

The “UNITY of The SPIRIT” WHAT IS IT?

A Fresh Examination of an Old Standard Ephesians 4:1–6

By Jack W. Langford, January 9, 2012
(Certain names have been deleted from this edition)

Recently the question of just exactly what the “unity of the Spirit” is has arisen among certain brethren who are dramatically attempting to dig out of the confused aftermath of sad division. Just here I will use a tornado as an analogy. We have all seen pictures of people standing where their homes used to be after a tornado had swept through bringing destruction and confusion to their once seemingly secure and comfortable communities. There they stand wondering where to begin in reconstructing their lives and property. What changes do they plan to make? So it is with certain brethren who are making drastic reevaluations of what they thought they believed previously. The Lord warned us of disruptions in the spiritual realm. The unity that they once had has obviously been disrupted and has left them like “children, tossed to and fro and carried about with *every wind of doctrine*, by the trickery (crafty, deceitful scheming) of men” (Eph. 4:14).

In nearly every scene of nature where tornadoes do their damage, there are always some houses that withstood the storm’s turbulence. Some say that the storm simply bounced over certain houses. This may be true in some cases. The building inspectors will usually tell you that the most probable cause for certain structures withstanding the storm’s fury is due to the fact that they were more sturdily built according to code. In the spiritual realm we must certainly realize that had assemblies been led to carefully build their houses by the *code of God’s Word* they would not have collapsed in such disarray. We also know one thing for sure—Ephesians 4:1–6 stands as the inspired building code God has provided so that the “house” which we profess to be building will stand against the winds of Satan that blow against it.

The Spiritual Code

Can you imagine some of these so-called “leaders” now saying—“the code is only a past event and not something practical which we do!”? Verily, to reject and ignore the practical aspect of this God ordained code of principles is to invite disaster. In fact, this perverse emphasis becomes a mockery to the truth of the passage.

I am going to quote this passage using *The Majority Text Greek New Testament Interlinear*, 2007, Thomas Nelson Publishers. Often we find that certain modern

translations can be flavored by the particular religious philosophy of the translator. Confusion sometimes reigns over opinions about the best translation. To avoid that, I have gone back to a literal translation of the Greek text itself. This should dispel some of the confusion over words. Interestingly enough, in the case of this particular passage of Scripture there is perfect unanimity by the major Greek texts.

Best of all, it is our privilege, and for our spiritual enlightenment, to go back and carefully meditate again upon the rich truths in this passage of Scripture. Because of the availability of Bible lexicons which give clear definitions to the Greek words used, we can read the text word by word, meditate on its meaning and then compare Scripture with Scripture to assure our understanding. Let us pray for God's guidance in this endeavor.

EPHESIANS 4:1–6

**“I therefore urge you, as a prisoner of the Lord,
to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called,
with all humility and meekness, with longsuffering, bearing one another in love,
being diligent to keep *the unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace.**

**There is one body
and one Spirit,
just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
one Lord,
one faith,
one baptism,
one God and Father of all, the One over all and through all and in us all.”**

***The Position of the Book of Ephesians
in relationship to ‘Church Truth’***

The book of Ephesians has been referred to by some dispensational expositors as “the mountain peak of God’s revelation concerning the Church of Jesus Christ today.” This is a correct and important analogy. It has been pointed out that as Moses was called up to the top of Mount Sinai to receive the Divine revelation of the Law system, so the apostle Paul was “caught up to the third heaven” (2 Cor. 12:1–6) to receive the Divine revelation concerning God’s stewardship for this age of time. In addition, the book of Ephesians seems to sum up that revelation. In Ephesians we are “seated with Christ in the heavenly *realms*” (Eph. 1:3 and 2:6).

One might further observe that as the “Ten Commandments” stand as a central feature of the Law system revealed to the nation of Israel, so stands the “Unity of the Spirit” in relation to the Church of Jesus Christ. The Ten Commandments epitomized the moral standard under which God designed Israel to operate. So it is that the Unity of the Spirit epitomizes the spiritual operating procedure for this Christian Dispensation.

“I therefore urge you . . .”

To properly appreciate and understand this inspired section of Scripture, it has been observed many times before that any text must be read in light of its contextual setting, both what comes *before* and what *follows after*. At this juncture in the letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul prefaces his exhortation on the basis of what he has previously revealed in this letter. Consequently his opening statement “*I therefore*” means we need to remember and understand what has gone before. What Paul is now going to say is based upon what he has stated previously.

A most prominent part of what the apostle Paul has previously stated in this epistle has to do with the exalted position of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God the Father in heaven and Christ’s place as “Head over all things to the church which is His body” (Eph. 1:3–23). Included in this same first chapter are numerous blessings bestowed upon the ones who have come to place their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives. Paul prays that “the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened” (1:18) in order to see and understand what God is doing today. In Chapter 2 it is further revealed that every believer is “raised up” and made to “sit together with Christ in the heavenly places” (2:6). Believers are “no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (2:19). Amazing as it may seem, God is building a “holy temple” today (2:20–22).

In chapter three Paul is going to position the believer in this “holy temple” from which the believer will have a better appreciation of God’s dwelling place on earth today. Paul begins in chapter 3 to build upon the unique dispensational truths that characterize this age (see 3:2 and 3:9). By these truths the believer can be “strengthened . . . in the inner man” (3:16), be able to “*comprehend*” the “*width, length, depth and height*” (3:18) of the greatness of God’s Spiritual Temple program for us today and thus “be filled with all the *fullness of God*” (3:19). In other words, God is in this Holy Temple today. This, as it were, places us right in the middle of the present “Holy Temple” (see 2:20–22) wherein we can say with Paul “to Him be the glory in the church and in Jesus Christ to all generations forever and ever. Amen” (3:21).

Now this is a magnificent introduction to the passage under our consideration in chapter 4:1–6. The apostle Paul is obviously captivated by the spiritual beauty, power and reality of God’s plan for this Age of Grace. His heart is overflowing with what he has seen, and in turn, he issues an inspired burden for God’s people in this age.

I personally have stood in the midst of some great cathedrals erected by men. I stood in what is called “Saint Paul’s Cathedral” in London. I stood in the midst of the original Catholic temple in Mexico City built nearly 500 years ago. I toured a similar one in Lima, Peru. I saw the insides of some magnificent “churches,” with breathtaking architecture, in the United States. I have seen splendid pictures of “Saint Peter’s Basilica” in Rome. Though these grandiose structures are titillating to man’s physical senses, none of these can even remotely compare with what we see with spiritual eyes here in Ephesians where God uses “living stones.”

Sad to say, the vast majority in Christendom today has little or no perception of the grandeur of this magnificent Temple. This condition of fogginess has been caused by the cataracts of 1700 years of human religious inventions. To those immersed in

traditional “churchanity,” who can only be appreciative of the architectural magnificence of human invention in man-made religion, such an exhortation by Paul is interpreted as mere sweet poetry or pious philosophy with little practical value.

On the other hand, rather than looking at the light emanating from men’s fancy, stained glass windows strategically placed in their earthly and devilish temples, believers are to be captivated by the light of the many unique truths and blessings God has bestowed upon us. In light of our unique positioning in God’s “mystery” temple, we can bring real praise to God in the midst of this age. Paul says “*I therefore urge you*”—meaning, as we stand in this “holy temple” how surely we should dedicate out lives to conform to God’s divine program for us.

