

# Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

## GRIEVING THE SPIRIT

David Lipscomb

The 30th verse of the 4th chapter of Ephesians, is, “**Grieve not the Holy Spirit of our God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.**” In properly understanding this passage, we must note the meaning and use of several terms. The term *seal* is a sign guaranteeing and confirming a promise, or obligation. Persons in the apostolic age of the church, believed in Christ, confessed him, and put him on in baptism. The New Testament Scriptures were not then given. To instruct the new converts, to strengthen, and encourage them in the divine life, to prevent them losing faith and heart and courage, and to enable them to persevere faithfully to the end, the Holy Spirit was given to them or at least a sufficient number to supply all needful instructions and guidance to the infant congregations.

The disciples on the day of Pentecost, the Samaritans, to whom Peter and John went down after Philip had preached and baptized many, and laid hands, that they receive the Holy Ghost, those same Ephesians who first knowing only John’s baptism were baptized in the name of Christ, when Paul laid his hands upon them, they received the Holy Ghost. By the Holy Ghost they are here said to be sealed unto the day of redemption. That is the Holy Ghost was given to confirm to them the promise of God as well as to instruct and guide in the way of truth and so to encourage them to persevere unto the end. It sealed and guaranteed to them the truth of what was taught, and confirmed to them the promise of God, gave assurance to them that the promises and work were from God in such a way as to prevent their growing faint and weary in their minds, and turning back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world.

This gift of the Spirit was direct and what is called miraculous in its character. It was the transfer of God’s Spirit of knowledge

and power to the individual and so transferred God’s knowledge and power to the individual, as to manifest that God was with and in the individual. The promises of redemption were made to these persons in the gospel and were confirmed by this gift of spiritual knowledge and power. God in this way sealed or confirmed the certainty of His promises unto the day of redemption. This Spirit, in its miraculous manifestation of gifts of divine knowledge and power, has not been possessed by any individual since the revelation was completed, collected, and confirmed to man. Hence the Spirit in closing the revelation through John in the Isle of Patmos, says,

**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. ... For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.** (Rev. 22: 13, 18, 19, *KJV*).

That is, the spirit of revelation that he possessed was the first and last of revealing spirits, or it revealed the first and last of divine truth to the world, and had completed its revelations, so that when that book was closed no further revelation would be made.

The truths confirmed, the promises made sure and the directions needful to the guidance of man are all fully set forth in the book of the revelation of the Spirit. Through that book it now teaches, guides, directs, and comforts.

It did not direct, comfort, strengthen when given in its miraculous form to man, otherwise than through revealing and confirming the instructions to man. The apostles themselves had the truth revealed to them, and were left like other men, to contend with their passions and infirmities, strengthened and encouraged by the knowledge revealed to them. For the Spirit to influence them otherwise than through revealing truth to their mind and leaving them

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# Contending FOR THE Faith™

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## *Editorial...*

### **CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE?**

Men may misunderstand the Bible in as many different ways as there are people to read it. But God did not intend such misunderstanding. Regarding our obligations to God, all people must be in total agreement. Jesus said, **“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”** (John 12:48). Thus, the Word of God will read and mean exactly the same on the Day of Judgment as it does now (Jam. 1:25).

All mentally capable people can (are able to) understand, but they do not—there is a difference between can and do. The question to be asked is, “Can we understand the Bible?” This is the case because when we understand, we will be alike in understanding. Paul made this clear to the Ephesians when he wrote, **“How, that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ”** (Eph. 3:3-4; also see 1 Tim. 3:14; 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11; John 5:39). When people orally or in writing, teach that men cannot “understand the Bible alike,” they are writing for one reason—to cause their audience to understand that “everyone cannot understand the Bible alike.” *We shall not belabor such nonsense.*

