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## Unity of the Spirit.

(Read Eph. 4:1-3.)

IN these verses we find one of the “walks” mentioned by the Apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians, applied to the Christian. We know that these walks referred to in this Epistle become part of the theme of the Apostle. In chapter 2:2 we are told that before we were Christians we walked according to the course of this world, as children of disobedience. We know that the children of disobedience are referred to as the children of Adam’s disobedience. Before we were Christians we were in that position, walking in the course of this world and in the course of Adam’s disobedience, and therefore out of communion with God. But then in Eph. 2:10 we read, “*We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained we should walk in them.*” Therefore we are exhorted to walk in good works. Not the ordinary good works such as the world does. We could spend a great deal of time in discussing how many things the world does as good works. But they are not the good works mentioned here. We are to walk in good works prepared for us or arranged for us by God. Therefore in the study of this chapter we find that these good works of a Christian start at the time of consecration, and follow on all through our Christian life as we endeavour to do His will. The good works of a Christian are the carrying out of his consecration.

Now in Eph. 4:1 we are exhorted to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. “Walk worthy of the calling wherewith thou art called,” another translation says. How can we walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called? The Apostle tells us how. First, he says we must be lowly, or humble. We must not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think if we are going to walk worthy of our calling. Then he continues; in order to walk worthy of our calling we must be meek, and unselfish, with long-suffering, even if it requires great patience over a long period of time. Patience is one of the Christian virtues. Sometimes, under some circumstances, *we may* be patient for a few days or weeks, but longsuffering requires us to be patient sometimes for years; sometimes all our lives. Christian love is based upon a mutual love for the Lord and the Truth, and the realisation that we have all been called of God. We also have to be longsuffering because of our own shortcomings.

We find the expression “endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit.” “Spare no effort to keep the unity of the spirit.” That word “keep” means to guard, to protect. Therefore we are told to give diligence to guard or protect the oneness, the unity that exists, and that should exist, in the body of Christ. If we do that, we will keep in mind that unity must be maintained within the framework of the fundamental truths that have been entrusted to our care. “In the bond of peace.” The bond of peace is one uniting all those who have the heart reconciled to God. Associated with that is peace with God. These should be walking

worthy of their calling, seeking to know their Heavenly Father's will, and do it. In other words, those who are sparing no effort to protect the unity of the spirit in the body of Christ, always remember that in fundamentals, unity; in lesser essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.

We love the brethren. Through the Truth we shall attain unity. The exhortation is that we should, through an understanding of the Truth, strive to have that unity. We should strive for unity, and not compromise. Those who demand acceptance of their views cannot enjoy the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Every one of us has a right to disagree, but none of us has the right to be **disagreeable**.

Ephesians 4:4-6 reads, "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Notice how these verses are connected to the first three verses. The Apostle Paul tells us about unity, then tells us how that unity is striven for, because there is only one body and *we are* members of that body in particular, and as members of the same body we should give the other members all possible help. Then he exhorts unity because there is one spirit, the holy spirit, the spirit of truth, and we all have that holy spirit, that unction, in the operation of our fellowship one with another. We are exhorted to unity because there is only one hope, and we have been called and inspired to seek the whole of our hope. We have the hope of the high calling, the hope of Christ in you, the hope of glory, having a hope of sharing in the great work of the future. We are exhorted to keep the unity of the spirit because there is only one Lord, and He is our Head. We are all members of the body. We are exhorted also because there is only one common end; that Jesus Christ is the author of our salvation, and the real expression of our faith is the outworking of our consecration. We are also exhorted because there is only one baptism, and that is baptism into Jesus Christ.

Faith and baptism belong to each other. Our faith belongs to us individually. Certain things we have to recognise as individual ones—your faith is your own. Your baptism into the body of Christ is your own. And so therefore, faith and baptism belong to us as individuals, and not collectively. As individuals we have to make our calling sure. As individuals we have to walk worthy of our Father. As individuals we have to know and do the Heavenly Father's will. As individuals we are baptized into Jesus Christ. When we realise this, we know that each one of us as individuals has a responsibility for the unity of the spirit. Each of us as individuals has a part of the responsibility of the unity of the body. As we exercise this responsibility, we enjoy the fellowship of others. We enjoy the unity also because it is from God. We have dedicated ourselves to Him. For these reasons we can appreciate why we should give every endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace—because of our close relationship to the Lord. We must accept our part of the responsibility for the sweetness of Christian unity. Are we not glad that there is one hope, one Church? We have one God, one Lord. One of the things the Heavenly Father loves is unity and kindness. The Lord Jesus also hates certain things, and so does God. One of these things is he who would alienate the affections of one brother from the other. Such is not in keeping with the unity of the spirit, in the bonds of peace.