To further sober us, and to state the circumstances of this exhortation, Paul offers what are in essence his unusual credentials—

“ . . . as a prisoner ”

And here, we are suddenly stopped in our tracks. In addition to delivering this great and wonderful message, Paul shocks us with the fact that he is obviously not standing upon some grandiose pulpit of carved wood or stone, nor is he draped in gorgeous robes of rich elegance. Neither is he positioned in a great and magnificent cathedral in Rome. Nor is he to be greatly honored by men in this endeavor. On the contrary, he qualifies his own predicament as being that of “a prisoner.” It is from this position that he is inspired to issue this request of us. These are actually Paul’s credentials as far as God is concerned (see 2 Corinthians 11:16–30).

Now this type of a preface could actually seem very unusual to many people. After all, most people have severe reservations about even allowing a man *in prison* trying to lecture them, let alone, ask anything of them. However, when we note that Paul qualifies his imprisonment as “a prisoner *of the Lord*,” we understand this is an entirely different circumstance than any ordinary prisoner.

“ . . . of the Lord ”

Paul was not in prison for vile inhumane deeds to society. Paul was imprisoned because of his testimony for Christ—and this testimony was not appreciated by the world. In fact, Paul is telling us he was in prison for some of these very truths he is now sharing with us. Just like Jesus Christ, Himself, Who suffered under the Jewish and Roman judgment, so Paul is also suffering. Looking into the previous chapter we see Paul asking the brethren to “not lose heart at (his) tribulation on their behalf, which is to their glory” (3:13). One might naturally ask, “how could Paul’s imprisonment be to our ‘glory’?”

Amazing as it may seem, it was from this Roman imprisonment that Christ revealed through Paul some of the most liberating truths ever known. Not only is Paul revealing liberating truths on our behalf, but he is suffering because of those truths. These very truths about Christ and Christianity are worth dying for. It is therefore of importance for us to never forget these truths which speak condemnation to the world of religion, superstition, idolatry and human invention. Consequently, the anger of the unrighteous is

drawn towards any who would *openly walk* in these truths. That practical walk would, in effect, spell the condemnation of the religious world. It does so even to this very day. In that regard, we must realize and understand that the attitude of the world and of mere religion has not changed in our own time.

What should this mean to us today? It first of all means that when we lift the pages of this text before our eyes we must remember that many saints have suffered imprisonment and even death because of walking in these truths. It means that the individual Christian today who puts these truths into shoe leather is going to suffer at the hands of religionists just as surely as did the saints of old. Yes, misunderstanding, hatred, false accusations and even death have been the trial of many saints down through the centuries who have endeavored to walk in these truths.

This is indeed an amazing preface to this section of Scripture. It alerts us to the possibility that there may be a *price to be paid* for walking in these truths.

In my own case, beginning in 1952 I heard preaching on this subject by men like Maurice Johnson, Ed Stevens, Wilbur Johnson, Richard Bailey, Bob Thompson, James Cox, Berl Chisum and many others. It was from these men that I first heard this passage of Scripture expounded. Indeed, the very first meeting I ever came to was in East Los Angeles and I remember this passage displayed upon the wall outside the Ceramic Decorating Co.—

“Don’t Blame God For Religious Confusion. There is ONE Body . . .”

I knew the truth when I heard it and I was drawn to these men because I knew they were willing to suffer ridicule and be maligned for preaching the truth on this very key subject. I knew personally that their use of this passage brought hatred and animosity towards them by religionists and even fellow Christians in the Fundamentalist circles who had chosen to walk in sectarian divisive toleration. I still have copies of the handout post cards and/or tracts with this passage of Scripture displayed upon them in pictorial form. I also remember the disdain that was cast upon us by those fellow brethren who had chosen to operate under man-made religious inventions.

And now, nearly 60 years later, I hear a preacher (who has raised himself up as a second or third generation leader among this group) expound on this same passage, and I can guarantee you one thing for sure—those in every brand of sectarian division would pin upon him their medals of honor. They would most certainly applaud the conclusions he has now finally come to regarding “a better understanding” of this passage of Scripture. For, indeed, he has successfully taken *the sting* out of the condemnation this passage spells toward them in their various and sundry religiosities. His expression of tender “toleration,” which was echoed as in duet by another leader among them will most certainly bring relief to the guilty consciences of those carnal Christians who have most surely chosen to set aside the revealed “unity of the Spirit.” These men are now waving their banner in humble pride—which is best described as the “*Unity of Appeasement.*”

“ . . . to walk . . . ”

Herein is the **first** of a series of exhortations that pertains to our “WALK.” And here we see the rest of the context in Ephesians for this passage—namely “*the practical*.”

Walk of the believer.” The **second** exhortation pertaining to our “walk” is in verses 17–32. Believers are encouraged to not “walk” as in their former unsaved manner of life, but rather in the “*new man*.” The **third** exhortation is in chapter 5:1–7. Believers are herein encouraged to “walk in love,” and to avoid the sins of the flesh. In chapter 5, verses 8–14 we see the **fourth** exhortation as to our “walk.” Believers are encouraged to “walk as children of light.” In 5:15–21 we find the **fifth** exhortation. Believers are encouraged to “walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.” Right here I would ask “Which one of these five exhortations as to our ‘walk’ is not practical for our everyday life?”

It becomes obvious by these words—“to walk worthily”—that whatever the “unity of the Spirit” is, it is something so designed by God as to allow each believer to put it into practice in his Christian life. It is a reality we can W-A-L-K in. In Ephesians 2:10 we are told that we are “God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should WALK in them.” Now, we are to understand that the “unity of the Spirit” is the **first** of five areas in which the believers are to “walk” or practice in their lives. In other words, the “unity of the Spirit” has as its most **obvious character** a practical application in our daily lives as living representatives of Jesus Christ.

I remember very vividly the Sunday in 1953 when I came to a meeting and afterwards sat down with brother H. G. Ross. I asked him to explain to me what he knew about this Maurice Johnson who “was everywhere spoken against” (Acts 28:22). Brother Ross assured me that the real reason Maurice Johnson is despised by those in the fundamentalist circles is only because he is determined to “walk” in the truth of Ephesians 4 and not just preach it. I realized that this was indeed the truth of the matter.

In contrast, any allusion to this primary fact of our “walk” in demonstration of this “Unity” was totally absent from anything these men now gave in their presentation. What they did give only spelled out passivity towards sectarians.

“ . . . worthily ”

The English word “worthily” is a translation of the Greek word *axos* which the lexicons say literally means “to pull down the scales” so as to give “a just weight.” The thought here is that God has made a great investment in each redeemed sinner. Like any other investor, God naturally wants good returns upon His investment. The idea of “pulling down the scales so as to give a just weight (or to equalize)” means that God expects us to live our new lives (God’s investment) in such a manner as to do justice to God’s investment. Another way of stating this exhortation is by the old saying, “everyone needs to deserve his earn.”

