not mean that we are all going to be spiritual giants. God never meant for every member of this great body to be a spiritual giant. When you look at the various members of your human

body, which is what this body is compared to in its function: you see certain members that the human body could get along without. Every day, surgeons are cutting away members of human bodies, and many of them function without those particular members, but the procedure usually leaves a scar. Well, that is exactly what the body of Christ would be like, if certain members were eliminated by our choice: but God never intended for it to be that way. He will make absolutely sure that every member is in its predetermined place, and functioning properly. Yes, we are compacted by that which every joint supplieth; and there is no jealousy, nor inferiority, in that healthy body. Let me give you a little illustration of every joint supplying, by just using the ministering brethren sitting back here behind me. If I do not have the right attitude, I can allow a spirit of jealousy to take hold of me when one of these ministers preaches a message along the same lines as what I have preached, and I hear someone say to him, Oh, Brother: You just do not know what that message meant to me. I never saw it like that when Bro. Jackson preached on it. Saints: That is how it is supposed to be. No one preacher is supposed to have it all. God has purposed to perfect the Church by the ministry of a five fold ministry, so I am thankful in my heart, when I see this thing working; like the Bible says it is supposed to work. It lets me know that we are on the right track. I will never be guilty of

holding any other brother back; just because of some jealous spirit. I have said all along that we would yet see the ministry of Ephesians 4:11 in the church, before the end. When Bro. Branham died and various ones were saying, it is all over; I said to Billy Paul, right in the presence of Bro. Neville, It is not all over; God will have a living ministry among the ranks of the church until the very end; whether you want it or not. Praise God! He has that ministry in the church, and I am not jealous. Jesus is not jealous of me; and I am not jealous of my brothers. It makes me happy when another ministering brother gets up here and takes a scripture that I may have preached on last week, and brings it out in such a way that I see smiles on your faces, and know that it is benefitting your soul. It lets me know that it is the spirit of God that is doing the preaching.

### **CAUSE FOR JEALOUSY**

Now I am going to tell you when I will be jealous. If for some carnal reason some of you decide that this church is not moving the way it should: and you could succeed in getting one of these ministering brethren to play along with your plan, and you begin to undermine what we are doing here, and bring division among the people, then I

assure you, I will be jealous. It would be just like the apostle Paul said to the Corinthian Church, I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. Why would he say such a thing? He was speaking of the possibility of false teachers beguiling them, like the serpent did Eve; and drawing them away from the truth he had preached to them. As long as truth was preached, he would rejoice with them, no matter who was doing the preaching, but he had no patience with anything else. A true man of God takes great pleasure in seeing the Church edified; and he enjoys being fed by someone else, just as much as he enjoys doing the feeding. That is how God means for us to look at these things. There is no place among the true body of Christ for selfishness and jealousy. It thrills my soul to know that when God gets through with us, we will not be like a bunch of puppets, being manipulated by some human instrument. No. Praise God! We will get our instructions from the head; and every member will function as a healthy body should. Right now, we are all still learning; and every last one of us should be willing to have God change our mind about certain things; if need be. Or our attitude, if we have been looking at something wrong. The point is, in order for God to mold us into the image of his only begotten Son, we have to be willing for Him to change us once in a while. We are being fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, only when those joints are

allowing the head to call the signals. The thirtyfold Christian supplies something, the sixtyfold Christian supplies something; and the hundredfold Christian supplies a lot; but that is the way God ordained it to work. None of us can supply any more than what God has committed to us; and that, of course, is according to the measure of our faith. But like the scripture says, To whom much is given, much is required. I will say this though, With tares sitting among you, playing their little games, it is sometimes very hard for the true members of the body to contribute their part, for the tares will rip it all to pieces. A tare cannot be perfected, therefore they are always ready to take issue with anything that is of the leading of the spirit of God, unless they are somehow able to copy it. But just for a little comparison of the operation of the body of Christ in its healthy state, let us look at the physical body, that Paul used for an illustration. The physical body has many members, and every one of them take instructions from the head, when the body is in a healthy state. If my thumb is to move, a thought from the brain travels down through a never channel running down through my spinal cord, and out through my arm, right on down to the thumb. But just suppose there has been a serious injury somewhere between my head and my thumb, and the signal cannot get through, What will be the result? If there is no communication, the thumb will be numb, and there will

be no reaction until something changes. When the injury heals properly, the feeling comes back into the thumb, and it will once again react to its signals from the brain. That is just a little illustration to get us thinking about why the body of Christ eventually ceased to function as it did in the first years after its birth. Before the tares got in, and the body was still healthy, the head (Jesus Christ) could move the body in any direction. But the time came that the body of Christ was almost dismembered. It existed in a very sickly state, and there was not much communication between the head and the members, and it remained so for hundreds of years, while the devil's tares more or less called the shots in what was known as the church. I can never praise God enough, as I have occasion to look back, at what he has brought His church out of; out of a sickly, crippled condition, back to vibrant life and expectancy.

### **WHAT VARIOUS ONE'S SUPPLIED**

Well, we want to get to some examples of how every joint of this great body of Christ supplies something; so pray for me, that I will be able to express it to you, as I see it. Through the years, we have had a tendency to look at certain Christian people and wonder why

there seemed to be so little spiritual growth; while in their hearts you know they have the same desire toward the Lord, that others have. Thinking along those lines is what got my mind on the scripture we have been looking at; and eventually caused me to see that every individual person in the body of Christ has to contribute something to the well being of that body. Of course, there are some who will say, well, every true child of God will eventually have some kind of spiritual gift. That may be true; but that is not the only means by which they contribute something to the body. That which is done through a gift of the Spirit, is to be looked upon more as God ministering to the body; and what we want to see is what the individual contributes. Now first we can look to ourselves. Many of you, including myself, are sitting here today because we were supplied with something that brought us out of denominational religion. Someone passed something on to us at a time when our souls were receptive to it, and that something was a contribution to the body of Christ. There are many areas to consider as you begin to think along these lines; but just for an illustration, let us consider scriptural water baptism, and the godhead. When the body was scattered among various trinity religious systems, it was in a pitiful, sick and crippled condition. Yet the Holy Ghost knew exactly where every member of that body was; and what it would take to get every member separated from that, and joined

together as it should be. First God began to speak to some trinity people from His written word; about the name of Jesus in water baptism, instead of the trinity titles of Matthew 28:19; and the more they studied along those lines the clearer it became. Then the Holy Ghost opened up opportunities for them to share with others, what the Lord had been dealing with them about; and here was a precious truth restored to the Church; that had been lost for centuries. Naturally that opened up an avenue for the godhead to be considered; Is God one, or is he three? As a person would begin to meditate and study on these things, a great hunger for truth developed within, and an excitement that could hardly wait to share what was being revealed, with someone else. One person's testimony sheds light upon someone else's pathway, and on an on it goes, as God eventually shines more and more light upon the pathway of every hungry soul. Now when you are talking about the body of Christ, (the church) you have to look beyond the realm of the little circle you are familiar with, and realize that this body has members in every nation under heaven; and whatever the spirit of God does on behalf of the body, must have time and opportunity to affect the universal picture; and that is accomplished as individual members contribute their part. You may not immediately see it; but every member of this great body supplies something, that benefits the body as a whole.

**ALL MEMBERS ARE**  
**NECESSARY**

I look back through the years at the great move of God that was stirring in the hearts of many people, coming through the 40's, 50's, and on into the 60's; but in those early years, very few people had ever thought anything about a message to the age. Unless God somehow showed you that there was going to be an Elijah spirit come into the picture, (like you have heard me testify that He showed me) you would not have had your mind on anything like that. One February morning I sat down to read the Bible, and opened it up to the first chapter of Luke, and as I read that I said, if we are living in the days before the second coming of Christ, God will send that Elijah spirit again. I did not know when, where, nor how, but in my heart, I knew it would be. Well, my wife's cousin was already sitting under the influence of that ministry, but I had not heard anything about it until he came down home to go squirrel hunting; and came by the house just as I was coming out from eating my lunch, one hot summer day. That is when he told me about Bro. Branham and what the Lord was doing through his ministry, and when I heard it I said, If these things be true, then this is that Elijah that is to come. I only had to hear the man one