"But every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (Read verses 7-10.) Verse 7 again emphasizes our obligation as Christians. We have obligations. We emphasize this verse, because the Apostle emphasizes that every one of us has been given grace. Everyone of us has been the recipient of His grace. The Lord has not overlooked one of us. How beautifully the Apostle Paul takes the Messianic prophecy of Psalms 58:18 and applies it to our Lord—His birth, death, resurrection and ascension! His work results in making captives of all the enemies of the Kingdom—captives of Satan, sin, sorrow and death. It also results in fulfilling the words spoken by the prophet, even to the establishment of the kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth. All of that is contained in this verse.

Now, we will go on to verse 11: "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying

of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 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.” (Verses 11-16.)

“He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets” and so on. These are gifts that God has given to the Church. In 1 Cor. 3:4-7 we read, “For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” Their commission came from the Lord. They were witnesses of the Lord’s resurrection, and gifts given to the Church by the Lord Himself. The Apostles were not the only gifts to the Church. “And some, prophets”—

that is, teachers, expounders of the Word of God. “Some evangelists” — travelling missionaries, pilgrims. “Some to be pastors and teachers.” We have received in these latter days all of these gifts. Why have all these been given? It says here, for our perfecting, to equip us for the work of the ministry, and for appreciation of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Then it says this is for the building up of the body of Christ, so we might grow towards attaining the oneness and unity of our faith; so that we can grow up in our understanding of the Son of God. Whenever you read the word “perfect” in the Bible you will realise that as we become maturer Christians we reflect in our lives more perfectly the characteristics that were perfectly reflected in Christ’s life. But we are advised not to rely on human leaders. We are not to be partisan, and say “I am of Paul, I am of Apollos.” “I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.” Without both, there could possibly be no increase. Do not glory in anyone else, because we are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. Our relationship to the Heavenly Father is so personal that if we are Christ’s, we are God’s. Let no man glory, except in Christ.

Verse 16 of Eph. 4 speaks of “that which every joint supplieth.” Paul had given much to the Church. So had others. So today we have had a blessing from the ministry of Brother Russell, in understanding the fundamentals of the Truth of God’s Word. But the Apostle is here impressing on you and me the individual responsibility that we have as members of the body of Christ. Each member of the body of Christ can supply something. Each member of the body of Christ can contribute to the supply of blessing to other members. We can often supply what the other member needs. Have you ever quietly sat down and considered what you, as a member of the body of Christ, can supply to the benefit of the other members of the body? Every joint supplies something. Then when you have decided what you can do, determine to be a living member of the body of Christ. A word of encouragement, a smile, a handshake—there are many ways; but we, as members of the body of Christ, are necessary. We can all supply something. Every member in the body has been set as it pleases God. Because of that, our experiences are bound to vary. The hand cannot say,

I have no need of thee. Each member is necessary. Our understanding of some points of truth may vary. But a whole body works in unison, and so should we. We all have to have the unity of the spirit. We rejoice that we, as members of the body, are all appreciative of the privilege of living in the days of the presence of the Son of Man. May we all remember that each member is important to the healthy functioning of the body. You, as a member of the body of Christ, are just as important as any other member. So one can never say to another member, I have no need of thee.

Let us take the television work as an example, or the radio work. In the operation of this part of the kingdom message, a few brethren are sometimes inclined to forget that those brethren taking an active

part are able to do what they are doing only because of the individual sacrifices of the other members of the body. So there again it is the members of the body who unite in proclaiming the message of the kingdom. It is the unity of effort, the unity of sacrifice, the unity of the spirit that counts. The few brethren who actually give the message could not do so without the sacrifice of the others.