On the one hand we know that there is absolutely nothing that God requires of lost sinners in order to gain salvation. There is no way man’s good works can tilt the scales of God’s judgment in his behalf. Salvation is initially received expressly by faith in Christ and not by our good works. Good works in this regard are actually offensive to God. It is our works which have condemned us. Our works have tilted the scales against us. Salvation is free; it is the gift of God. Salvation “by grace” means that it does not come by good works that demands a meritorious reward.

Yet on the other hand, now that we are saved and made members of God's household, God offers to us the privilege of living out our new lives in a manner that does justice to the grace of God in Christ. As stated earlier in Ephesians (2:10) the believer is "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for *good works*, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Thus, for the believer to "walk worthily" is to balance the scales. It becomes our privilege to yield to God's "workmanship" in us so as to give God a good return for His glorious and gracious investment.

" of the calling . . . "

It is interesting that in the King James Version this is translated "the *vocation* wherewith you were called." The literal translation of the Greek word *kleesis* is "calling." As we commonly realize, a person's calling can also be understood in the sense of a "vocation." For instance, Paul was "called (*kleesis*) to be an apostle of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:1 and I Cor. 1:2). That was a particular vocation or ministry. In I Corinthians 7:20 Paul used the word to distinguish the status between Jew and Gentile. Each has his distinctive calling or status in life. Consequently there is real value in the King James translation which actually makes it more comprehensible to our practical understanding and experience. Sometimes we still use the words "calling" and "vocation" interchangeably. There is a difference, of course. A vocation is the type of work we do. It is more surely a profession we chose (unless it is forced upon us). The word "calling" emphasizes God's part in issuing His desire and design for our life. Therefore, as Christians we should think of our *calling* as God's designed *vocation* for our lives.

We all are familiar with vocations in life. One person may be a carpenter, another a professor in a university, another an office worker, minister, gardener, lawyer, doctor, etc., etc. Most people will try to find the vocation that is most suitable to their particular disposition or abilities. In this particular case God has directly designed the new nature of every believer for this particular "*vocation*." And it is most important to remember that in this case, the "vocation" points directly, in context, to "the unity of the Spirit." In other words, the "unity of the Spirit" should be the "*vocation*" and/or "calling" of every believer in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of his life.

If someone were to ask you "What is your vocation in life?" you might well answer them, "As a Christian, it is to walk in the Unity of the Spirit." It is appropriate that everyone lives in such a manner as will give credit to his profession. How much more so, should the Christian live or "walk" so as to give credit ("worthily") to his "vocation."

". . . with all humility, meekness, patience and forbearance in love . . . "

This is the manner in which every believer should walk in this vocation or calling. This is not a part-time vocation on Sunday morning. This is an everyday calling. Nor is this a calling for our private devotional life, but rather an hourly demeanor before the world. This is not a mere profession of faith in Christ, but rather a demonstration of the very life of Jesus Christ in us. Obviously we need to remember that these ingredients come from the "fruit of the Spirit" in our lives. This is the life of one humbly appreciative

of the great gifts which God has bestowed upon him. This is the life of one expecting the body of Christ to be caught up to meet Him in the air.

There are four or five ingredients which should characterize the life and practice of one called to this vocation. The first two are like twins because they seem to say a similar thing and even translators sometimes mix them.

The first one is **humility**. The root of the Greek word means “to not rise far from the ground.” It carries the sense of *having little value*. This is the ingredient in our attitude which shows that we are mere recipients of God’s grace in this wonderful Church which He is building. We did not invent it. We did not organize it. We do not manage it; Jesus Christ does. We are mere recipients of God’s merciful kindness by being placed into the body of Christ. Therefore we cannot *vaunt* ourselves as if we generated in some way this amazing purpose of God for this dispensation. It properly, therefore, *humbles* us to be blessed with the privilege of representing before others the message and demonstration of this unity God has designed and ordained.

The best message I ever heard on the subject of “humility” ended up defining it as simply being that “deep fear and respect one has for the Word of God in his life—that is humility.” The man who walks in the unity of the Spirit will be the man who walks humbly before God.

The second word is **meekness**. This is now joined with humility and, in effect, states that as humble people we should be serving our Lord with the attitude *opposite* of *self-assertiveness*, not following our own self-interests. Some suggest that the attitude of “gentleness of spirit” be a part of the definition of meekness. It has been stated by one Greek scholar that the Greek word *prautes* is not readily expressed in the English (W.E. Vine). He explains that whereas in the English “meekness” can suggest weakness or lack of courage, this is not at all the case in the Greek usage. In the Bible “meekness” is first of all the proper fear of God, and consequently reliance upon His power and strength.

Amazing as it may seem, both these characterizations were demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ (the Creator of the universe) during His earthly sojourn (Matt. 11:29; Zech. 9:9 and Matt. 21:5). Jesus in His earthly ministry was simply functioning as a humble servant, ministering with meekness the will of God. This should also remind us of Moses. Moses was the one human chosen to mediate the Law economy to the children of Israel, yet he was said to be “the meekest man on earth” (KJV, Num. 12:3, or as others “the humblest man on earth,” NASB). Neither in the case of Moses or of Christ was their meekness a sign of weakness or lack of courage in the service of God.

The third characteristic is **longsuffering**. Perhaps this is best understood by our word “patience.” The Christian brother or sister who has the truths about the church of Jesus Christ in proper order must not be proud and overbearing towards the ignorant. On the contrary, they should exercise great patience towards those who are untaught. This is because the eyes and minds of most have been blinded and confused by “the god of this age.” In the realm of religion today there is as much confusion as to what true Christianity is all about as there was in all pagan idolatry in past ages.

The fourth ingredient is **forbearance** (or bearing) *in love*. In the Greek, *anecho* means “to hold up, to bear with or to endure with.” This follows and expresses the

quality of the “patience” (the third characteristic above) the Christian is encouraged to exemplify. In other words, the believer is to “patiently bear with” the untaught brother in this great and important truth. One way we can “bear with” our brethren is by being in prayer for them that their eyes may be opened to the splendid truths about “the Church which is Christ’s body.” Above all, this forbearance is to be done *in love*. Volumes, of course, could be said about the subject of Christian love. Let it suffice to say that, obviously, this is the Divine “love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5). Such “forbearance” will be appreciated by many.

Just here a word of caution—

As I stated earlier, this leader has recently gained “new insight” into this passage. He also has a new translation that changes “forbearance” to “*tolerance*.” When asked by his supporter to define “tolerance,” he answers—“Tolerance, that’s giving you room when you disagree with me.” He goes on to explain that the Bible gives latitude for believers to disagree on various and sundry issues. (He also gave Romans 14:1–6 and Philippians 3:15 as proof of this. I will deal with this misuse of Scripture at the end of this message.) And then He projects this upon the subject of the Unity of the Spirit as if we should have an attitude of “*tolerance*” towards those who differ.

Of course, I don’t know of any lexicon that gives that definition of “tolerance” as the proper translation of the Greek word *anecho*. In addition, the last thing on earth that the apostle Paul would be teaching here is that there is to be “tolerance” in keeping the unity of the Spirit. To test their new found definition and application, let us just ask the following questions in context:

“*There is one Body*”—should we now be *tolerant* of those who believe and would therefore teach there is more than one body?

“*There is one Spirit*”—are we to be *tolerant* of doctrines that espouse more than one spirit? After all, there are other “spirits” to be sure—including false, deceiving spirits.