time; to be completely convinced that he was the man. Well, right there is another example of what we are talking about. This member of the body of Christ ministered something to me that I needed to hear, and most of you have had similar experiences, where someone that had already traveled farther down the road, witnessed to you something that the Lord had already made real to them. Anytime you share something that the Lord has put in your heart, you realize that the testimony can be either accepted, or rejected, but once you have obeyed the leading of the Lord, you are not obligated to worry about the end results of it. God has used the testimonies of some to bring about a total separation of you and I, from the systems of religion we were scattered about in. There has to be a total separation somewhere along the line; for it is not scripturally possible that the true body of Christ could remain locked up in those systems, until the rapture takes place. No. The Lord has worked in some very unique ways to get His true Church separated from those systems; and I am sure we can all say Amen to that. Regardless of what finally settled it for you, it was probably someone's testimony that first got your attention; so I am just using these little illustrations to remind you that we do minister to each other as the Holy Spirit leads us to do so. In other words, the head directs all the other members of the body. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, chapter 12, Paul has a lot

to say about this many membered body of Christ. We will not read all of it at this time, but notice as we read a few verses, how he states these truths; comparing the human body and the mystical body of Christ. Verse 12, “For as the body is one, (the physical body) and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; (the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the only thing that can put a person into the body of Christ, just like it says here. Therefore if you have never had that experience in your soul: you are not a member of Christ’s body, even if you have attended church all your life.) And have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.” He goes ahead with examples, showing how even the most feeble (least esteemed) members are necessary, for a healthy body. Why? Because both in the physical and the spiritual bodies, each and every member supplies something that is beneficial to the body. The big difference is, doctors examine our physical bodies and determine that we can function better if certain members are surgically removed; but when we are talking about the mystical body of Christ: no true member of that body will ever be removed. Those members that are not functioning properly, will be dealt with by the head until they are. The foundation upon which our faith is

built, has to be straightened up, and every true Bible doctrine has to be restored, before all the members can function in perfect harmony. The beauty of it is, if we are true children of God, we are all standing upon the same foundation; the only foundation that God would ever build His house upon; which is the foundation laid by the apostles of Jesus Christ. I like the apostle Peter’s terminology (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:5) where he said, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Not only are we the house of God, (being lively stones knit together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth) but we are also looked upon as an holy priesthood; privileged to be able to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. Hallelujah! Saints: we are a privileged people, and we have a great spiritual potential ahead of us; but do not let your guard down; for Satan is still very busy, trying to defeat the plan of God, and he has many ways in which he works.

### **WHERE SATAN WORKS**

I believe we will all agree that God is not just in the process of perfecting individuals, but the whole body of genuine believers. Therefore we



should be just as concerned about the spiritual state of our brothers and sisters of the faith, as we are of our own selves. We are not in this race alone; therefore there is no advantage in trying to get ahead of anyone else. The whole body must work together; every individual member supplying his or her part, so here is something we all need to be aware of. The devil cannot separate us over water baptism; we all have that straight. Our minds are settled, concerning scriptural water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Neither can he separate us over any controversy concerning the godhead; for we all know that God is one; and that He is Spirit, and not a person. That one revelation breaks down prison walls that have held precious souls captive, and made it impossible for them to grow very much spiritually. But thank God, we have that settled; and Satan has no room to work in that area. We also have the revelation of serpent seed; which lets us know why we need salvation, so he cannot get between us with any dispute about that. But does that mean that there is no place left where the devil can cause us trouble? I hope none of you feel that way; for I am here to tell you, he will give us trouble right to the very end; and we are charged with the responsibility of recognizing him; and overcoming his assaults by the word of God. Alright since we have our doctrine straight, where will the devil attack us? I think all of you know the answer; he will

work on this old flesh. Our greatest enemy is ourselves; if we do not stay on guard, and keep submitted to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Just the fact that we have the Holy Ghost, is no guarantee that we will never again have any trouble with our human makeup. That is the very reason the apostle Paul spoke of having to die daily. Every day we live, Satan is busy trying to revive our old selfish, carnal nature; and if we are not constantly on guard against such a thing, situations can arise that will bring about broken relationships. Our old selfish, sensitive, human nature, can be revived to the point where our Christian fellowship is broken; and spiritual growth comes to a standstill. These things come, from time to time; and there is only one way to deal with them. We must face every situation honestly, and allow the spirit of God to deal with our hearts and submit ourselves to the word of God. We cannot seek special favor; for we are to live by every word that proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God. Jesus was faced with situations where flesh sought special recognition; therefore we will do well, if we apply his examples to our own situations. One such instance is found recorded in the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew; where flesh sought special favors of the Lord, and had to be reminded that the father (the sovereign Spirit) grants these things according to His foreordained plan and purpose, and fleshly desires have no place in it.

## **PRAISING SELFISHLY**

In Matthew chapter 20, starting in verse 20, we find an account of something that took place when Jesus was on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, just like we all are, spiritually speaking. Maybe some have overcome certain areas of this kind of human behavior, but it still remains to be a problem in the body of Christ as a whole. A lot of it depends upon what category certain ones are in; whether 30, 60 or 100 fold, but the thing we need to realize is, We do not graduate from one category to another. Whatever we are, that is what we will be in the body; but a 30 fold Christian that will submit to the leadership of the Holy Ghost, will still bear fruit to perfection. In other words, we are what we are, only by the grace of God; for we could do nothing to merit this great salvation we have. But notice now. Here is this great mob of people following Jesus. To some, he was just an outstanding man. But to many of them, He was the Messiah they had waited for; and they believed he was on his way to kick out the Romans, and set up His kingdom; so notice verse 20. "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, (James and John) worshiping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him." It says she came worshiping Him; (adoring

Him) but she was like a lot of people; she wanted a special favor from Him; something that was very important to her human nature. We have all been guilty of the very same thing at one time or another. Many times it is because we set certain goals of what we humanly want to attain in our Christian lives; and even though we are not talking with Jesus in the flesh, it amounts to the very same thing. Just as this woman did, we say, Lord: There is something that would mean a lot to me; Would you do so and so. Notice now. "And He said unto her, What wilt thou? (What is it you want?) She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." This thing of striving for a position is a detrimental thing in the life of a Christian person; but a lot of people are guilty of it; just like this woman. In her heart she felt that it would be just wonderful if her two sons could be given these positions with the Lord; but Jesus knew that this was not the way it was going to work. From His own human mentality there would be no choosing done; for He was completely submissive to the sovereign mind of Jehovah; the mind that knew the outcome of everything, before He ever created anything. Therefore He said to her, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (He asked James and John this question.) They say unto

Him, We are able. And He said unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: BUT TO SIT ON MY RIGHT HAND, AND ON MY LEFT, IS NOT MINE TO GIVE, BUT IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO THEM FOR WHOM IT IS PREPARED OF MY FATHER.” Regardless of what some of these preachers of our day may tell you, God is not running some kind of program just to cater to the whims of human flesh; therefore to ask of Him selfish things is not praying according to the will of Him who is working all things according to the counsel of his own will; as it says in Eph. 1:11. In other words, No matter what my human desires may be, if they do not please my heavenly Father, I need not ask Him to grant my request. Brothers and Sisters: We have to study our Bibles, to even know how to pray. You cannot really have faith to believe for something from God, without first knowing what is available from the great storehouse of His wealth. In other words, The Bible makes no provision for any of us to ask anything from God just for some selfish reason. This is why Jesus did not just send the mother of these two men on down the road, without first dealing with her selfish motive. He wanted all mankind to be aware of the fact that all things must work according to the mind of the Father. The flesh man Jesus, was an outlet through which the attributes of the Father were expressed; therefore we need to follow His example in our

thoughts, words and our deeds, and desire only that which we know our heavenly Father would be pleased for us to have.

### **CORRECTION WAS NECESSARY**

Now what we have been reading about, all took place before any of those disciples ever had the Holy Ghost; so notice what it says about the other ten, when they learned what the mother of these two had asked. Verse 24, “And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. (I can just hear them talking among themselves about James and John thinking they were better than the rest of them. Brothers and Sisters: You know that is the way this old flesh reacts; and that is exactly where the devil gets into the picture; so Jesus had a few words to say to them.) But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. (It is like that in politics, and religion. People in high places actually rule over the rest. But notice what Jesus said to those disciples.) But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief, among you, let him be

your servant.” He was not telling those disciples that they would all have to sit on the same size chair, nor was he changing His mind about what He had already said to Peter; about giving him the keys to the kingdom of heaven. He was merely pointing out to them, that the greater you are, the more you have to be willing to do for other people. There has never been a greater man on this earth than Jesus Christ; and He became servant of all. The Bible points to Him as our example, so where do some of these preachers of our day get the idea that they should have for themselves, the very best of everything? Jesus never tried to call attention to Himself, nor did He make any effort whatsoever, to have better things than anyone else. Listen to me, saints: No preacher has any right or reason to feel that he should have more, nor have better, than the rest of the people who sit under his ministry. I mean that with all my heart. For some reason, people of our day seem to have the cart before the horse; when it comes to things like this. God does not call men into the ministry to place them upon a pedestal for everyone else to look up to, and admire; because of their greatness. No. A true man of God will walk with the people where they walk; and be a help to them in all of their trials and tests, instead of a burden upon them. A true leader will walk through the mudhole with you, if it is necessary for you to go through one. If a man of God will walk with his people, they in turn will walk with him.