Read Eph. 4:17-24. In these verses the Apostle Paul resumes the exhortation “walk worthy of your calling,” and if you do not you are going to walk as the Gentiles, not in the spirit of Christ. The Gentiles had no fellowship in Christ; they were ignorant of the Divine Plan—therefore do not walk as Gentiles. “Ye have not so learned of God.” You have laid aside the old walks of life, the lusts and delusions of this world, and therefore walk not as Gentiles, but walk worthy of your calling in righteousness and true holiness.

Now we have verses 25-29,—’Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another. . . . Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister unto the hearers.’ It seems that some did not have a very high standard. The Jews were brought up with the Law and taught the principles of the Law, but the Gentiles were not. When we get that picture, these verses are more easily understood. After a great deal of study it seems that there is no other way to take those verses, than that some of the brethren were lying and stealing. These qualities worried the Apostle Paul, because that would destroy the unity in the early Church. It should help us, because we know the Church has been called from all walks of life. The members have different social backgrounds, standards of education, working conditions and other things, even coming from different countries. Even now those conditions can play a part in the experiences of the Church. If we had chosen the members of the body of Christ, no doubt *we* would have chosen different ones than the Lord has chosen. We would have been wrong in our choice, because the Lord naturally knows more about them than we do. But the Lord did not give us that responsibility. He gave us the responsibility of being members of the New Creation, and having the same desires of unity of purpose, helping one another to approach the Bible as the Word of God and walk worthy of our calling. We are to have the unity of the spirit regardless of our different conditions and disadvantages; we all need the cleansing power of our Lord’s sacrifice. We all have to be reminded of things.

Verses 30-32 read, “Grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

“Grieve not the holy spirit.” That is an admonition. Do the will of God, imparted to us through the Word of Truth.

By not doing as the Gentiles do, while not walking according to the course of this world and not doing disgrace to the Gospel. If we do that we will not break the seal which holds us in communion with God and in communion with each other as members of the body of Christ. Note the contrast in verses 31 and 32. Verse 31 tells us how to grieve the spirit. Verse 32 tells us how not to grieve the holy spirit, to protect the seal, and we can only do this through the power of the holy spirit, through love to the Lord, love to the Truth and love to one another.

Remember those brethren at Ephesus were very close to the Truth. Their background was very different to the background of the brethren today. For us, it should be easier to be kind one to the other, that we should be tenderhearted, that is understanding one another and forgiving willingly, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us. That is, we will not grieve the holy spirit or break the seal of sonship, and we will preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace and the bonds of grace. That is something which is the responsibility of each member of the body of Christ. It is only for us to put forth the effort.

Christianity does require effort, even though we walk in Christian fellowship and communion with God and regard it as well worth all the sacrifice we may make. Let us all continue to strive for the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.

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## “Peace on Earth, Goodwill Toward Men.”

(Luke 2:8-14)

THE angel's message at the time of the birth of Jesus as the babe of Bethlehem is most inspiring, being helpful and encouraging at all seasons of the year, but especially so at the Christmas season. The words of verse 10 in this 2nd chapter of Luke read—“The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which **shall be to all people.**” Meditating on these words we realise that they mean something really outstanding, for the “all people” mentioned in the angel's message means all **people who have ever lived on this earth.** This assurance is almost beyond our comprehension until we realise that what the Lord promises in His Word He is abundantly able to perform, in due time.

Further, the message in verse 14 is of the utmost importance also, because it gives assurance that a time is coming when there will be **“on earth peace, good will toward men.”** Both these messages, coming from God's holy angels, at the birth of God's dear Son to be the Saviour of the world could not have greater or higher qualifications for the sureness of their fulfilment, because those angels spoke for God.

Examining other Scriptures which also speak for God, through earthly servants, we find that the promised “peace on earth” has never been experienced amongst the human family since Adam disobeyed God and brought the sentence of death upon himself and all mankind who were condemned in him. This is clearly stated in Rom. 5:12,—“Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

How different, however, is the prospect for all mankind revealed in the wonderful prophecy of Isa. 9:6, 7,—“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” This prophecy given by Isaiah at least 700 years prior to the birth of Jesus is surely a wonderful message of assurance that the Saviour would come and establish peace on earth, in due time. The difficulty with many people is that almost 2,000 years have passed since Jesus came, and instead of peace on earth, good will toward men, wars and other world-wide troubles have increased. Indeed, to such a pitch have world conditions developed today, that the greatest men on earth fear for the complete destruction of the human family with such weapons of annihilation that are available today.