There is “*one Hope*”—are we to be *tolerant* of all the various “hopes” preached in Christendom today?

There is “*one Lord*”—are we to be *tolerant* of all the various “lords” in religion? Or is there more than one Lord Jesus Christ?

There is “*one Faith*”—are we to be *tolerant* of all the other “faiths” in organized Christendom? (Please see Jude 3 in answer.)

There is “*one Baptism*”—are we now to be *tolerant* of the variety of baptisms available as initiatory rites in all the sects in Christendom?

There is “one God and Father”—are we to be *tolerant* of a multiplicity of gods?

I am sure that a message like this would make the Devil quite happy. After all, if Christians would just be “tolerant” in all these areas then the Devil’s master work of confusion would reign supreme. Being “tolerant” of all these variables in Christendom today is exactly what I came out of even when I belonged to the “inter-faith” Fundamentalists. The Bible school I was in actually gloried in all the various denominations represented among the student body. (Of course, as my fundamentalist

friends exempted the Roman Catholics and liberals from this “tolerance,” so also does this brother.)

Take special note of— *The Intolerance of Christ*

In this respect, years ago brother Maurice Johnson wrote a very strong message entitled, *The Uniqueness and Consequent Intolerance of Christ*. I formatted that study and printed it in booklet form. I strongly recommend that these two leaders and everyone of us read that study again. Brother Johnson spoke in light of the popular modern “Fellowship of Faiths” programs that were increasingly being encouraged by sectarian preachers. It has become highly popular for these clergy to be teaching their congregations “how *tolerant* Jesus was of other people’s opinions . . .,” and in turn, how tolerant we should be of those who may disagree with us. However, brother Johnson stated, “The Christ of the Bible is the most *intolerant* Being that man has ever known or had the privilege of knowing.” Again he stated, “It is utterly impossible for any honest person to read the eighth chapter of John and then say that Christ was tolerant of other men’s religious opinions.” He then asked the questions: “Isn’t absolute truth intolerant of a lie? —Of all kinds of lies?” “Isn’t light intolerant of darkness?” And, “*What agreement has the Temple of God with idols?*”

“. . . being diligent to keep.”

The lexicon defines the Greek word *spoudazo* (diligent) as “earnestness or zeal.” This would emphasize the importance and beauty of the project and duty before us in our “walk” and presentation to the world. When a sales person knows he has a great product, and has personally applied that product to his life, he can and will enter into the presentation of that product with proper zeal, enthusiasm and confidence.

The English word “keep” is actually the simplest and best translation in this case. It is repeatedly used in relationship to “*keeping* the law,” to “*keep* the commandments,” to “*keep* My sayings,” to “*keep* My words,” to “*keep* the Sabbath,” etc. It simply means that the “unity of the Spirit” is the designated guideline by which those in the Christian profession should live and direct their lives. Just as the observance of the Sabbath day, or the keeping of the Law, or the commandments of Jesus were to be observed by everyone professing Judaism and/or faith in Christ, so it is that everyone professing Christianity in this Age of Grace is to be *keeping* the unity of the Spirit. Each believer is to be *observing* it and *walking* in it—thus “diligent to keep” it. The unity of the Spirit is, therefore, not some stagnant work that God has accomplished in the past, and men “guard” as if it was a museum piece for admiration. On the contrary, the unity of the Spirit, as intended in this text, is obviously a presently working and living principle for everyday operation.

Now when we normally say that something in the moral or spiritual realm can be “kept,” we are in effect saying that this “something” is not some abstract, one time thing or event which happened in the past. On the contrary, this “something” may have begun in the past but it is *possessed* now, *lived* now, *walked* in now, and *kept* now. In this passage of Scripture we are instructed that the *Unity of the Spirit* is a PRESENT-tense ingredient to be *observed* with *enthusiasm*.

In light of these plain truths, *it is absolutely amazing to me* that these brothers would now stress just the opposite. Of course, it must be stated out of fairness that they are coming at the subject from the perspective of some brethren who would force a so-called “Unity of the Spirit” upon one another. This perverseness was repulsive to them as it should have been to any of us. However, they now go to the *opposite extreme direction* and takes the position that the “Unity of the Spirit” is a one time event of the past that we can only “keep” by “guarding it” as if it is some museum piece, and being “tolerant” of any who disagree with his view of things. Their reaction is, if not more so, just as ungodly and obnoxious as the original cause of his reevaluation.

All these quotes are from the message by this brother given to the brethren in Southern California on 9/4/11. These quotes will be referenced from the pages of the careful and painstaking transcription which was made. Just read a few of his numerous statements to the effect that the Unity of the Spirit is NOT something we do or practice—

“Unity—it’s completed, [an] accomplished thing” (pg.11).

“But I think it is important to understand that the Unity of the Spirit is— is the act or the action that takes place when all were put into the body of Christ. That’s the Unity of the Spirit” (pg.13).

“It’s a fact. There’s nothing I do anymore to attain this” (pg. 14).

One asked “[Did you indicate] the Unity of the Spirit was a onetime event?” To which He responded, “Ah, Yeah.” (pg.14)

“But it’s a fact I’m one with you in Jesus Christ, regardless of how I walk or you walk, we are one in Jesus Christ. It’s constant.”

To which one responded—“So then the Unity of the Spirit is not a one time event, but it is an ongoing process.” In answer He stated, “No, the Unity of the Spirit happens—‘by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body’.”

“I believe the unity of John 17 is the work of God, it’s what happens to all who were born into His kingdom. And I believe the Unity of Ephesians 4:3 is the Divine unity of all believers as they were baptized into the body— 1 Corinthians 2:13” (pg. 16).

One tried to help this brother by distinguishing between the “automatic” unity of our new birth with that unity which is a “practical [and] functioning” unity that we are to “endeavor to keep” (pg.17). He still indicated disagreement.

Another tried to help him by stating, “But it’s ongoing. John 17 is ongoing as I as an individual Christian walk in that truth, and believe that truth. [As] I walk in my new man I will not be in conflict with any of the Word of God or any other Christian that’s walking in his new man.” To this he merely responded in sarcasm—“let me know when you get there” (pg. 20).

“It is not up to us and our futile little efforts for the body of Christ to be able to function here on this planet. If anything I think we’ve been a hindrance to it at times, a hindrance in manifesting it . . . So our calling is to ‘preserve’ it or ‘keep’ it, it’s not to create it” (pg. 24).

“I betcha there’s hardly a man in this room that I agree with on more than 50% of the things, and if we hit 50% we’d be doing great” (pg.25).

Of course, anyone can easily see by just looking at the actual passage before us that there is not the slightest hint from the apostle Paul that the Unity of the Spirit is a “one time event which happened when we were born again and initially added to the body of Christ.” On the contrary, the Unity of the Spirit is treated herein as a perpetual condition that will forever be true and practical as long as the body of Christ exists. These two brethren have blatantly perverted the Scriptures on this very important truth.

Interestingly enough, I had the same experience as this brother in being marked to be avoided at an earlier date by those brethren for not agreeing with their conclusions about a vital issue of man-made religious incorporation. However, it did not throw me into a tail-spin, wherein I reversed my stance from past years on vital issues. In fact, I personally encouraged this brother to be strong in the truths of Christ at this time in his life. (He obviously did just the opposite.) This is what I wrote back in 2006 concerning the Unity of the Spirit in light of my own experience—

What the Unity of the Spirit is NOT!