That is what this is all about. God never intended to set some up, to be looked upon as being so much more important than anyone else. The New Testament is full of examples, if a person really has a desire in his heart to walk with God. Furthermore, the apostle Paul left us a perfect example of how to have the victory in our soul; even under the most trying circumstances. Did he lose his joy, and give up, just because he ended up in jail, or found himself shipwrecked, or persecuted? Do you find anywhere that he ever projected himself as being any better than anyone else? The answer is no. He knew he was a servant of God, called to minister, instead of being ministered to, and so did all those other apostles, once they received the Holy Ghost, and began to submit themselves to His leadership. Nevertheless Jesus used Himself as the example of what He was talking about, when He was correcting those offended disciples, and showing them that to be a leader, required one to be even as a servant. Notice verse 28. “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” What if Jesus had been afraid He would hurt their feelings, and he had just left those ten disciples with their indignant feelings toward James and John? They might have worked themselves up into such a state of resentment, that they could have just turned back from following Him. In other words, truth was on the scene, and truth got the dispute settled,

and avoided a very bad situation; and because of it, all those men except Judas, continued on; to supply their part in the body of Christ, in later years.

## **EXAMPLES OF FORGIVENESS**

Some of you may wonder why we are using all these seemingly unrelated instances to the message we are dealing with; so I will put your mind at ease by saying this, There is something in every one of these occurrences that we can learn from; as we seek to be able to supply our part to the body. The feelings between those disciples necessitated some forgiveness, in order for them to fulfill what they had been called to fulfill. In other words, In that one occurrence we saw selfish desires expressed, we saw human resentment activated, we saw truth correct the whole situation, and the plan of God move forward; which means that there was also forgiveness on the part of those who were offended. Let us look at another example of human weakness, and also at a perfect example of forgiveness. In the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew, we find Jesus asking His disciples, "But whom say ye that I the Son of man am?" Peter was the impulsive one among them; and immediately replied, "Thou art the

Christ, the Son of the Living God." He was just as quick to express a revelation, as he was to grab a sword and cut off a man's ear later on and because of this answer, Jesus committed to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven; knowing that it was a revelation Peter was expressing, and upon that rock of revelation the Church was built. But a little later when Jesus began talking to them about what He would suffer at the hands of the Jews that hated Him, (how they would kill Him) Peter jumped right out there again and said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." In other words, Lord, we will never let them do a thing like that to you. He meant it; but he did not understand everything that was taking place, so Jesus had to deal with this human reaction, just as He had to deal with the ten, on that other occasion, a little later. No, He did not take Peter aside and talk to him, like we might have done; He looked him straight in the eye and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," In other words, This was an impulsive human reaction, and Jesus knew this kind of boisterous remark was not what it was going to take to please God in the end. It sounded good, but Jesus knew that when Peter was really put to the test, fear for his own life would cause him to react just the opposite of the way he felt at that moment. Now He was not calling Peter, Satan, but it

was the spirit of Satan (the devil) that Jesus was actually addressing, because he always causes natural man to react contrary to the plan and purpose of God. Therefore after the Passover supper, when Jesus was saying to the disciples, "Ye shall all be offended because of me this night," and Peter again responded in his usual way, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Jesus said to him, "Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Then Peter and all the others agreed that they would defend him to the very end, even if it meant their own death. That was just a short time before Jesus was actually arrested, and you all know what happened afterward, when different ones questioned Peter about being one of them that was with Jesus; he denied that he ever knew him, and began to curse and swear in his denial, and immediately the cock crowed, and he was reminded of what Jesus had said to him; and the Bible says he went out, and wept bitterly. We could not take the time to read all of these scriptures, but from these various occurrences, we are able to see some examples of how human nature reacts, and how truth deals with it to bring about the purpose of God. Peter's real weakness was revealed, and he was forced to acknowledge it, and his heart was rent with remorse, because he had reacted exactly as the Master had said he would. Now I am sure many thoughts raced through his mind as

Jesus went through that mock trial and was then put to death. No doubt he wondered, Was he really the Messiah? Will He rise from the dead, like He said? What will we do now, and what will He do if He arises? Though all this was no doubt running through his mind, he still remembered what Jesus had said to them before he went into the garden of Gethsemane where He was arrested, "But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." Jesus already knew all that was going to take place, and how Peter would deny Him, even before He said, I will meet you in Galilee, so right there, we see a perfect example of forgiveness. Brothers and Sisters: Somewhere we are going to have to reach a place where we can recognize some of these examples that are set before us, and learn to apply these same principles in our own lives. Through these examples, we should be able to get a picture of our own attitudes, misgivings, shortcomings and frustrations, and realize that we are continually yielding ourselves as vessels in the hands of the devil; unless we make a spiritual effort to yield ourselves to the Spirit of God. We fail to supply to the body of Christ, that measure that has been committed to us; when we allow self and personal feelings to cause us to ignore the examples of righteousness that are set before us in the scriptures. That is why I said, Satan cannot separate us on doctrinal things, so he works on our human nature, always trying to get us

to look at every situation in a selfish way; I want to alert you to his devises. I believe we will all agree that God did not call us out of denominational religion and give to us this beautiful revelation of His word, His plan for the redemption of lost mankind, and of our eternal reward, just simply to allow us to go on day after day, and year after year, living for self, without any real concern about the welfare of the universal body of Christ that we are a part of. AS we said earlier, A healthy body is one where every member of that body supplies its part in the total function of the body; and the apostle Paul lets us know that the mystical body of Christ is no different; it also requires every member to supply something. We do not decide what we are to supply, we just yield ourselves to the leading of the Spirit of God, and allow the head (Jesus Christ) to direct us.

### **STUMBLING BLOCKS - INSTEAD OF EXAMPLES**

Through the years, as I have stood in the pulpit and preached, there have been many times that I would find myself taking a certain angle to a subject, that I had not really planned ahead of time, to take, and almost without exception, whenever that happens, someone will say, Bro. Jackson: You answered a question for me when you said so and so, and then

I realize, that was the part that I had not previously planned to include in the message. I just have to rejoice and be thankful to God every time He does something like that, for I have always believed that a true servant to God would stand in a place where God could use him to answer the questions that are on the minds of His people. I have said it before, and I do not mind saying it again and again, There is a lot more to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, than just leading people to a salvation experience, (as we are so prone to call it) for their salvation is not really complete, until they are taught to walk with God according to His word. Let me be quick to say though, The preacher is not the only vessel God uses, to supply what a new born child of His has need of: they look to older Christians for exampleship, and God means for us to set a proper example before them. Therefore if the older Christians are always bickering about some little personal feelings, they are really a stumbling block instead of an example that the younger ones can look up to. What do Christians bicker about? Some may say. Usually some petty little thing that is taken wrong, or something that their imagination comes up with. Just for an example, one of these other brethren could make some simple little statement about something, and I could take it wrong, and without finding out for sure what he meant, I could start to imagine that he is against me. Then if you allow yourself at a time like that,

you will start to be suspicious of the other person and watch for other things that he may do or say, that could strengthen your suspicions. Now some will say, Bro. Jackson: Christians ought not be so sensitive; and you are absolutely right, but do not forget, the devil is still on the loose, trying to defeat the plan of God. That is why I said, We are entering a time when we have got to get control of ourselves. We must find out what is bugging us, and decide what we value as the most important thing, our feelings or the cause of Christ. We certainly cannot serve both at the same time. If we are going to walk with God in the light of His word, we have to get self out of the picture. I meant it, brothers and sisters, I am not just talking. If you have any kind of feelings against anyone, it is time to examine those feelings in the light of God's word, and take the necessary steps to deal with them accordingly. When you get serious about walking with God, you will not have any problems determining what true Christian conduct is. That is why I said, I am glad for these brethren that sit with me up here. I am not envious of any of them. It thrills my soul to see men that God has truly dealt with, take the scriptures and bring out things that He has shown them. One man is not supposed to have it all; the body of Christ will be perfected by the five fold ministry of Ephesians 4:11, because they will all have the same revelation, and will minister for the same purpose, not trying to build anything for self.