Seeing it is not God’s fault that people do not understand the Bible, why is it the case that they misunderstand it? The answer is not far from any of us. Please note the following simple prerequisite for understanding the scriptures—**“an honest and good heart”** (Luke 8:15). In this parable, the Word of God is the **“seed of the kingdom”** (v. 11). It did not change as it was sown **“by the wayside,”** or **“on the rock,”** or **“among thorns,”** or **“on the good ground”** (vss. 5-8). The first three places the seed fell represent dishonest hearts; they were not good because they were not honest. Before one is going to **“hunger and thirst after righteousness”** and thereby **“be filled”** (Mat. 5:6), there must be the integrity of heart (intellect, will, conscience, and emotions). Jesus said, **“If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching”** (John 7:17). Seeking the truth for merely academic reasons will not bring understanding. There must be the will to comply with what is learned before full understanding is possible. Jesus spoke of those who did not understand because they would not. Jesus said their hearts had **“waxed gross.”** They had lost their honesty because of idols in their hearts. Such idols were more important to them than understanding God’s truth (Mat. 13:13-15). Paul further emphasized this principle when he wrote of the departure of the Gentiles from God—**“Because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened”** (Rom. 1:21, *ASV*–1901). The heart that does not expend its energies in glorifying God by obeying His will, in time, lose whatever knowledge of God it ever had. The heart kept honest cannot fall into this trap. The **“reprobate mind”** of Romans 3:28 is a direct result of a dishonest heart. Also consider Hebrews 5:11-14. Paul wrote of those who did not have a **“love of the truth”** but who **“had pleasure in unrighteousness”** (2 The. 2:10-12). Integrity of the heart will prevent this from happening.

The writer of Proverbs penned: **“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”** (Pro. 4:23). Our understanding or misunderstanding of God’s saving Word is di-

rectly related to an honest or dishonest heart. Indeed, we are totally responsible to God for understanding or not understanding what the Bible teaches concerning our salvation from sin and what is involved in remaining faithful to Christ to the end (2 Tim. 3:16, 17;

Rev. 2:10). Hopefully, this brief study has shed some light on why people persist in misunderstanding the Bible?

—David P. Brown, Editor

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to act under the direction of that truth would be to destroy their individuality and responsibility. Hence apostles, prophets, and men of less degrees of inspiration sinned. Peter was inspired before he denied the Saviour, sinned after the full apostolic measure of inspiration was received. Balaam was inspired. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Saviour, was one of the twelve to whom was given power **“to cast out devils, Heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease”** (Mat. 10:2).

No spiritual power to resist evil and temptation was conferred by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit save by giving to the mind a clear perception of truth with its blessing and of the evil tendencies and fatal results of error that leads to sin. The clear perception of truth with the good that flows through its practice, together with the loveliness of God, kindness to man, touches the heart, purifies the affections, restrains the evil tendencies of the flesh, and so strengthens the soul for good. The same influences are exerted now by the Spirit through the truth, revealed in the Scriptures and confirmed to our faith. All the instructions given by the Spirit to the apostles, for the enlightenment, guidance, comfort and help of the world are recorded in the Scriptures for the benefit of the world. Hence,

**All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works** (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

It is through that Spirit then, in its teachings and guiding power that in this day Christians are sealed unto the day of redemption. That is, the promises of God through Christ are sealed or con-

firmed to all Christians until the day of redemption, complete and thorough from the thralldom of sin.

The Spirit is the medium of divine communication with man. It is God’s representative here on earth. We reach God through the Spirit. God is spirit and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Then what pleases the Spirit pleases God, what pleases God pleases the Spirit, what vexes God or grieves God grieves the Spirit.

There is a declaration in Isaiah 53:10 that is of the same purport. **“But they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit, therefore he (God) was turned to be their enemy and fought against them.”** When these Jews vexed the Holy Spirit they certainly grieved it. The Holy Spirit was in the prophets, through them taught the Jews the law of God. Those Jews refused to hearken to His law, rebelled against the law, and so rebelled and sinned against the Holy Spirit that gave the law so that God turned and fought against them.

Again in Psalm 78:40 He, referring to their frequent rebellings against Moses, against the Holy Spirit speaking through Moses, said, **“How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness and grieve him in the desert.”** They provoked and grieved God and His Holy Spirit, by the frequent murmurings and rebellions against Moses and His law in the journey through the wilderness from Egyptian bondage up to the land of Canaan. Distrusting His promises and disobeying His commands grieved Him in the wilderness and provoked the Lord to destroy them (*Gospel Advocate*, June 7th, 1877).