“It has been projected that since I am not together with the majority of my brethren on these matters (of religiously incorporating with the State), therefore I am not ‘keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ as exhorted in Ephesians 4:3. In answer to that accusation, I will point out that Ephesians 4:1–6 is not just talking about unity itself, but a very particular and special *kind* of unity. Therefore, before one automatically refuses my appeal, please at least give consideration to the kind of *Unity* Ephesians 4 is talking about, and then find out if that is my endeavor.

“Unity by itself has always been a very important ingredient in the world. Even Satan recognizes its power and persuasive potential. Therefore Satan has often inspired men to be in *Unity against God*—as in the Tower of Babel account in Genesis 11. This will also manifest itself in the last days as *united* rebellion nationally against God (Rev. 20:7, 8). Likewise, in sectarian denominationalism, they demand ‘*Unity*,’ and speak of its virtues in keeping their organizations together. To the degree that carnal, compromising Christians are involved in sectarianism they too demand ‘*Unity*,’ and extol its virtues—in their carnal walk of disobedience against Christ's will in their lives. Oh, yes, how beautiful and thrilling large ‘unity rallies’ can be in modern Christendom. And yet, I and others have often stood on the outside of these gatherings, and passed out literature and endeavored to talk to believers about the ‘One True Church’ of our Lord Jesus Christ. Most often we were viciously attacked and accused of not keeping *unity* and only causing trouble and divisiveness.

“Of course, as I previously said, we recognize from the Scriptures that the ‘unity’ designated for believers is a very particular *kind* of unity. Actually Eph. 4:3 has nothing whatsoever to do with being together with a crowd, or united in numbers. Strange as it may seem, individually, we sometimes might be the only person in the midst of a vast crowd that is professing unity, who is really ‘endeavoring to keep the *unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace!’ Since this ‘unity’ in Eph. 4:3 is qualified by ‘*of the Spirit*,’ we know, therefore, that this is a *unity* that derives from the Holy Spirit of God. There is none other

like it on earth. It stands unique! The Holy Spirit has given us the ‘inspired’ Word of God. When we are in *agreement* with the inspired TRUTH in the Word of God, then we will be in agreement with every other brother who is in agreement with those same inspired TRUTHS. Consequently, the next statement is highly important—

- “*One must never compromise or sacrifice TRUTH in order to gain Unity, for then that ‘unity’ is not the ‘unity of the Spirit.’*”

Another old statement of significance in this regard is—

- “*Better to be divided because of **truth**, than to be united over error!*”

“To thus be in agreement with the Spirit's Word and the Spirit's revelation about our Lord Jesus Christ is the ‘endeavor’ that every believer is obligated to make. This alone qualifies as the ‘*unity of the Spirit!*’ And quite often it may mean that we must stand alone in the midst of a crowd in ‘keeping the unity of the Spirit.’

“As an example, the very first statement of fact in the ‘*keeping the unity of the Spirit*’ is the revelation that ‘There is One Body’ (verse 4). That Body, of course, is ‘the church which is Christ's body.’ Now, if in a group of brethren there is unity in the contention that there are other functioning ‘religious bodies’ made by man which Christians should observe and implement in their functioning together, and one brother stands up and opposes this, we can ask, who is actually ‘*keeping the unity of the Spirit*’? Is it the group that is in physical *unity*? Or is it the man who is in keeping with the Spirit's teaching who is actually observing ‘*the unity of the Spirit*’? Of course it is the latter. A man, therefore, may not be in unity with a group, but in perfect *unity with the Spirit*.

“What a person needs to determine, therefore, before he can know whether or not a brother is ‘endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit’ is—what is the truth of the Spirit's Word? When one has the truth of the Spirit's Word, and is willing to walk in it, it will become a burning fire in his breast, and he will want to share it. In addition he will become bold in its defense. Consequently, ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty’ (2 Cor. 3:17). I knew I had spiritual liberty and a spiritual obligation to my brethren. Thus, in writing these letters (of why Christians should walk in the truth that there is only ‘one body’ and not be creating other religious bodies) my soul was stirred repeatedly by the precious truths from the Word of God, and in remembrance of the victorious events in the past testimony before our civil government and before sectarian brethren.

“However, today I have no doubt whatsoever that the vast majority of my Christian brethren in these local assemblies, in which I have lived and ministered in times past, have little or no realization of the serious implications of this subject matter at this time, since it is some 40 years after the fact of our earlier testimony. This is also primarily true because careful public scrutiny of the matter has been kept from them. In my own case I was asked to be quiet on the subject. I was prevented from sharing these truths with the assemblies in openness.”

This ends the statements I wrote back in 2006 to my brethren. Now let us return to the Scripture text of Ephesians 4:1–6—

“ . . . the unity of the Spirit ”

The Greek word for unity is derived from the word *heis* which means “one.” The neuter form of the word *heis* is *henotes*. *Henotes* is defined as “oneness, unity, unanimity, agreement, etc.” As was stated above, this “unity” is immediately qualified by “*of the Spirit*.” That means that this is no ordinary *unity* but a highly specialized kind. It is a unity emanating from and belonging exclusively to the Holy Spirit of God.

One might ask, “why is this Unity designated as belonging to, or originating from, the Holy Spirit?” In answer to that question we must remember that God has ordained that the Holy Spirit was to take up His residence upon this earth after the departure of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven. Christ stood beside the believers during His earthly sojourn, so also the Holy Spirit will “stand beside” (as a “helper,” “comforter” or “lawyer”) the believer during this dispensation of time (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit was to have a special ministry in this Age of Grace. In fact, the Holy Spirit is Christ’s special representative on earth today directing the affairs of the Church of Jesus Christ. This is stated for us in 2 Corinthians 3:8. Herein Paul makes reference to this age as the “administration of the Spirit” (literally translated) in contrast to the “administration of the Law.” When one reads the inspired history of the first several decades of the Church (the book of Acts), he will observe that it is the Holy Spirit directing and guiding the affairs of the Church. See—Acts 2:4; 5:9; 6:10; 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 11:28; 16:7; 20:22; 21:4. Consequently, it is the Holy Spirit, as the manager of the affairs of this Age on the behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has designed a special Unity principle as a guiding stabilizing factor for this Age. The early church often had the miraculous presence of the Holy Spirit. Today, we have the completed Word of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the unity of the Spirit is essentially to be *united by the Spirit*.

“ . . . in the bond of peace ”

The Greek word *sundesmos* simply means “that which binds together.” In this case we are to understand that “peace,” which emanates from our keeping the unity of the Spirit, is said to be that which binds the believers together. It should be clear that those who are observing this unity of the Spirit effect “peace” among the members of the body of Christ. To the degree Christians walk together in the “unity of the Spirit” there will be genuine “peace.” Please do not confuse this with the artificial “peace” achieved at denominational union rallies. When one understands the horrible fractions that come because of carnality among believers who are walking in the flesh instead of in the Spirit, he can also understand that the only way of real spiritual peace is in the keeping of the Unity of the Spirit.

