

## A Sectarian and a Truth Seeker

by David Lipscomb<sup>1</sup>

A sectarian is one who defends everything his party holds or that will help his party, and opposes all that his party does not hold or that will injure the strength and popularity of his party. The partisan takes it for granted everything his party holds is right, and everything the other party holds is wrong and to be opposed. Hence the party lines define his faith and teaching. He sees no good in the other party. He sees no wrong in his own party, unless some one in his party should love truth and oppose an error of his party or defend a truth of the other party.

A truth lover and seeker always looks into whatever party he comes in contact with, and will first look to see what truth the party holds. All parties hold some element of truth. Usually each party holds and emphasizes some particular truth in a way of its own. One seeking truth above all other things will search out first of all this truth and appropriate it as his own. A true lover of truth seeks out and appropriates as his own every truth he finds, no matter who holds or teaches it. All truth is the heritage of the truth lover and seeker. He will approach every teacher and every system as holding and cherishing some truth that he desires to learn and hold. He will feel kindly toward all. The love of truth is a spirit of kindness and love toward all, even to the holder of error. He loves the holder of truth because he receives truth and strength from him. He loves those in error because he sympathizes with them and desires to impart truth and strength to them. He knows, too, the more truth and strength he imparts to others, the more he has for himself. A characteristic of truth is, the more we give away, the more we have to keep for ourselves. Imparting, giving away truth. Increases our own store. The lover of truth, then, feels kindly toward all and approaches all, whether to gain or impart, in a spirit of kindness and love. The effort to learn and gain truth from others opens their hearts to learn and receive truth from us. He who is most willing to receive truth from others is the most effective teacher of truth to others. When we are receiving another's truth is a good time to remove his errors and impart to him truth. Jesus and the apostles acknowledged the truth others held, and made the acknowledgment of that truth often the occasion of correcting their errors and teaching other truths.

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<sup>1</sup>David Lipscomb, "A Sectarian and a Truth Seeker," Gospel Advocate (June 27, 1907): 409.

## WHO IS SECTARIAN?

By David Lipscomb

I would say that it is wrong to encourage sectarianism in any way, if we can tell who are sectarians. But my observation is that it takes a sectarian to ferret out a sectarian, just as "it takes a rogue to catch a rogue." Unfortunately, all the sectarians are not in sectarian churches; and I hope that some in sectarian churches are not sectarians. Things get badly mixed in this world. Sometimes people who wish to obey God are born and reared in sectarian influences. A man who loves party more than he loves God is a sectarian. A man who divides the church of God for a theory or teaching not required by God is a sectarian. A person who pushes an idea or practice not required by God, to the disturbance of the peace of the church, or that exalts a human opinion or practice to an equality with the commands of God, is a sectarian and a heretic. There are some in nonsectarian churches who are sectarians, who violate the laws of God in order to oppose sectarians. They are sectarian in their opposition to sectarians. There are some in sectarian churches who will obey God and follow him in spite of the sectarianism of the churches in which they find themselves. As examples, there are persons in the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches who were baptized to obey God rather than to please the sects. In this they rise above the sectarian spirit, despite the parties in which they find themselves. They ought to get out of the sectarian churches, but they see so much sectarianism in the nonsectarian churches that they think they are all alike. Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, all met with sectarian Jews at their times and places of worship and participated with them, that they might find an opportunity to speak a word for the truth. I do not think it hurts anyone to hear the Bible read by sectarian or sinner at any time or place. The great end is to be true and faithful to the truth and at the same time kind and sympathetic with those in error. The nearer we can do these two things, the more like Jesus we will be and the more sinners and sectarians we will save.