—Deceased

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## “The Same Mind”

Danny Douglas

### INTRODUCTION

#### Important Questions for Consideration:

1. Does God’s Word require that Christians be of the **“same mind”**?
2. What does it mean to be of the **“same mind”**? Does God charge His people to be of the same mind regarding doctrinal matters or matters of the faith?
3. Does being of the same mind mean that we are in agreement in our thinking and beliefs?
4. According to the New Testament, may the Lord’s church hold in good standing one who holds error on a

doctrinal position, but who agrees not to proclaim or promote this position?

5. Can one holding error in his heart declare the **“whole counsel of God”**?
6. Does God allow space for repentance for one who holds such error but is willing to study what the Bible teaches on the matter?
7. Are those who are not like-minded in the Lord fulfilling the Lord’s will as expressed in His prayer of John chapter 17?
8. Are there serious dangers in allowing for a different

mind between brethren?

### DOES GOD'S WORD REQUIRE THAT CHRISTIANS BE OF THE "SAME MIND"?

The New Testament in a number of passages emphasizes that brethren in Christ are to be like-minded or of **"the same mind."** In writing to the church at Philippi, Paul enjoined upon the brethren:

**If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind** (Phi. 2:1-2).

Brother David Lipscomb makes this fine comment on these two verses:

He had suffered so much for them, and they had shown such unremitting regard for him by following with their prayers and contributions that he felt impelled to make this appeal unto them, having the same love. It is a unity resting on the love of Christ which engenders the love of Christ, being of one accord, of one mind. In every letter that Paul wrote to the churches, he pled with them for the unity of the faith, oneness of mind and purpose, perfect accord in the work they should do. For division and strife are themselves sinful, and bring ruin and destruction as their fruits. To the Corinthians he said: **Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.** (1 Cor. 1:10.)

Such was the plea for harmony and unity among the children of God at all places. It is just as essential today that unity be preserved as it was then.

Vincent makes this accurate observation on verse two:

Literally, "think the same thing." The expression is a general one for concord, and is defined in the two following clauses: unity of "affection, the same love; unity of sentiment, of one accord." The general expression is then repeated in a stronger form, "thinking the one thing." The *King James Version* and *English Revised Version* (1885): "of one mind."

B. W. Johnson also emphasizes this point, saying "that they be like-minded, in full agreement, perfect harmony. Having the same love. Loving one another with pure hearts fervently. Being of one accord" (*The People's New Testament*).

The fact that being of the same mind is a key to unity is emphasized in the apostles statement in the fourth chapter regarding two sisters in the church: **"I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord"** (Phi. 4:2). **"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits"** (Rom. 12:16).

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE OF THE "SAME MIND"?

Paul, in closing his epistle to the church at Corinth, again

brings in the principle that must exist between brothers and sisters in Christ, that we must be of the same mind: **"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you"** (2 Cor. 13:11). The idea of being **"of one mind"** is: "Be of one mind by walking by the same rule" (Lipscomb).

This brings up a significant point, that walking by the **"same rule"** produces acting and thinking alike. In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul declares that we are to follow and walk by the same standard: **"...let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing"** (Phi. 3:16b). Hence, by following the only standard or rule that we have in Christ, namely His Word, the New Testament, we think alike, we live alike, and we follow the same pattern. The pattern is that which is given to us, the New Testament. Paul teaches that we are to hold firmly to it, implying that we are to follow it closely and faithfully: **"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus"** (2 Tim. 1:13). The form or **"pattern"** (2 Tim. 1:13, *ASV*, 1901) is that which has been brought to man by the Holy Spirit, that is, **"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"** (Eph. 6:17).

By letting the **"word of Christ"** dwell in us **"richly"** (Col. 3:16), we learn how to think, what to think, how to walk, how to talk, and how to live the Christian life. This is why when one who purports to be a member of the body of Christ begins to bring "uncertain sounds" doctrinally, or taints his conversation with worldly talk, the devout Christian can detect it immediately. It is also true concerning the way that one dresses. If it is not becoming of Christ's teaching, then those have been eating and drinking the wonderful words of life can see that there is a problem.

In like manner, the apostle Peter instructs brethren in Christ to be of one mind: **"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:"** (1 Pet. 3:8). The late brother Guy N. Woods says: "Like minded is unity of mind and purpose, agreement in all the major details of Christian life and activity."

