

FELLOWSHIP IN THE TRUTH

IN a private communication to a friend in the North, who had put some questions, Dr. Thomas writes on this subject, as follows:

The Lord Jesus said: "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me, that they may be one, being sanctified through the truth; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, as we are one, made perfect in One."—(John 17 .) This unity of spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), is what John styles *our fellowship*, the fellowship of the apostles, resulting from sanctification through the truth. Hence all who are sanctified through the truth, are sanctified by the second Will, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. For by one offering he hath perfected for a continuance them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:10 , 14), which one offering of the body was the annulling and condemnation of sin, by the sacrifice thereof.—(Heb. 9:26 .) This body, which descended from David "according to the flesh," was the sacrificial victim offered by the Eternal Spirit.—(Heb. 9:14 .) If David's flesh were immaculate, this victim, descended from him, might possibly be spotless; but in that event, it would not have answered for the annulling and condemnation of sin in the flesh that sinned.—(Rom. 8:4 .) If it were an immaculate body that was crucified, it could not have borne our sins in it, while hanging on the tree.—(1 Peter 2:24) To affirm, therefore, that it was immaculate (as do all papists and sectarian daughters of the Roman Mother), is to render of none effect the truth which is only sanctifying for us by virtue of the principle that Jesus Christ came IN THE FLESH, in that sort of flesh with which Paul was afflicted when he exclaimed "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?"—(Rom. 7:11 , 24 .)

It is not my province to issue bulls of excommunication, but simply to shew what the truth teaches and commands. I have to do with principles, not men. If anyone say that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh common to us all, the apostle John saith that that spirit or teacher is not of God; is the deceiver and the anti-Christ, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ; and is therefore not to be received into the house, neither to be bidden God-speed.—(1 John 4:3 , 2 ; 2 Ep. 7 , 9 , 10 .) I have nothing to add to or take from this. It is the sanctifying truth of the things concerning the "name of Jesus Christ." All whom the apostles fellowshiped, believed it; and all in the apostolic ecclesias who believed it not—and there were such—had not fellowship with the apostles, but opposed their teachings; and when they found they could not have their own way, John says "They went out from us, but they—the anti-Christ—were not of us; for if they had been of us (of our fellowship), they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."—(1 John 2:19 .) The apostles did not cast them out, but they went out of their own accord, not being able to endure sound doctrine.—(2 Tim. 4:3 .)

Then preach the word, &c., and exhort with all long-suffering and teaching. This is the purifying agency. Ignore brother this and brother that in said teaching; for personalities do not help the argument. Declare what you as a body believe to be the apostles' doctrines. Invite fellowship upon that basis alone. If upon that declaration, any take the bread and wine, not being offered by you, they do so upon their own responsibility, not on yours. If they help themselves to the elements, they endorse your declaration of doctrine, and eat condemnation to themselves. For myself, I am not in fellowship with the dogma that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh, or that he died as a substitute to appease the fury and wrath of God. The love of God is manifest in all that He has done for man. "When all wish to do what is right," the right surely is within their grasp. I trust you will be able to see it from what is now before you. And may the truth preside over all your deliberations, for Christ Jesus is the truth, and dwells with those with whom the truth is. Where this is I desire to be.

If I believe the truth as it is in the Jesus Paul preached, and fellowship the doctrine of an immaculate Jesus Paul did not preach, in celebrating the death of the latter with those who repudiate the maculate body set forth by God for a propitiation, is affirming one thing and practising another. Those who hold Paul's doctrine, ought not to worship with a body that does not. This is holding with the hare and running with the hounds—a position of extraordinary difficulty. Does not such an one love the hounds better than the hare? When the hounds come upon the hare, where will he be? No; if I agree with you in doctrine, I will forsake the assembling of myself with a body that opposes your doctrine, although it might require me to separate from the nearest and dearest. No good is effected by compromising the principles of the truth; and to deny that Jesus came in sinful flesh, is to destroy the sacrifice of Christ.

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