Preachers who seek the favor of the people they preach to, will not always tell them what they need to hear; and that can make it hard on those that do obey God and preach a true revelation. I have to tell you brothers and sisters, there have been many times through the years since Bro. Branham's death, that it really seemed like we were standing here, in vain; because of the way so many people treated the truth. But we have not stood in vain; for God has vindicated this ministry, and is using it to help people get themselves settled, after being tossed to and fro and literally abused by men who are just trying to make a name for themselves.

### **CONDUCT OF SOME PREACHERS**

We have stood here in the area where this message of truth was first preached; and men from all around the world have come here to look at the tomb of the man that preached it; and visit various places where God manifested something special through him. After touring the area, many of these men have taken an armload of books and tapes, and gone home, and pretty soon they would be on the road, ready to tell the world what this message is. That is when they jump on Jackson, and Faith Assembly, because



they realize their version of the message does not match what we preach and teach here; and they feel that they have it right from the horse's mouth; (so to speak) therefore Jackson is not in the message. Brothers and Sisters: Years ago I did not see what I see now; so a lot of that persecution really got next to me; for my human nature caused me to want to like and respect everyone. I somehow had the idea that every man that carried a Bible and called himself a preacher ought to be given a place to preach. Well I have learned a lesson; that is not what God called me for. I do not surrender my pulpit to every preacher that comes down the road with a Bible under his arm; mainly because I have learned that a true man of God is not out looking for a place to preach. He does not have the preacher's itch. A true man of God knows that if he has something in his heart that is to benefit this assembly, sooner or later God will put him up. He will not come in here with his chest puffed out; I am Reverend So and So, Can I preach in your assembly this morning? If you surrender your pulpit to men like that, they can do more harm in one message, than you can straighten out in the next three months. I do not have to be that concerned about the people who have sat here long enough to be established in the truth; but there are always some that are still babes in Christ, and they do not need to be tossed up and kicked around by character's that are just simply running the roads sowing

discord. Like I said, I am accused of not being friendly, and of not being in the message, but God knows my heart, and he knows that I have learned what I know about the nature of people, the hard way, for I have tried to fellowship them all.

### **SETTLING DIFFERENCES** **GOD'S WAY**

I will never forget how discouraged I was when I preached the message, "My Defense," years ago. In my heart I thought, What good does it do to stand as I do, when there are so many against me? I look back now, after seeing what confusion there is in the ranks of those who are supposed to be following Bro. Branham's message, and I am so thankful that God did keep me separated from all of that, even though it was extremely hard on my flesh at the time. I can also see now that while my flesh, my name, and my image was taking such a beating, I was really getting free advertisement for what God would later use this ministry for. Letters like the one we just received from the Philippines makes us realize just how thankful we ought to be; that we have been privileged to stand for this truth, regardless of what our flesh has had to suffer because of it. I can see clearly now, that in order to walk with God in truth, we have to

be willing to have our flesh chewed on by those who do not understand. As I have already said, There are many ways that Christians get their feelings hurt, and a lot of them have nothing at all to do with our doctrinal beliefs, and that is especially so, when it takes place right here in this assembly. But if you go around always hurt about something, there is something lacking in your life. God lets the devil work on flesh, for the purpose of getting your life in line with His word, and His will; therefore if it never accomplished that, there is something wrong; we need to do some checking up. Now, lest some of you misunderstand what I have just said, Let me explain it, and use an example. There are two kinds of people that can hurt you, but it is up to you as a child of God to deal with it properly, and to learn something from it, that will add to your statural growth. A tare can say and do things to hurt you, and when they do, many times they are trying to destroy you. That has happened right here in Faith Assembly. We cannot make children of God out of tares, but neither are we to determine that certain ones among us are tares; and use that for an excuse not to conduct ourselves in a proper manner. That is what the devil wants. On the other hand a true child of God, out of plain ignorance, or weakness of the flesh, can say something in a very unwise way, that can be hurtful to you, and if you do not handle it properly, you can go for months with those hurt feelings. I will use these preacher

brethren here on the platform, just to illustrate what we are talking about; they will not mind. Just suppose I heard that Bro. Salinas had said something about me, that hurt my feelings, and instead of taking it to the Lord, I go to Bro. Allen and say, Bro. Salinas said something about me the other day, that really hurt me. Then I go into great detail telling him all about it. Am I handling this in a way that will give God a chance to work in it? Then I go to Bro. Adams and say, Bro. Salinas said something about me that was not right, and I am terribly hurt about it; and then I tell him all about it. Now I have two others in on something that can eventually tear up a whole church if it is allowed to go on like that. It is wrong in the sight of God for me to do a thing like that, and it is just as wrong for you to do it. When you spread your hurt feelings like that, it is just like an infection in a natural body; you do not cure it by spreading it. I might be able to make that brother look like a dirty rat, but in so doing, instead of contributing something to the body that will edify and strengthen, I have sown discord, and caused some weaker ones to stumble, and besides that, just suppose the person that told me what they heard him say, had misunderstood his remark: that would make it even worse. But let us just say for the sake of illustration, that the brother really did make an unwise remark, I will make myself even more unwise if I do not do what the word of God tells us to do. Brothers and Sisters: Are you

seeing what I am trying my best to get you to see? This is the kind of thing that has caused me to lose much sleep in the weeks and months that I have been aware of what Satan would like to do here. It is a wonderful thing to get our doctrine straightened out; but if our attitudes and motives are not straightened out also, the devil still has just as much room to work, as he ever did. While we are fussing and fretting about our hurt feelings, we cannot possibly supply anything to the body of Christ. All we are doing is presenting a negative picture that causes outsiders to wonder, when they hear of it, what we have that they do not. If we have the Spirit of Christ in us, then let us handle these things that arise according to the way He told us to. The only way to reconcile such a condition as the one we have used in this illustration, is for me to go to Bro. Salinas and say, Brother: It was told to me that you said such and such, and I feel that if you did say that about me, I ought to find out why, and try to get it straightened out, before it affects the rest of the assembly. Many times, just confronting a person with the thing that you have heard, is all it takes for God to work in it. If that person's own heart is right, and they have just said or done something, not really intending for it to go further, then God can cause them to realize how unwise or weak they were in doing it; and the whole matter can be reconciled right there. Now I am sure most of you know that there is a right and a wrong way to

confront a person that you feel has wronged you. If I grab hold of the brother and say, Bro. Salinas: I heard what you said about me the other day, and I feel that you owe me an apology. I am not presenting myself according to the words and examples that we have in the scriptures, and I probably will not get the desired response. But on the other hand, If I, out of genuine love, and a genuine desire to see the love of Christ working in our midst, will go to the brother and say, Bro. Salinas: I love you; and I have believed that we are brothers in the family of God, so I wonder if you really did say what I heard you said about me, and if you did, then I wonder if you would tell me why, then God has an opportunity to work in the situation and get it straightened out. I do not care if you are a preacher, a deacon, a trustee, or what; the same goes for every last one of you, myself included. Many times it is hard for the old flesh to yield to these scriptural principles, but if Jesus was standing among us in the flesh, He would teach us a lesson along these lines. He would not call a committee meeting to consider the matter; He would just tell you face to face, if you were at fault. Saints: For goodness sakes, when there is some cause for you to be hurt please do your utmost to go and get it reconciled in a Christlike manner, without dragging innocent people in on it. Jesus never had to say, I am sorry, to anyone; nor did He ever have to ask anyone to forgive Him for anything, because He

lived a perfect example at all times. He knew exactly when to speak, and how to look at every situation without sowing discord among the other disciples.