“ . . . there is One ”

“One or oneness” is a word or statement indicating “*singularity of nature*.” The Unity of the Spirit is immediately defined therefore as a *series of singularities* (seven in all). This is of critical importance. *Oneness* or *singularity* means, “to deviate strongly from the norm,” “to be distinct,” “to be rare,” or even “to be peculiar.” Something that possesses “oneness” or “singularity” means it is to be distinguished from all others—this

is “one of a kind.” So it is that each of the following ingredients listed stands absolutely unique and singular. The singularity of each of these ingredients means that there is utter simplicity in the determination of each and in the observance of each. Consequently, the believer is not to be confused by a multiple choice selection of what some might think to be best in each category. The singularity in each category rules out any and all deviances even though one may think them to be ever so great or important. The emphasis here is to the effect that there is only *one of a kind* and there is *no other like it*. Walking in these singularities is to be walking in the unity of the Spirit. This would seem to be the ultimate of simplicity. The problem, of course, is man’s unbelief in the practicality of that simplicity as designed by God.

“ . . . there is one Body ”

All interpreters admit this is none other than “*the church which is Christ’s body*” (Eph. 1:22, 23). A related passage with which we are all familiar is 1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into *one body*.” The church of Jesus Christ is composed of that company of people who have been “called out (*ek-klesia*)” of the world by Jesus Christ to Himself. In turn, beginning on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit has supernaturally “embodied” (*in-corporus, Latin, i.e., incorporated*) that assembly of saved souls by Jesus Christ Himself, so as to give life to it—thus it becomes “the church which is *His body*”—His corporation or very life. Every day and every hour God adds to that church each new individual trusting in Christ for salvation. Now there is only “one body” called in Latin “the *corpus Christi*,” meaning the body of Christ. Herein is the positive solution to all the problems of sectarianism—just “walk” in the truth that there is but “*one body*.”

In Christendom the solution to division is for representatives of the various factions to sit down together and find where they can compromise in certain areas of their doctrines and organizations so as to form a new united group that will be more respectable to society. Various denominations have been doing this for some time now. All this does is to actually form a larger man-made rebellion against Christ’s order. Now I learned that God’s solution is for us to set aside all man-made creations and walk in the truth that there is but “One Body”—“the church which is Christ’s body”—now just “walk” in that truth and reality!

When I first heard this ministered to me, like many others I said, “I didn’t know one could actually do that.” Of course, I was only aware of the many different programs, organizations, churches and denominations in Christendom. My Christian life at the time had been characterized by trying to find one such program that was, as they say, “closest to the truth.” But now I am told “why not just walk in the truth—‘*there is one body*?’” I was somewhat dumfounded. It was further explained to me, “God certainly would not have told us to ‘walk’ in this reality unless it was practical and possible.” I was thus illuminated and came to realize this was true and I was now accountable before God to “walk” in it. I then finally decided to cast aside all the various man-made religious organizations I was entangled with and just walk in the truth of the “one body.” This was in 1955.

In 1960 I had the privilege of standing next to Maurice Johnson and other older brethren in the office of the Internal Revenue Service of Los Angeles, California. Their lawyers were trying to accommodate us by offering different forms of incorporation so as to be “legally” defined on their terms as a “church” or “non-profit religious organization.” However, we had a very unique testimony. We professed to believe that there was only *“one body”* that God had designed for us to operate under—“the church which is Christ’s body.” To us this was not mere theoretical theology—this was practical reality for our everyday lives and conduct (“walk”). The lawyer for the IRS offered us the opportunity to incorporate as “churches,” “charities,” or “trusts.” To each of these Maurice answered a clear “no, we are not interested.” Finally the lawyer gave a long dissertation about the advantages of forming “ministries” under which we could operate. It sounded very enticing. However, once again Maurice answered “No, we are not interested.”

Now this made the lawyer angry and he spoke very strongly, “Well, you’re just against any kind of incorporation, period!” To which Maurice responded “no,” and stated to the effect that we believe in God’s *corporation*. I personally rejoiced in the truth that brother Johnson explained about “the church which is Christ’s Incorporation (embodiment).” I might just say that my eyes were finally opened to just exactly what kind of organization the Church of Jesus Christ was—it was a Divine corporation according to the Biblical revelation. It is for this reason that I could not stand with Robert Grove and all the other ministers in forming “Ministry Corporations” under which to operate. The Scripture clearly forbid it and I had stood with an older minister and brethren in “walking” in the truth that there is but *“one body”*—Ephesians 4:4.

Forty years later, when I saw the modern ministry creating (out of fear of the IRS) other “religious bodies” called “ministries” under which they would now operate, I knew instinctively they had lost their spiritual vision of this supreme truth and that the spiritual “backsliding” of this company of believers was in progress. The creation of “ministries” was just the symptom of the sectarian spirit (the choosing spirit) wherein men “choose” their devices over that which God has supplied. Now, these men were honorable men. They professed to be walking in “unity,” but it was most certainly not “the unity of the Spirit.” In addition, they now lied to the general public and to the various assemblies by still maintaining— *“we are not building anything man-made in religion.”* When I stated publicly that they were building “man-made religious organizations” I was told, “unless I retracted that accusation I would be marked to be avoided.” Of course, I was not going to retract the truth, and so I was put out from their association. Interestingly enough, both of the brethren leading in this religious incorporation admitted in writing that they were building “man-made religious organizations.” In addition, the local minister admitted the same before ten brethren. Yet now they insisted that I must retract the accusation which they knew was the absolute truth.

And now here we are today. All those honorable ministers stand in obvious and sickening disarray. In addition, they have this passage of Scripture from Ephesians 4 come right back to haunt them all over again. They are now obviously not walking in the “unity of the Spirit—there is one body.” But this confusion began when they “chose” to walk in a multiplicity of “religious bodies,” each with its own distinctive identifying name of this and that ministry. The assembly in the Fort Worth area is actually

functioning under what is called today a “Ministry Church.” “Ministry Churches” are the very smallest fragmentation in the history of sectarian denominationalism. The only difference between the Fort Worth assembly and all the other local “Ministry Churches” in the area is that the “Jeff A. Grove Ministries, Inc.” is not advertised out in front. It is as if they are instinctively embarrassed to tell the truth.

Obviously, if these brethren did not initially respect the truth of the “one body” and formed other “religious bodies” in order to satisfy the IRS, then in time they will not respect the truth of Ephesians 4 even further. Indeed, their own differences of opinion over other issues became so great as to allow fracturing apart into their present predicament. In other words, I am persuaded that their present sickness showed its symptoms at least some ten years earlier.

“ . . . and one Spirit ”

In 1 John 4:1–3 we are told, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the *Spirit of God*: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God . . .” Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of truth” Who would “bear witness of Him (Christ)” (John 14:17 and 15:26). Men who consistently give the “truth” of God have the Spirit of God. Many preachers profess to have the Spirit but only demonstrate by their false doctrines that they are led by unholy spirits. As we observed earlier, this Unity is designated as “the Unity of the Spirit.” The “one Spirit” is thus uniting all believers by both our divine *position* in the household of God, and by exhorting us to put this into *practice* in our daily walk.