When Jesus was on earth at His first advent He made no claim that His Kingdom of Peace could be expected at that time, and this is also strange to many people. In John 18:36 we read Jesus' reply to Pilate,—“My kingdom is not of this world.” The word “world” in this verse is a translation of the Greek word “kosmos”, meaning “order of things.”

So Christ's kingdom would not be established during this "present evil world." We may reason that if our Lord had set up His kingdom at His first advent, He could have prevented the development of such terrible conditions we see world-wide today. That may have been so, but supposing the Lord's power had been operating throughout the world, and wars had not developed, and nations had not invented such weapons of destruction that are so prevalent today, would "peace on earth, good will toward men" have been possible while all members of the human family were growing old and passing away in death, even if there were no dread diseases to cause pain and suffering? It will be admitted readily that there can be **no real peace on earth** in the midst of death amongst the human family. Therefore, God's promise, through His angels at the birth of Jesus, to establish "peace on earth" was much more far-reaching than the mere prevention of war, however desirable that may be. Yes, the promise of "peace on earth, good will toward men" when Jesus was born as the Saviour, Christ the Lord, meant the taking away of every hindrance to lasting peace and happiness for the human family, including the abolishing of the death sentence rightly imposed upon our first parents 4,000 years previously.

In Matt. 18:11 we read,—"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost," and this includes the whole human family. The words of Jesus are also recorded—"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might receive it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my-self. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to receive it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:11, 17, 18.)

The Psalmist gives us a good outline of God's compassion and love for His human creation, that prompted the sending of His only begotten Son to pay the penalty of death standing against all mankind, in the words of Psa.

102:19, 20. "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death." These human prisoners under the sentence of death, are also well described by the Apostle Paul,—"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Rom. 8:22.) However, the promise that God would "loose those that are appointed to death" is abundantly confirmed throughout the Old and New Testaments. In Isa. 25:7-9, we have a beautiful description of the blessings of Christ's Kingdom operating throughout the world for the benefit of all the obedient in that day,—"He will destroy in this mountain (kingdom) the face of the covering (death) cast over all people, and the vail (ignorance) that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (See also Isa. 2:2-4.)

In Psa. 72:17 we read,—"His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." This surely will be the time when the message of the angels at the birth of Jesus will be fulfilled—"Peace on earth, good will toward men." However, it may be asked,

Why did God allow about 2,000 years to pass from Jesus' birth before the promised peace should come to mankind? The answer is, for the special purpose in God's plan to select the Church, the Bride of Christ, to inherit the heavenly kingdom with Christ, and assist in establishing **lasting peace** throughout the earth, to God's praise. To accomplish the calling and developing of this class of followers of Jesus, the whole Gospel Age has been devoted and each one drawn of the Father to Jesus has been blessed with a measure of inward peace which our Lord exhibited so completely against all the contradiction of sinners against Himself. (See Heb. 12:1-3.)

Our Lord's legacy of peace has been a great blessing to all His true followers, as stated in John 14:27,—  
"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This peace, comforting the hearts of God's people, comes from the indwelling of His holy spirit, but of course does not fulfil the promise of "peace on earth, good will toward men," which can come only with the setting up of Christ's Kingdom and His rule of righteousness throughout the earth, Satan of course being bound that he deceives the nations no more at that time. (Rev. 20:1-3.)

While waiting for the kingdom the Lord's people realise what a privilege it is to have a part in the service of Christ, to be active in witnessing with the glad message which has been such a blessing to their own hearts. An important part of the Christian's armor is to have our "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." (Eph. 6:15.) In other words, to have one's heart prepared in meekness, humility, and devotedness to the Lord, and so be fitted to commend Christ's gospel of peace wherever there are hearing ears. The same thought is found in Paul's words in Rom. 10:15,—  
"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Yes, indeed, what a favor to have been entrusted with the glad tidings of the gospel of peace, to be proclaimed at all suitable times now, and also assuring all who have ears to hear that the message from the angelic host is sure of fulfilment in the near future, with the establishment of Christ's kingdom,—  
"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