### **LET LOVE DIRECT YOU**

It is not within my natural makeup to enjoy dealing with a message such as this, but when the Lord backs me into a corner with something, and keeps me awake at night thinking about it, until a picture begins to form in my mind: I have to know that He means for me to deal with it; whether I enjoy it or not. When God began to deal with me on this subject, I knew that Faith Assembly was going to be faced with the reality of setting aside petty feelings, and conducting ourselves as people professing godliness are supposed to. We will either walk with God by the leadership of the Holy Ghost, and conduct ourselves as mature Christians, or we will face the consequences of failing to do so, after sufficient warning. We cannot just drift along through life, treating our Christian experience like something that we only acknowledge when we feel good. If we are truly born again by the spirit of God, then we are Christians twenty four hours a day, every day, for the rest of our lives, and it is the will of our heavenly Father for

every one of us to reach a place in our Christian growth, where we will conduct ourselves according to the examples set forth in His word, no matter where we are, nor what time of day or night it may be. Therefore if you think you can give in to carnal feelings, and create a better image of yourself by broadcasting your hurt feelings, you have another thought coming. You are certainly not walking in the spirit, as the Bible teaches that we should, unless you allow this word of God to work in you concerning these petty things also. How many times have you sat and listened to someone relating something about someone else, without making one single effort to try to get the thing straightened out? We have all been guilty of it; but the time is coming when God will not allow us to do that. The scriptural way to handle that, is, Brother: If what you are saying is true, then let us go to that brother, (or sister, whichever it is) and have a talk with him. We will handle it like that, rather than spreading what we hear to a dozen others. In other words, For the sake of the body, let us take these things right to the source of origin, and get them reconciled. If I have a headache, I do not rub ointment on my toe; I take a pill that will go right to the source of trouble. When we begin to think just how compacted God wants us to fit together as a body, then we understand that there is to be nothing between us. In order to stay healthy, the head has to be able to control every member of the body, so that our every

thought, word, and deed has the interest of the whole body at the forefront. When Paul wrote that about the body being fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, he was not talking about our pocketbooks, nor anything else in the material sense. He was talking about something in the spiritual sense that each of us are privileged to contribute to the body of Christ. No matter how small or insignificant you may consider yourself to be, there is some function within the scope of the universal body of Christ for you to perform; as you yield your life to the leadership of the spirit of God. You may be the very one God will use, to get someone to turn loose of hurt feelings they have been holding on to. But remember this, Love is the motive that we should be guided by, instead of just a fleshly desire to see people get along with each other. God has many ways of getting rid of infection and of smoothing the rough edges of the many vessels in His house, so do not try to force Him to work according to your plans. You determine that you are going to work according to His plan, for the benefit of the whole body of Christ. He is not putting this great body together to fit the image of Raymond Jackson; it is going to be in the image of Jesus Christ; the one that willingly shed His own blood on Calvary's cross, to free us from the bondage of sin and death, so that we could be joint heirs with Him of the Father's treasure. Hallelujah! If we would spend more

time meditating upon our inheritance as children of God, we would be less prone to carry our feelings in a place where they can be so easily hurt. I sometimes wonder if we do not just simply take too much for granted: as though there was no price paid for this wonderful liberty we enjoy. Most of us know very little of what some have had to suffer because of their faith in Jesus Christ, and their refusal to continue to participate in antichrist religious practices.

### **GROWING TO FULL STATURE**

I do not mind telling you, brothers and sisters, that I am very concerned about the hour we are living in; as I observe the things that are going on in the world, and especially in the Middle East. The very fact that a leader of Israel stepped outside the line of what was normally routine, and went to one of the Arab heads of Morocco, to see if there was anything that could be done on his part: to bring about a workable peace process in the Middle East, is reason of itself for us to be concerned. For it is obvious that Syria is a power that must be reckoned with, in whatever is done; therefore the whole Middle East is just like a powder keg; that could explode any moment, and every time it does: it just brings us one

step closer to the end of Gentile time, the time when the little bride of Christ is to be ready to meet the Lord Jesus in the air. Of course there are some that will say, Bro. Jackson: You have been saying that for years, and that is true, I have. But whether you believe it or not, one day there is going to be an event take place over there, that will set the stage for that final drama that must be played out before Jesus comes; and if you are one of those that is still playing around with truth when that takes place: I am afraid you will end up in the great tribulation, for it will be too late for you to start dressing yourself up, to go with the Lord in the rapture. Remember the little story where they cried, Wolf! At first everyone was very sensitive to the cry; and it brought about a reaction. But after so long, when they cried Wolf, the ones that were supposed to react, ceased to respond to the cry, and when the wolf really did come, and the cry was sounded, and they failed to react, the wolf got them. That is exactly how this is going to be one of these days. It is true we cannot allow ourselves to be carried away by imagination of what could happen; but neither should we become so calloused in our heart and in our thinking, that we become careless, and begin to think that we have another 30 to 40 years. You are likely to wake up some morning, (if you wake up at all) and find that you need God like you have never needed Him before, because the world you live in has suddenly become a shambles. A

lot of people will attend church this morning, and go home knowing no more than they did when they left home; and they will argue and fuss going and coming, not even considering the fact that every trip they make could very well be their last one. Brothers and Sisters: we do not have time to let our lives dwindle away like that. We need to come face to face with the reality that regardless of when: there is surely coming a time when God will require us to give an account of the way we have treated this wonderful, bountiful opportunity that He has given us. We can never be any more in the body of Christ than what God has ordained for us to be; but if we truly are bride children of God, and we fail to allow Him to lead us, he will put the chastening rod to us, until we do. I have said this to you many times before; but let me say it again, When the apostle Paul referred to the Church, he spoke only of born again children of God, for tares were not yet in the picture, and foolish virgins come into the picture only at the end time; so there will be no tares nor foolish virgins compacted together in this great body of Christ. All of those whom the apostle Paul referred to as the Church, will be compacted though, so that there is nothing at all between them. Now I realize that there are verses before these, and I trust that all of you will read them, but I keep coming back to verses 15 & 16, here in Ephesians 4, and I hope you see in them what I see. Paul is talking about

the Church being perfected, coming to full stature in Christ, so that we are not tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and so forth; and then he says, "But speaking the truth (How?) In LOVE, may grow up into Him (Christ) in all things, (Notice now) which is (or who is) the head, even Christ: From whom (It is from Him that we receive our instructions on how and what to supply to the body) the whole body fitly joined together and compacted (How) by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, (including you and me) maketh increase of the body into the edifying of itself in love." The word COMPACTED, as used here, does not mean mashed, and pressed together like something squeezed into a container; it just simply points to the fact that every member of the true body of Christ fits together perfectly, like a jigsaw puzzle, when the picture is completed. After those pieces are all interlocked, there are some that you can hold up by the edge, and the picture will not fall apart. That is because they are cut to be that way. Another thing about it is, There is no room for anything else in between the pieces. When every piece is in, the picture is complete, and so is it with the body of Christ, after the Holy Ghost gets through refining us. In other words, After he gets through trimming the raw edges off of our human nature, so we can fit together. I know most of you have heard this, and

even said it yourselves, like I have in times past: What good am I? What can I do? Brothers and Sisters: That is just plain negative, human thinking, brought about by our failure to read the word of God properly. God does not accept that kind of an excuse either; for if we are born again, we are children of God, no matter how we feel about ourselves, and there is something for each of us to do, that will benefit the body of Christ. Conditions and abilities are regulated by the Holy Ghost; for the effectual working on the part of each individual member of the body, according to the way God has dealt with our lives. It is only when we are led by the spirit of God that we are able to contribute something to the body that will cause it to make increase toward the edifying of itself in love. In the natural human body, the members of the body only contribute that which is necessary for the benefit of the whole body; by the direction of the head. If your back itches, your hand causes your hand to reach for some means to scratch it. Is that not right? What we need to see is that every member of the body has some function that adds to the total well being of the body, whether the physical body, or the mystical body of Christ; but each member functions only by the direction of the head, and does not try to outdo the other members.

## **A LIVING SACRIFICE**

I would like for us to look at a verse or two in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans, while we are on this thought, and look at some of the examples Paul used there. Let us just start in verse 1 and get the full picture. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is (What?) Your reasonable service. (That is no more than what every born again child of God is expected to do.) And be not conformed to this world: (Do not follow the styles and ways of the people of the world at large.) But be ye transformed (How?) By the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, WILL OF GOD. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself (notice this) more highly than he ought to think; (this is just the opposite of thinking that you are not worth anything) but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (That measure of faith is what God gives to each of us to start out with; and the increase of our faith is determined according to the investments we make with it, as we lay hold on the promises and provisions in His word.) For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

(Here is your natural and spiritual comparison again.) So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (It takes all of us together, to make the body complete) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, (Now he mentions the different gifts that God has placed within this one body of believers.) Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. (Every bit of that has to be under the direction of the Holy Ghost in order for it to fulfill the purpose of God.) Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. (Notice verse 10 now.) Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another. (Let us read just two more verses here, 16 and 21, and then we will talk about how all of this works together to glorify God.) Be of the same mind one toward another. (This is an important key. Being of the same mind allows these other things to work as they should.) Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. (God knows whether we are respecters of persons, and whether we think Dr. So and So would be an asset to our assembly. Saints: The body of Christ is



not built on any such special recognition as that.) Be not wise in your own conceits. 21, Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Some will say, Bro. Jackson: Can a true Christian really be overcome with evil? It happens all the time. That is why it is so important for every one of us to be made aware of Satan’s traps; it is the children of God he expends all his efforts on, trying to get them sidetracked from walking with their heavenly Father. Did not the apostle Paul say in Galatians 5:16, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh?” He was writing to Christians. These instructions on Christian conduct were not written to lost sinners; they were written, so all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, can know what it takes to do so. Now being overcome of evil, does not mean that such a person has lost their salvation; it speaks of a weakness of the flesh causing a person to yield to something the devil has tempted him or her with. Therefore it is very important that we cultivate these Christian attributes in our daily lives; lest the adversary lay a stumbling block before us, and we stumble over it, and break our fellowship with our heavenly Father. We are certainly not going to contribute anything to the body of Christ while we are in a state of broken fellowship with the Father, and furthermore, there will be no peace until such a situation is reconciled. But let us get back to our main thought,

“Every Joint Supplieth,” and keep this on the positive side; for no true child of God is looking for ways to do wrong; we are looking for the perfect will of God for our lives.