“ . . . one hope of your calling ”

The “one hope of (y)our calling” is best described by the apostle Paul as that “upward calling” (Philip. 3:14). It is interesting that the English word “church” is actually an erroneous translation of the Greek word used. *Ek-klesia* is a compound word made from two Greek words—*ek*, meaning “out,” and *klesia*, meaning “to call.” Thus the church is simply a “called out” company of people; in this case called out of the world by Jesus Christ. The best translation is “assembly” or “congregation.” Now, as to the “one hope of our calling,” as I stated above, it is best described by the “upward-calling” as given in Philip. 3:14. Here again a similar compound word is used. It is taken from the same Greek word “to call” (*klesia*), but with the prepositional prefix *ava* or *avw*, which means “up” or “upward.” So it is that the “out-called” company of people are also expecting their unique “upward-calling” which will take them totally right out of this world system into our heavenly destiny. Obviously there is no other hope like this one. It is the “blessed hope” of Titus 2:13. It is the “comforting” hope of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. It is also the “mystery” hope of 1 Corinthians 15:51–58.

The hope of the Christian today is not to be found in this or that politician who makes all kinds of promises, which in most cases he could never keep, but only makes in order to get the votes for his election.

“ . . . one Lord ”

It is generally agreed by expositors that this has reference to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the “chief cornerstone” of the Church of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:11 and Eph. 2:20). At the time of His second coming Christ will “show Himself as *King* of kings and *Lord* of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15). It has been observed by Bible teachers and preachers that many people are ready to accept Christ as their Savior, but very few of those are ready to allow Christ to be “*Lord* of their lives.” Every Christian should cry out as did Saul (later called Paul), “*Lord*, what would You have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). To choose to build other man-made religious organizations is essentially a denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Christ is “*Head over all things* to the church which is His body” (Eph. 1:22, 23).

“ . . . one faith ”

The “one faith” is, of course, that body of revelation that is unique for this age or dispensation. Believers are encouraged to “build yourselves up in the most holy faith” (Jude 20), and to “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). The apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthians, and beyond them all Christians of this age—to “stand fast in the faith” (1 Cor. 16:13), and to “examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith” (2 Cor. 13:5). Every believer can be “holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience” (1 Tim. 3:9). “In the latter times some will depart from the faith” (1 Tim. 4:1). However the apostle Paul, towards the end of his life could say “I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:6). It is God’s purpose for believers to “come to the unity of the faith” in Christian maturity (Eph. 4:13).

“ . . . one baptism ”

In the “unity of the Spirit” there are seven ingredients. Three of them are pertaining to the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The other four ingredients are each *unique* to this age or dispensation of time. The “one body” is the unique body of believers in this age which started at Pentecost and will continue on earth until the rapture. The “one hope” is that unique catching away of the body of Christ at the very end of this Age of Grace. The “one faith” is that body of revelation which began to be implemented at Pentecost in the body of Christ and will be terminating in practice on earth at the rapture. In a similar manner, the “one baptism” is that unique baptism that began at Pentecost, incorporates the believers into the “one body,” and is expressed in the “one faith” which anticipates the “one hope.” This is, of course, the baptism of the Holy Spirit which places the believer into Christ and His body.

“ . . . one God and Father of all, the One over all and through all and in us all ”

“For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live” (1 Corinthians 8:5, 6). “Blessed be the God and Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love . . .” (Eph. 1:3, 4). “. . . that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him . . .” (Eph. 1:17).

“Now when all things are made subject to Him (Christ), then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him (the Father) Who put all things under Him, that God may be *all in all*” (1 Cor. 15:28)

In Summary from Ephesians 4:1–6

To ignore all the positive indicators of the practicality of the “unity of the Spirit” is absolutely without excuse. In fact, the whole exhortation of the apostle Paul is on the basis of it being practical for the believer’s everyday walk—that is plainly the preface to and the context of the exhortation. How anyone can miss this is mystifying. There must be some other factor confusing or clouding the minds of these who are teaching this new doctrine. In fact, one has to deliberately hide his eyes from it. Notice the following—

- 1.) The passage is in the form of an *exhortation*. “**I therefore urge you . . .**” This is obviously an exhortation to action on the believer’s part.
- 2.) “**To Walk**” is specifically the designation of an active conduct in the everyday life of the believer. This is how these words are always used. Paul is not telling the believer to “SIT” and thank God for his salvation in past time. On the contrary, now that we are saved, and now that God has placed every saved person in this unified position, it is time to put into action (“walk”) as a natural demonstration of our position.
- 3.) “To walk **Worthily**” is a further qualification to the action of our conduct. This is like “working out your salvation” (Philip. 2:12–13). Salvation is what has happened in the past when we first trusted in Christ. But God never intended this to be a stagnate passive salvation that we just sit and admire as if a museum piece. If salvation means anything, it means a *NEW LIFE* to be lived. The “unity of the Spirit” is similar. It thus becomes a beautiful and perfect position for everyday demonstration.
- 4.) “**Calling or vocation . . .**” as we discussed before, these are words designed to tell us the “unity of the Spirit” is specifically our life’s occupation. We are “called” to a demonstration of this Spirit given unity.
- 5.) With “**humility, meekness, patience and forbearance in love**” are words describing the attitude we should have in keeping “the unity of the Spirit.” How much more practical can this endeavor possibly be?
- 6.) “**Being diligent . . .**” are words describing the enthusiasm which should characterize this walk. Why does God want us to be “diligent”? Is not one clear reason—because the world is looking on—and this is an opportunity for witness to these truths?

- 7.) “**To Keep . . .**” In the Greek this is a verb in the “*infinitive, present active*” tense. In other words, this is not a past action, nor a stagnant action, but rather a *continuous, ongoing activity*.

Another illustration of this whole principle is found in the doctrine of the believers’ “*sanctification*.” On the one hand, it is true that positionally every saved person has been “sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor.1:2) at the time of his salvation. This is obviously what God does. However, it is just as true that God ordained for believers to walk in our everyday lives in a *sanctified* manner—“For this is the will of God, your *sanctification*; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality . . .” (see 1 Thess. 4:3–7). Bible teachers have always distinguished between the believers’ “positional sanctification” and the believers’ “practical sanctification” which is for their everyday lives. Now if I were to come along and say I have new insight on this truth about sanctification, and I tell you that it is a past event which has been done by God, and therefore it is not something man can create or perform, you would probably laugh at my stupidity and quickly show me the door. This is exactly what should be done in response to the teaching of these brethren and their new found corrupt doctrinal line on the Unity of the Spirit. (These brethren probably were infected with this idea which was voiced from past by another carnal brother from San Diego. That is where I consciously remember having first heard it many years ago.)

Of course, God has united all believers into one body by His design, but the whole basis of this truth as found in Ephesians 4 is that believers are to “walk” this way in their everyday practical lives! This is also God’s design.

What about John 17?