## RESIST THE DEVIL

"Your adversary the devil goeth about as a ferocious lion, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith," says the Apostle. We may be sure that he attends all the Conventions, and even the regular meetings of the Lord's people, and that his influence is continually exerted to sow discord, strife and every other work of the flesh and of the devil. He works upon our imperfect heads and hearts. "We are not ignorant of his devices," writes the Apostle, and we well know that wrongheartedness is far more dangerous than wrongheadedness. The latter the Lord had promised to protect us from, but not from the former; we must be "pure in heart," else we will not long be reckoned amongst the branches of the true vine, but be cut off; for **love** is the fruit of the spirit—the fruit of the vine. And "herein is your Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Oh! then, how we should watch and pray against the spirit of envy, malice, wrath, strife, contention; and cultivate meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness, love. Thus, as directed, let us keep our hearts in the love that is of God; keep them with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life—the decision as to our everlasting future of life or death eternal. Let us all be on guard. And let those who have on the whole armor and who know how to use the sword of the spirit assist the weaker to overcome the tempter's snares and wiles. —Selected.

## A Test of Faithfulness

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we have a record of God's faithful servants during Old Testament times, and the sixth verse tells us that without exercising faith in God it is impossible to please Him. We will not review the lives and faith of the Ancient Worthies; suffice it to say they were a great people—as Paul declared, the world of their day was not worthy of them; they were misused and persecuted almost continually, yet these old faithfuls pressed on, simply believing what **God had told them**, even though they received little outward evidence of the fulfilment of those things promised.

The prophecies and promises of God have been fulfilled in remarkable ways since Old Testament times, so that faith generally ought to be increased; yet we find that it is true, as the Scriptures declare, when our day should come, faith would be hard to find. Students of the Bible know that we are living in a time of peril—that Christians are warned of the likelihood of many falling from faith in this evil day. We all desire to be of those who “stand”, and not fall.

How shall we maintain our faith in this evil day? Individually and collectively this is an important question facing all Christians.

Throughout our Lord's personal ministry, and during apostolic times, Christians were exhorted to love one another, and endeavor to help each other maintain a life of faith and good works in the Lord. Read Heb. 10:23-25. We are told here that the assembling of ourselves together is important in assisting each other to maintain faith, love and good works. One can conclude that the tendency to “forsake assembling together” was among the church at that time, and that Paul was trying to correct it; but over and above that, he declared that a GREATER endeavor to this end would be required as the end of the Gospel Age approached —“when ye see the day drawing on.” The New English Bible translates verses 24 and 25 very nicely—“We ought to see how each of us may best arouse others to love and active goodness, not staying away from our meetings, as some do, but rather encouraging one another, all the more because you see the day drawing near”.

We experience much friction today—the world is full of it, our homes are far from free of it, and there is some of it in our meetings and in our fellowship. Friction is bad enough in the world, but it has been there so long that we do not expect anything better until the Kingdom comes. We may just shrug it off; a wise Christian will endeavor to keep neutral in the worldly feuds. Friction is disturbing in the homes where it occurs. On occasions it is wise to do some heart searching regarding it—we are often angels to people outside, and anything but angels within our own home circle.

There may be unavoidable friction in some homes however, for our Lord did not promise us to enjoy peace on earth in the present time (thank God peace in entirety will come one day); but as yet during the Gospel Age Jesus said the acceptance of His gospel would sometimes set at variance father and son, mother and daughter, and that a man's foes could be those of his own household. We would often faint because of this friction were it not for the sufficiency of grace the Lord provides as we seek moment by moment to be kept in His love.

But when friction occurs between brethren, fellow believers, and in our fellowships, we are really up against it.

What causes it? How can we overcome it? No doubt *every* Christian who truly desires to serve the Lord and the brethren acceptably, does much thinking upon these questions. Constant bickering produces a sense of frustration until ultimately we begin to think, What am I getting from this unsatisfactory state of

affairs; would it not be better to study my Bible alone and leave the study class? Some do, and find a measure of satisfaction; others do also, but admit later that they made a mistake and were sorry they did; others again press on amidst the frustrations resolving it as the Lord's will for them that they press on amidst "the blood and tears" to the end. Of one thing we can be reasonably sure—the easiest way out is not necessarily the right way. It is admitted that there may be different angles and differing answers to these questions, but we all surely desire to be alert to any cause of trouble, and how we may overcome it. Blame is always placed on some person or persons as an excuse for separation and broken fellowship, but to the writer it would appear that the blame is rarely placed upon the right person; all too often the real blame attaches to the one doing the blaming.