### **A TARE REFUSES CORRECTION**

When it comes to gifts, or abilities: God does not give anyone more than they need, nor does He give us less than we need, so really, there is no sensible reason for anyone to be worried about not doing anything; if you are willing to do what God gives you to do. Some people never do anything, because they are always waiting for some outstanding opportunity; when it is the will of God for them to do something simple, without open recognition. That is how we grow to the place spiritually, where we can be recognized, without it having some detrimental affect on us. Therefore we need to be faithful, to contribute what God gives us to contribute, no matter how insignificant we may feel; for it will be spiritual substance in that effectual working, as the body of Christ makes increase, and edifies itself in love. When we each one learn to do the things that God gives us the opportunity to do, and do

them with the right motive; the body of Christ will take on a completely different look, or image, in the world she lives in. The only acceptable motivation is love; so if we have any other motive, we need to re-read some of these epistles Paul wrote to the various assemblies in that 1<sup>st</sup> age. Now please understand, None of us are claiming to be perfect; we will readily confess that God is still working on us, (as the little song goes) to make us what we ought to be; so when we deal with a message such as this, I expect to gain something from it myself, and I pray that each of you have that same desire. Let me say this also, When I use these preacher brethren as I did, it is just for the sake of illustrating something to you, and certainly not that I am trying to foretell something that is going to happen later on; so do not allow the devil to do to you what he did to a lot of people that sat in Bro. Branham's meetings. If he called someone's name, or used a little illustration like I sometimes do: someone would always say, See there? That is a revelation. Jesus used parables to illustrate certain things; so why can we not do the same thing, without someone's imagination running away with them? I say that, yet I realize as long as there are tares sitting among the saints of God, the devil will use them to pervert anything that is done or said for the benefit of the body of Christ. That is why I said earlier, Much of the word of God cannot be applied in our day, as it was

in the apostolic age. There are still too many tares sitting present for it to have the same affect. A tare spirit refuses correction, and reacts in various ways. When you take the word of God to correct a situation, sometimes the tare will just simply run away, find him another church, and do everything he can to try to destroy you. Others will pretend to submit to correction, and start their campaign of destruction from within the assembly. We have been faced with both, right here in Faith Assembly, and there is no reason for us to feel that it will not happen again; for Satan is still on the loose. In an assembly like this, you have tares deliberately saying things to cause hurt feelings, and then you also have Christians who make unwise remarks, like we were saying earlier, and that causes someone's feelings to be hurt, and if it is not handled properly, the whole assembly will be affected and spiritual growth will come to a standstill. What is the answer? Some will say. Well God has not authorized anyone to search out the tares, and kick them out of the church, so the obvious solution, if we are going to move on with God: is for every true Christian to determine in their hearts, that they are going to live for God, no matter what happens; and start applying these scriptural principles in every situation that comes up, even when our flesh is hurt. As we become more sensitive to the word of God: truth will work on our behalf, and the purpose of God will move forward. Surely, as we look at

the present trend of political corruption, and the moral decay of unregenerate mankind, we will have to agree that the Spirit of God is lifting from the Gentiles; and realize that the little bride of Christ ought to be in the final stages of getting herself dressed up in the word of God. The days of running from church to church are over. We have had ample time to learn what truth is, and where it is being preached; and you can take my word for it, when I tell you that it is hard to find. The Bible tells us that there will come a time when there will be a famine for the hearing of the word of God; and I believe you will have to agree, that that time is upon us. Oh there are a lot of people quoting scriptures for one purpose or another, but most of it is without revelation of what those scriptures mean, and without revelation of the godhead, and of the plan and purpose of God; so when you take all of that into account, the famine is in the land today. One thing is sure though; wherever truth is being preached, that is where the true children of God will want to be; for the Bible so beautifully portrays the fact that the true body of Christ will be washed by the water of the word of God. Many will tell you that there is no more revelation to be given, but the true child of God knows that as long as we are still here, God is going to see it that there is a few little nuggets yet to be discovered in the pages of His written word.

## **AN AGE OF NAKEDNESS**

We are living in the Laodicean age, the age of materialism, when the prevailing spirit on people is that they are increased with goods, and have need of nothing. But the eye of God that sees all, sees that those who feel that way are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They are naked, both physically and spiritually, and too blind to realize it. If you do not believe this is the truth, just take a good look at most of what the world looks upon as Christianity, and you will see that it is exactly like the scriptures portray it. It takes a revelation to clothe your inner man, and when the inner man is properly clothed, the outer man, or woman will be properly clothed also. Now it is true, you could put on clothes and cover your flesh completely, and to the natural eye, you could look as much like a dedicated Christian as anyone else, but if you are without a revelation of the word of God, He sees your soul as being naked, and you as a person, as being wretched and miserable. Brothers and Sisters: I am not pointing an accusing finger at anyone. I do not have to; for the word of God has already done that. Any person sitting here whose life is not measuring up to God's standards, knows it by now, and it is up to each individual to take the

necessary steps to correct the situation. I could stand at the door, and refuse to let you in, unless you come dressed according to my interpretation of proper Christian dress, but I could never change the attitude of your hearts, nor dress you spiritually, without the spirit of God dealing with you first. Therefore I say to everyone of you, and I include myself; Let us look at ourselves in the light of the truth God has given to us, and make an honest appraisal of our attitudes, our motives, and our general outlook toward the things of God, and just see how we measure up. God is going to deal with us in some ways that we are not used to, but it will not be for our destruction, and it will not be just because He wants to hurt us; but it will be because He loves us, and wants us to recognize that we are still lacking in some areas of our Christian development. When He points the finger at me, I must be willing to say, Yes Lord, I see my fault; help me to correct it. If we have wronged a brother or a sister, the first order of business, is to go to them and make it right. If you feel that you have been wronged, and the person who wronged you makes no attempt to get the situation reconciled, it is still wrong for you to hold a grudge against that person, for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord. Saints I am talking to you about Christian conduct; not whether your flesh is justified in reacting as it is. You can be legally right in what you are

doing, and still miss the will of God by a country mile. You will not supply anything to the body of Christ while you are holding out for your rights. We have to put this old flesh to death; in order for God to have first place in our lives; and we have to make sure it stays dead, for there are always situations that will bring it back to life, if we allow it. In other words, As long as we are in this mortal flesh, we have to make every effort to see each other as true children of God who desire to walk in the Spirit, lest we ourselves become judges, and our own carnal nature rule over our spiritual nature. Remember: things are not always what they appear to be, and neither do we always say everything exactly like we mean to say it; and even when we do, it can still be misunderstood by some who failed to hear as well as they should. This many times, causes remarks to be made unwisely, that can have an adverse affect on others who hear those remarks; so let us not think that we are immune to Satan's traps and deceitful devices, just because we are not meaning to hurt or harm anyone.