The same as above is precisely true concerning the “oneness” Christ prayed for as recorded in John 17. Of course it is true that God has made all believers one in Christ for this age! However, what Christ specifically prayed for was a demonstrated unity that “the world” could see and, consequently, the world “might believe.” In John 17:18 and 21 Christ prays emphatically—“I also have sent them (the believer) into the world . . . that they may be one . . . that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.” Again, as if in confirmation, Christ prayed—“that they (the believer) might be one . . . that the world may know that Thou didst send Me” (John 17:22–23). To eloquently argue that Christ’s prayer was totally answered by our “positional’ unity, and therefore there is nothing we can do to achieve this, is to virtually blaspheme Christ’s prayer. The world is obviously not going to be convinced by bare doctrine. The world is only going to be convinced by what they can see in the lives of these Christians. Every reputable expositor of this passage that I know of readily recognizes the failure of Christianity TO WALK in this UNITY, and so states in their expositions of the passage. See also as examples the book of collections from those in sectarianism who interpret this passage in a practical way and admitted Christendom’s failure—*The Sin Of Sectarianism*.

While I was typing this study I happened to see an interesting news item. I can’t help but see a similarity with this present false doctrine as a destructive element. Scientists have found it hard to explain the death of large populations of certain insects. For instance the loss of many groups of the common honey bee is a current problem.

Recently a researcher quite accidentally observed a certain innocent looking fly landing on the back of a honey bee. With a special camera the fly was seen inserting its eggs into the back of the bee. In the process of a short time the eggs hatch out larva that begins to feed as parasites on the insides of the bee. In a few days the bee begins to get disorientated, acts like a zombie and finally dies. After it dies the larva crawl out of the body of that bee. The researcher then found piles of bees that obviously had this happen to them. Now this may be a partial explanation to the disappearance of many honey bees. I thought the same is true in the false doctrine of these two brethren. They may look innocent, but they are not. The implanting of this damnable parasitic doctrine results in taking the practical life out of the unity of the Spirit in a person's thinking. The ultimate effect in a Christians' life on this subject is to get disoriented and act like a zombie in a world of reality. The false teaching of these brethren today is much like the "innocent" looking fly that inserts its eggs (false doctrine) that eventually takes the life away.

What About Romans 14:1–13 and Philippians 3:15 ?

In order to substantiate his claim that God wants us to tolerate major differences between Christians, this brother quoted portions of Romans 14 and Philippians 3:15, as if these two passages somehow sanctify and even instruct believers to make such tolerations. However a careful look at both passages will tell us otherwise. Let us examine the Philippians passage first.

Most all interpreters recognize that Paul is using the image of an Olympian runner in this particular context. Paul starts off by leaving behind his past gains in the Jewish religion, whereas he is now seeking to "*gain Christ*" (Verses 8). . . that he might "*know Him and the power of His resurrection*" (verse 10). . . "*If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead*" (verse 11). . . he does not yet claim to be "*perfect*;" but he "*presses on*" (verse 12). . . (as the runner) he "*stretches forth to the things which are before*" (verse 13) . . .and "*presses towards the mark for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus* (verse 14). It is with this setting that we read the following verse 15—

“Let us then, as many as be mature, be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, even this God will reveal unto you.”

Now this brother quotes this passage and thinks it means that Paul is saying a brother may have a difference with him on this matter and God may, indeed, reveal something different to him. Nothing can be further from the truth. That is not what Paul is saying.

First of all, the goal of the apostle is most certainly the goal of all believers—it is the “blessed hope” of our “resurrection” or “upward call” (verses 10 and 14). Secondly, the words “even this” has reference to the “goal” Paul is talking about, not something “different” that may characterize the attitude of an immature brother. And, indeed, this is how it is understood in all the commentaries that I have immediately before me:

1.) *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, by Dallas Theological Seminary. “He (Paul) trusted God to make (these) things clear to those who disagreed with him.”

2.) *Commentary On The Whole Bible*, by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown. “Otherwise minded—having too high an opinion of yourselves as to your attainment of Christian perfection . . . God will reveal the path of righteousness to them.”

3.) *Barnes’ Notes On The New Testament*. “(Those) otherwise minded. That is, if there were any among them who had not these elevated views and aims . . . who are still impeded and embarrassed by erroneous opinions—God shall reveal even this unto you. He will correct your erroneous opinions, and disclose to you the importance of making this effort for the prize.”

4.) *New Bible Commentary: Revised*. “He (Paul) longs that those who would be mature in Christ, or who would call themselves ‘perfect,’ would think in these terms. He can only rely on God to reveal to them what is mistaken in their thinking or different in their living.”

5.) *Alfords’ New Testament For The English Reader*. “(the) exhortation to them to be unanimous in following his example . . . and if in anything ye be differently minded (diversity in a bad sense). . . this also (as well as the rest which he has revealed) will God reveal to you.”

6.) *The Ryrie Study bible*. (Marginal Note) “If you don’t agree, God will give you light on the subject.”

I think this is sufficient to show that the passage teaches just the opposite from what these brethren thought. Now let us turn our attention to the Romans 14 passage.

“Now accept the one who is weak in the faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. One man has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls . . . One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord . . .” (Rom. 14:1-6).

I heard (and I am sure others have as well) Maurice Johnson, Ed Stevens and Berl Chisum give clear and careful explanations of this passage from a dispensational perspective. In other words, the book of Acts records a transitional period out of Judaism into pure Christianity. During this time period the Jewish believers were still Law observant. They all obviously knew that changes were in the making. However, God had not yet fully revealed the termination of the practice of the Law for the Jewish people. On the other hand the Gentile believers were clearly instructed to not be placed under the Mosaic Law system with its celebration of religious holy days and its special dietary laws. Consequently God allowed for there to be the “two walks of the believers” during this transition period as recorded in the book of Acts. Acts 20:3 is the time frame when the book of Romans was written.

Consequently, Jewish believers were still obedient to God’s instruction in the Law, whereas, the Gentile believers were also obedient to God’s instruction to them to

not celebrate the Law system. This is where the *application* of Romans 14 must be made. The Jewish brethren were not to misjudge the Gentile brethren, and the Gentile brethren were not to misjudge their Jewish brethren. At the time when the revelation was complete that the Mosaic Law system was ready to be terminated—Hebrews 8:13—then the Holy Spirit also revealed that all foods were pure and could be eaten (1 Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:14–15 and Col. 2:16) and no believer was to be judged concerning any Sabbath day observance (Colossians 2:16). From this time on both Jew and Gentile were to be fully cognizant of being a new species on earth—“the Church of God.”

So, in both cases the false teaching of these brethren is not supported by these Scriptures. What they are doing in reality is to contend for the privilege and right of “every man doing that which is right in his own eyes.”

As to Authority—

This brother went on to say that, in effect, the Church today has no ministry in authority as did the early Church and that includes men like Timothy. Of course, this type of thinking is both a necessary and a natural progression springing from the ideology of allowing differences among brethren—there will of necessity be no one in authority to rebuke their carnal walk in divisiveness.

The only problem with this idea about no Timothy in these “last days,” is that God always has messengers to rebuke the sins of His people in any and all ages. In addition, apparently these brethren did not remember that in 1 and 2 Timothy ***Paul projects Timothy forward in time to the very last days***—see 1 Tim. 6:11–16 and 2 Timothy 3:13–17 and 4:1–4. So any reader of these passages can know that there are, indeed, men like Timothy right up until the time the Lord comes back for His own. The work of the last day Timothy is spelled out very clearly—

“I solemnly charge you (Timothy) in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, at His appearing and His kingdom: preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but waiting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned aside into myths.”

Obviously, these two brethren do not qualify as a Timothy today.

THE END