In every difficulty that occurs the battle would be more than half won, if instead of blaming another we first looked squarely at ourselves. Let every man **examine himself** — that is what is needed; never mind examining someone else. If we would judge ourselves we would not be judged. How easily we seem to see the mote in another's eye, despite the beam that is almost blocking our own vision. This wrong attitude is surely traced to a lack of **love**, the greatest and most important of the fruits of the spirit. Probably more sermons have been preached on love than anything else; but is it so much to be **preached about**? It is something each individual Christian should seek to develop and maintain, but does preaching about it help to develop and maintain it? If the writer were asked, How best is love developed and maintained, the answer would be, **Personal obedience** to God and His Word through the grace of Christ. Love has to grow in the **inward parts**; we cannot put it on superficially. Much professed love is a miserable counterfeit of the real thing. When the true love of God dwells within, we can overcome every difficulty-1 Cor. 13 shows us that.

Ministering the gospel requires **love in the minister**. To distribute thousands of tracts mechanically or from a sense of duty, is not as important as presenting the message to fewer with true love for others prompting it. Though we make all kinds of self denial, give freely to the poor, etc., and love is not the prompting motive, it profiteth little. True love never envies others, is never jealous; never vaunts itself, never allows one to think **himself** something. Love suffers long—a state of mind and heart which can bear long when oppressed or provoked, without allowing hatred to prompt harshness and revenge. It continues to wish well to all, never becomes "puffed up" to see the faults of others while blind to its own. Weymouth's translation of 1 Cor. 16:14 is very nice—"Let all that you do be **done from love**".

Today the emphasis is on education. Never has the civilized world been better educated secularly than it is today, and never has it presented a greater conundrum. Many years ago, before the present great increase of knowledge, a preacher expressed the opinion that he doubted if **learning, without piety**, is really beneficial to man. Reflecting now, we think he must have been a very wise man; for today we have great learning with lack of piety or godliness, and the result—it threatens to wipe mankind out of existence.

There appears some similarity in religious learning; it was evident in Christ's day and continues to the present. The Scribes and Pharisees thought they knew all that was to be known about religion —maybe in fact, they did, because in Matt. 23:3 we read how the Lord told His disciples it would be right to do as the Pharisees **taught**, but not to live as they lived; do ye not after their "works". The N.E.B. translation reads—" . . . the Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses, therefore do what they tell you; pay attention to their words. But do not follow their practice; for they say one thing and do another." See also Matt. 5:19, 20—only they who teach **and do**, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

It may be possible to know the truth very well, be doctrinally sound, yet lack the proper spirit of the truth. Knowledge of true doctrine alone, may make for headiness; only when the truth is received in a spirit of meekness, with love controlling the emotions, does knowledge become a factor for good. . . . Though I

have all knowledge . . . and have not love, I am nothing (1 Cor. 13:2.) In Proverbs 4 the writer impresses the importance of getting wisdom with understanding. We can get wisdom through learning; knowledge can make us wise; but understanding only comes by practising, by experience. We remember witnessing a young teacher of engineering perform a task on a machine rather clumsily, certainly not as expert as one might expect from one who was teaching that trade or skill. After he had left the room one of the company present remarked upon the fact. There was also another teacher present, a man much older, not only in teaching experience but who had many years practical experience before he became a teacher, and whose own skill was unquestioned by all who knew him. His quiet reply was—You see, we have so many teachers like that today; they know the theory of the trade, but they have had no great **practical** experience. The wonderful Word of God is ours to **practise**; let us grow in grace as well as in knowledge. Let us pray and strive more diligently to attain and maintain greater depth of spirituality, more holy love for God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let us seek to keep self in proper place. If someone wrongs us, above everything else let us be merciful; if someone slanders us let us not be stirred to slander in return. **Our** faithfulness is being tested; let us demonstrate that we are true, that we acknowledge the exhortations of God's Word and its spirit to be of surpassing loveliness, that we want our lives to be steeped in it.