### **HOW TO USE GOD'S WORD**

I want to give you another illustration of how the devil will work, trying to

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bring division in an assembly such as this; and I am going to use another one of these brethren here on the platform with me. Remember though, this is just an illustration; and not meant to cast any reflection toward my brother. Just suppose, I do or say something in a careless way, that offends Bro. Allen. We can do that many times and not even be aware of it. But for the sake of the illustration, just say, others in the congregation become aware of it. Now there are two ways that this can go; one right, and one wrong. If those who know that Bro. Allen is offended, begin to take sides and talk about it, the whole congregation can become divided over something that could easily be reconciled; if someone would just step forward, and apply the word of God to the situation. If I am not aware of the fact that he is offended, it is obvious that I will not be doing anything to try to get the situation reconciled, so it is up to someone else, either Bro. Allen himself, or some other brother that knows the scriptures, and cares enough about the whole body as a whole, that he is willing to do something that some others may not agree with. I will say this, though. If you, personally, know that such a situation exists, you owe it to yourself and to me, to do something to try to get the thing reconciled. Oh, Bro. Jackson: I would be afraid someone would think I was meddling. That is the devil that makes you afraid; for the word of God teaches us how to handle these matters that arise in our midst. Here is what

someone should do. Come to me and say, "Bro. Jackson: Do you know that you have offended Bro. Allen, by such and such? I believe you should go to him and apologize; before the word of this spreads any farther." If I am a brother, a true child of God, I will immediately go to my brother and say, Bro. Allen: I have just found out that I offended you. Please forgive me, and be sure that I did not mean that, like that. When a situation like this is handled properly, the whole matter can be cleared up instantly. But sad to say, Too many times, they are not handled properly; and the devil has the time of his life, tearing up a fellowship of people. Let me just suppose for the sake of presenting another avenue of reconciliation, that no one will do their Christian duty and intercede in the situation. Will Bro. Allen, being a man of God just go on nursing his hurt feelings, and see the congregation torn to pieces? No. Instead of allowing the devil to divide the congregation, he prays about it, and determines within his heart that he will talk to me about it. That is exactly what Jesus said we should do, in such cases. In the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew, in verse 15, we read these words, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Before we do anything else, we should do this, and pray that this will be the end of the matter. Tares in the assemblies have kept these scriptures from being used

effectively through the ages. Nevertheless if we approach these things the way God's word tells us to, our heart is clean, even if the other part rejects the effort. I assure you: if Bro. Allen came to me, to talk about something on my part that had offended him, I would be anxious to hear what he had to say, and also, to do whatever I could to get the offense reconciled; for in such a case, I would not even be aware of the fact that he was offended. The offending party will not always be innocent in the matter; but the same scripture should be our authority on how to go about getting such a matter reconciled, regardless of the guilt or innocence. Let me mention something else that causes bad feelings in an assembly of people at times. It is business dealings among the church people, when one or more parties fail to live up to the agreements made. If you do something for a brother or sister in the church, it is better if you will just try to do a little extra for them, and not just enough to get by. The devil always finds some way to take the cover off and cause someone to say, I thought he was a Christian, and look what he did. In other words, he has trespassed against them because he has not done all that he was supposed to do, for the word trespass, speaks of a violation of moral or social ethics. Alright, in such cases, do we take the brother to court, and sue for damages? Not without first approaching him God's way. If it turns out he is a tare, and not a brother, you may have to take him to court; if the

situation warrants it; but in such a case, you have not take a brother to court. A true child of God will be sensitive toward the feelings of others, and will try to resolve any misunderstanding as soon as he is aware of it; for he does not want to do things contrary to God's way, knowing that his heavenly Father will give him a whipping if he does not do right. Well how far should we go, in trying to get a situation resolved scripturally? Until we have exhausted the scriptural provisions. Verse 15 tells us that the offended person first goes to the other party alone, and talks to him about the problem; and when this is done, with the right attitude of course, many times it ends right there. But if it cannot be reconciled there, the next two verses give further instructions on how to handle it God's way. Verse 16 says, "But if he will not hear thee, (If he fails, or refuses to cooperate) then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Now saints, you do not take your brother-in-law and your cousin; you take two other Christians that would be just as interested in his welfare, as they would be of yours; and then if the matter cannot be resolved, it is time to use verse 17; tell it to the church. Notice, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." That is how Jesus said we should handle these situations, and I tell you: any true child of God would be a fool

to let something go that far, knowing that God will not let his true children do wrong and get by with it. The truth is, If a person so stubbornly resists all efforts that are scripturally made, it is a good indication that you are dealing with a tare, and not a true brother in the Lord, except of course, a complete baby Christian that still needs to be nurtured and taught in the ways of the Lord. To knowingly resist, when every effort is being made on the part of the other party, takes you right over to Hebrews 12, where we will pick up in verse 5. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: (You will certainly be rebuked when you knowingly do wrong.) For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, (pay attention to this now, I want you to catch every word of it.) And scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? BUT IF YE BE WITHOUT CHASTISEMENT, WHEREOF ALL ARE PARTAKERS (all God's children) THEN ARE YE BASTARDS, (TARES) AND NOT SONS." If we believe that God loves His children: then we should also believe that He will be faithful to chasten those who misconduct themselves, and fail to repent of it. How does God chasten: He has many ways; but mainly the devil is His whipping boy. God just simply pulls back His protecting shield and lets the

devil work us over, until His purpose is accomplished. A child of God knows when he is being chastened no matter what form the chastisement comes in. But the main point in all that I have said here, is that we should always be aware of the devil's devices, and knowing that he takes great pleasure in getting the children of God offended and upset, do our utmost to bring about a condition of healing wherever there is any kind of injury to the body of Christ, just like we do when the physical body is injured. Our first concern should be to make sure we do it God's way, when we determine that something ought to be done. Regardless of everything else, love is the great healing force, and it always will be.

### **WHAT HEALS WOUNDS**

Any time I think of how the apostle Paul used the physical body of mankind to illustrate his point about this great mystical body of Christ, I think about how our body is designed by the Creator to heal itself when it is injured; if we will just take the necessary steps to promote healing. You have red corpuscles that supply oxygen and carry life in the body; but you also have white corpuscles, that act as a defense system against infection, and so forth. Now naturally,

when you cut yourself, you see red, simply because the red corpuscles are more in number, and are the carriers of the body's energy; but the minute you do cut yourself those unseen white corpuscles, or cells, immediately begin to attach themselves to the structure of the flesh that has been injured. They fight infection by causing the blood to clot, close up the wound, and form a scab. By this means, other invading elements that might have a tendency to penetrate the wounded tissue, are kept out. In other words, a healthy person, no matter how serious the wound, if you can get the blood stopped and the wound closed up, the rest will take care of itself. You may have a scar if it was a bad injury, but you will heal up, because God has designed us in that way. Well the body of Christ is the same way. No matter how bad an injury may be, if those who are in a place to do something about it, will obey the word of God and meet the necessary conditions, the body will heal up. It is no wonder though, that James wrote what he did about the tongue, for most of the trouble we encounter is either because of our own tongue, or someone else's, speaking words that are unwise. In chapter 1, verse 26, he wrote, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is in vain." Then in chapter 3, verse 2, we read these words, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." He

then speaks of bits in horses mouths, and of the small rudder of huge ships, and how these, though small they be, are able to set the course of travel. Then in verse 5 he says, "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the father: and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" We will stop reading there, but it might be good, if you would finish the chapter later, for it gets right down where people live, and lets you know why it is necessary every day, to subject your fleshly nature to the leadership of the new man within, the part of you that seeks to follow the ways of God. That takes you back to Galatians 5:16 & 17, where Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are



contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Any time you allow fleshly feelings to express themselves, you are very likely to find yourself in an un-Christ like situation, for your old nature will not stay dead, without some special effort on your part to see to it. Your flesh will not just automatically serve God. If it did, we would never need correction, for we all know right from wrong. Now when it comes to a tare, God just lets them go on their own way; until such time as He sees fit to separate them from the body. He will never attempt to perfect a tare, for their place is already prepared for them, and they are going to end up there, no matter what takes place while they are still playing church. We may spend a lot of time trying to correct a tare; but God will not, because He knows they are not His children. They can do anything they want to, any time they want to. But the true child of God, as time gets closer to the end, will become more sensitive to the leading of the Spirit of God, and more concerned about his personal relationship with his heavenly Father. His prayer will be, Lord, help me overcome all these fleshly traits that keep me from being like you. Lord I desire to have my spirit under the control of the Holy Spirit all the time. As we become more and more concerned in this way, not too many of these little petty things of the flesh will bother us. We can leave the negative side, and become more positive, as we serve God together. What good does it

do, to pray for God to move in our midst, and to pour out of His blessings upon us, if we do not know how to go about correcting these negative problems among us? It is when we can sit here in one accord, with the true love of God radiating from our lives, that the Holy Ghost will move upon us, bind up the wounds, and heal us, both physically and spiritually.