One Christian writer expressed the opinion that by too much generalization we often rob the Scripture of its **personal** message—we should love one another, we should not strive, we should not bear false witness. . . . We . . . We . . . We—and as we read and preach we are in our minds applying the message to other persons. He suggested it better to read—The Scripture tells me what I should do. . I must not be bitter . . . I must not be selfish . . . unkind . . . I should have the spirit of Christ in my heart at all times—never mind whether others are complying or not. We look at others and say, He ought to practise what he preaches; whereas what others do is not the important thing. The important thing is—I must practise what I preach. If we are all busy trying to do that we will hardly have any time even to note what our brother is doing. Let every man prove his own work. (Gal. 6:4.) Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves whether Jesus Christ is in you. (2 Cor. 13:5.)

#### Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th, in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from the secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, S.E.13, Victoria.

#### BIBLE STUDENTS MANUAL

Copies of these Manuals, otherwise known as Berean Comments, have been published recently by brethren in Chicago, and are now in stock for the benefit of our friends. With nice appearance, bound in strong cloth, with gold lettering, the price is \$4.00, plus 15 cents postage.

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, is now available at \$9.50. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index a' \$10.50.

#### Adelaide Easter Convention

This early announcement is made to the effect that the Adelaide brethren expect to hold their Easter Convention next year (D.V.) from Good Friday to Easter Monday. Further information from the secretary—Mr. J. Jordan, P.O. Box 47, Kingswood, South Australia.

## TRACTS AVAILABLE

The article which appeared in the recent "Peoples Paper"—"Can the Living Talk with the Dead?"—**is** now printed in tract form, and is available to friends for witnessing to the truths of the Bible as they have opportunity. The tract "When Christ is King" is also still available for general use; and these tracts are supplied free by the Tract Fund.

### Books Available

"Most Holy Faith"—\$2.20.

"God's Promises Come True"—\$2.20.

"Emphatic Diaglott," New Testament—\$2.20.

"Daily Heavenly Manna," birthday pages—\$1.10.

"Tabernacle Shadows"—68c.

"The Book of Books," Reviewing the Bible as a whole—**\$1.10.**

"**The Divine** Plan of the Ages," Cloth bound-80c; paper covers-55c.

"Our Lord's Great Prophecy"-15c. "Manner of Christ's Return"-15c. "Christ's Return"-15c.

"Some of the Parables"-15c. "Hope Beyond the Grave"-15c. "God and Reason"-15c.

"Where Are the Dead?"-10c.

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## Question. Box

**Question:**— What is the real meaning of the 6th commandment—“Thou shalt not kill?”

**Answer:**— The Revised Version rendering—“Thou shalt do no murder”—is much to be preferred to the Common Version, “Thou shalt not kill.” Murder is always wrong; killing is sometimes right, sometimes duty. The life of the lower animals was given to man according to his necessities (Gen. 9:3), but we deprecate that which is misnamed sport—the destruction of birds and beasts and fishes wantonly—for no good purpose, but merely to gratify a savage desire to take life. That this command was not intended to prohibit the taking of human life under certain circumstances is evident from the fact that the same law made provision for the killing of murderers. The same may be said of those people whom Israel was commanded to kill for wrong-doing, in opposition to the purposes of God in connection with His covenant people. We are happy that in the Plan of God all those who were killed in obedience to God’s instructions will have full opportunity of salvation to lasting life on earth, in the kingdom of Christ, through the resurrection of the dead, because Christ “by the grace of God tasted death for every man.”

To the church, the new creation in Christ, a still higher law governs on this subject. Our law of love, the New Command, covers it completely. He who loves his neighbor will surely not murder him. But our Teacher gave a still higher thought respecting this feature of the law, and the way in which we, His followers, should view it, when He declared that for one brother to have hatred toward another was to have the murder spirit—the spirit which, under certain conditions, might lead to murder. According to this definition the person who angrily wishes that another were dead commits murder in his heart. On the contrary, the spirit of love wishes well to the neighbor—yea, even though he be an enemy, desires that he may come into harmony with the Lord, and ultimately attain life everlasting, and so desires these things as to seek by word and *act* to render him any assistance possible.

### BIBLE STUDENTS’ HYMNALS

Supplies of the Bible Students’ Hymnal in words only and music books are now available. Both books are cloth bound, with nice appearance, and contain 489 hymns. Words only books are priced at 50c, and the music books at \$2.50.

### CHILDREN’S HYMNS

A new booklet of hymns suitable for children, now numbering 73, as well as numerous choruses, has been compiled by one of our friends, and copies are now available at 15c each, post free.

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