### **OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Saints: I hope some of this is speaking to you; for time is too short for us to be negligent about our spiritual lives, and about the testimony we bear to others. Some of you need to learn that your personal feelings are not the most important thing in this life, and that you should never allow personal feelings to stand in the way of something God is doing. If God has to be a little hard on someone’s flesh, in order to correct a situation in their lives, just be sure you do not allow your personal feelings for them to sympathize with their situation, lest you make things worse. Compassion is a godly trait, but sympathy is detrimental, for it never accomplishes anything worthwhile. There are some people that just seem to make a point of being sympathetic in every situation, but the question is, Do they

supply anything to the body of Christ? Does their sympathy promote healing where there is hurt, or does it just make the situation worse? You cannot help anyone by making them feel sorry for themselves, even more than they do already; and that is exactly what sympathy usually does. ON the other hand, genuine compassion will cause you to want to do something to correct the situation, and many times you can. But whatever we do, let us be sure we are doing it according to the word of God. As we journey along life's pathway, there is something for every true child of God to do, that will benefit the body, and if we will all assume our Christian responsibility, as God opens these various truths up to us, we will begin to see some of the same results in our day, that they saw in the days of the apostolic leadership in the first century. As long as we are divided in the way we look at certain things, the Holy Spirit is not allowed to bind up and heal wounds, and it is all because some of these scriptural provisions have been lost truths, not exercised in the church since the days of the apostles. I do not know about anyone else, but I am going to say something to Faith Assembly, and I want every one of you to listen to what I say. When you see a brother, or a sister, doing something, that you feel in your spirit, could be harmful to the body of Christ, it is your Christian responsibility to scripturally do something about it. Do not run to a friend and tell it, and say, pray about it.

That is just an excuse to blab it. You get your Bible, and get on your knees before God until you know what to do, and then do it, without telling it everywhere you go. Of course there are some things that need to be told openly; and I am sure that every child of God knows the difference. But just for an example: If you see me downtown, staggering all over the place, and unable to find my car because I have been hanging around some place that I should not have been, you tell someone; and the sooner the better. If you see me running around with another woman, other than my own wife, you tell someone. That kind of thing needs to be told, and needs to be dealt with, and should not be covered over. God did not hold back in exposing that kind of thing in the scriptures, and he has not changed; but when it comes to little petty differences among the fellowship of the saints; you do not broadcast those to the world; you take the necessary steps to get them reconciled. Some of you may say, I could never do anything like that. You consider yourself a nobody, and feel that you are inferior to everyone else; all because you have allowed the devil to lie to you. If you are spiritual enough to know something is wrong, and you can slip around and tell someone else about it, then you are just as able to go right to the source of the problem, and deal with it in a way that will be beneficial to the body. No one except the parties directly involved, ever need to know

about it; if it is handled according to the word of God.

## **HOLINESS IS AN INWARD ATTRIBUTE**

Now brothers and sisters, I am not saying that we should get like some of the Nazarene people we have heard of; that is, so wise and holy, we just go around looking everyone else over, just waiting for them to make a wrong move; or go into other peoples houses and look their magazine rack over, to see if they have anything in there that you feel they should not have. That kind of thing will surely cause hard feelings, for God has not authorized anyone to police our houses and force us to put on an outward show of holiness. He has a better way. The Holy Ghost searches our hearts and places conviction on us about those things he finds in our lives, that He is not pleased with. If our holiness works it's way out to our outer appearance, from within, then we do not have to run and hide a lot of things when someone knocks on our door unexpectedly. In other words, somewhere there has got to be some practical understanding, and some sensible application of scriptural principles in the body of believers, before we can ever reflect very much of the image of Jesus Christ. We must become so conscious

of what the Bible says, that it will cause us to start being a little more cautious each day, instead of getting with someone and turning our tongues loose, just to say anything we feel like saying I have heard people say, Well I'm not a hypocrite; I believe in telling it just like it is. Do you know what an attitude like that compares to? A man who goes on through an intersection just because he has the right-of-way, even though there was a speeding vehicle coming the other way. You know what happened; lives were lost unnecessarily, just because someone insisted that he had the right-of-way. Is that the way you want your spiritual life to be? Do you want to have a cancerous infection in the body of Christ, just because you have the legal right of free speech, in the country you live in? If that is how you feel, you are subject to one of two things. Either you will be rejected by God, because you are a tare; or your heavenly Father will whip the socks off of you, to get your thinking straightened out, one of the two, for He cannot tolerate that kind of a spirit where He is in the process of perfecting the body of Christ as a whole. That kind of attitude has had its day; but we are too close to the end, for God to allow it to continue. You must remember, we are of that generation that is being restored to the faith of our apostolic fathers; therefore we must be restored to the same godly principles and precepts also. It is God Himself that predetermined that we should be conformed to the image of His (only

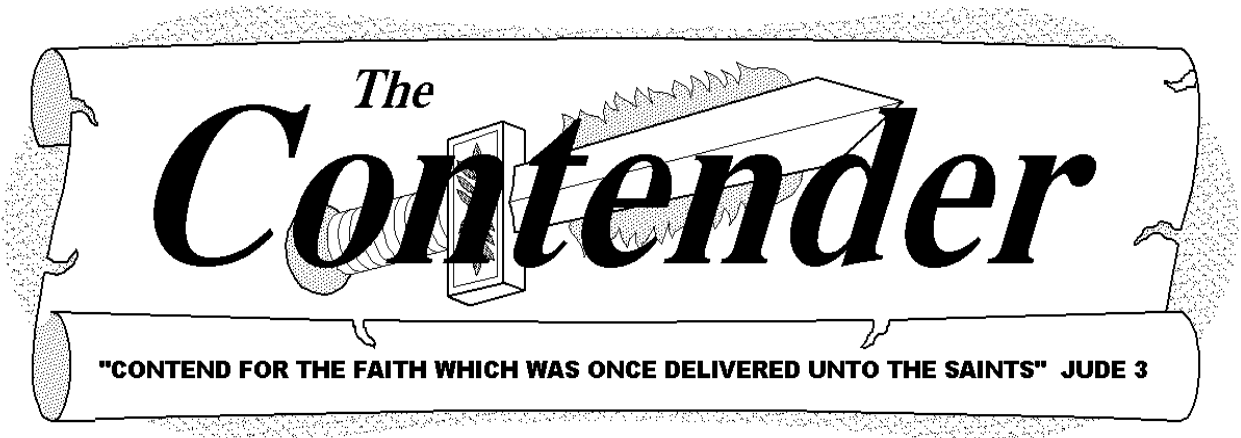
begotten) Son, (Jesus) that He might be the firstborn among many brethren, according to Romans 8:29, so if He determined to do that, then I am persuaded that He knows how to get the job done.

### **ANOTHER WAY WE CAN SUPPLY SOMETHING**

Alright we have said quite a bit along the lines of what I call, the negative side of this, so let me take just a moment to speak of what I call the positive side; where we, as children of God, will find ourselves faced with circumstances of a little different nature than what we have been talking about, but of equal importance to a healthy body of believers. There will be times when you will find your brother, or sister in Christ, or even whole families in dire circumstances. It can be some kind of social situation, or financial, or sickness that has hit them and put them in a very serious situation. I call this a positive situation, because it is something that Satan has hit them with, and you are not looking for a way to correct them, but to help them out of their problem. There are many things that can hit a family, that just simply takes them down to rock bottom. But do not ever think because you are not a spiritual giant, that you have no part. Whether God sees you as

a 30, 60, or a 100 fold Christian, you are still His child, and have just as much at stake in obeying God's will, as anyone else. God can deal with you in such a way that you will have perfect insight as to how to deal with the particular problem. He can give you a dream, He can give you a vision, or He can just simply deal with you in the realm of your intellect, by giving you a certain thought, so vividly that you cannot get away from it. Of course we all know the devil puts thoughts in our mind also, and that causes some to be a little leery about acting; therefore you must learn to examine the thing in the light of God's written word. We check our motive to make sure it is of a godly origin, and make sure we are not expecting our flesh to receive any undue credit, and then weigh it against your natural thinking. Usually what God shows us to do, is the furthest thing from our natural reasoning. In other words, it is not how we see it, but how God sees it, that makes the difference. Therefore if your heart is right in the matter, you will know whether it is God, or the devil that puts certain things in your mind; and more so as time goes on, and you cultivate the presence of God in your thinking. There was a time I had planned to do a certain thing. In my mind, the thought was complete, as to how to go about it, but the time when I was going to do it was a little later on. Then as it got closer and closer to the time I was planning to do this certain thing, I went to bed one night and fell into a sound

sleep, and sometime during the morning hours, I awakened with the thought going through my mind, Don't do that now. Don't do that now. In my mind, that was all I could think. It took sleep away from me for the rest of the night, as those four words lingered there. But when I finally got up, all the desire I had had for weeks to do that certain thing, was all gone. That just shows what God is able to do, and that is only one of the many ways that people of God are going to be dealt with from here on out to the end. But in order for God to be able to give us positive substance in such things, we are going to have to be willing to be used in these negative things we have talked about also. God wants the whole body to grow; not just one little area. The devil is always looking for the weak points, to make his assaults upon, so if the whole body is strong, he has less room to work.



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