We do not have miraculous gifts today because the age of miracles has ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-10). We do not need the gifts today because we have the Word of God in completion and it correctly applied to our lives completes us (2 Tim. 3:16-17). When brethren are thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures, when an unsound speaker or one who is in ignorance gets up to speak, it does not take long for faithful brethren to know that something is not right. This is because the Scriptures **"thoroughly furnish"** us, and are profitable for **"instruction in righteousness"** (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

### THE HOLY SCRIPTURES PRODUCE THE LOWLY MIND, THE MIND OF CHRIST

Again, in Philippians chapter two, Paul enjoins lowly

mindfulness and the mind of Christ upon the church:

**Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**” (Phi. 2:3-5).

It is this mind that will produce love, humility, meekness, long suffering, servitude, obedience, sacrifice and a willingness to suffer in the church. The mind of Christ will produce those things in the life of those who have His mind, as it did in the Life and Example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Paul speaks powerfully and beautifully of those things in His life and example, when he wrote:

**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross** (Phi. 2:5-8).

The Word of Christ is His mind and will revealed to man. By continuing in study and obedience to His word one becomes more like Christ. It must dwell in us richly:

**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord** (Col. 3:16).

By loving Jesus and keeping His commandments (John 14:15), being ourselves a workman in the word of God that needed not to be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15), and searching the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11), we can have the mind of Christ developed within us!

#### “THE SAME MIND” IN MATTERS OF THE FAITH

If Christians are of the “**same mind**,” and have the “**mind of Christ**,” that we will be of the “**same mind**” when it comes to matters of the faith. These are the principles that make up “**the faith**,” which are necessary for salvation, which one must: obey (Acts 6:7); “**earnestly contend for**” (Jude 3); “**continue in**” (Col. 1:23); and preach or support the preaching of (Gal. 1:23).

The inspired Jude wrote:

**Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints** (Jude 3).

Hence, “**the faith**” is that which was delivered by the inspiration of God: the gospel (1 Pet. 1:12); the word of God, “**the sword of the Spirit**” (Eph. 6:17); things received from God by inspired men which have been delivered to the brethren, during the miraculous age (1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3; 2:13). The faith is made up of the totality of New Testament teaching, which has been made possible by the precious blood of Christ (Mat. 26:28; Mark 14:24). In instituting the cup in the Lord’s supper, Jesus said: “**Likewise also the cup**

**after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you**” (Luke 22:20). In fact, inspiration describes the blood of Christ as “**the blood of the everlasting covenant**” (Heb. 13:20).

The “**faith**” has been: “**once for all delivered unto the saints**” (Jude 3; *ASV, 1901*). Brother Guy N. Woods, in his excellent commentary on Jude, makes the following statement:

This faith has once for all (*hapax*) not simply formerly as the *King James Version* implies, but for all time been delivered to the saints. The meaning is that the truth is delivered for all time; it is a permanent deposit, it will never be superseded, amended or modified. As it now stands it is a perfect, adequate, complete, and inviolable deposit of truth, providing the means with which to confute the gainsayer, and resist the advocate of false doctrine. This deposit of truth was infallibly delivered, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:21), and no part of it is superfluous or unnecessary. “**Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work**” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, *ASV-1901*).

Matters of the Faith are those things upon which we must be in agreement in our teaching and practice, such as: the plan of salvation; the Christian life; the worship of the church; the plan, purpose, organization, and work of the church; the Christian home; the role of men and women in the church and in the home; the means by which men are guided by God, in doing those things which are acceptable to Him; the creation; the virgin birth and Deity of Jesus Christ; and God’s law on fellowship. Paul’s injunction to the church at Corinth, in the Name and Authority of Jesus Christ, plainly evidences that God requires oneness in the matter of doctrine and the faith, in what we believe and teach:

**Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment** (1 Cor. 1:10).

This scripture (1 Corinthians 1:10) completely destroys the idea of “unity in diversity,” the idea that we may disagree in matters of the faith and doctrine of Christ, as long as we are in agreement as to who the Lord is. This is the idea that the Lord’s church may be in fellowship with those whose doctrine and practices are contrary to New Testament teaching is completely foreign to the New Testament. The apostle John sets forth the following principle that would forbid any such idea and practice:

**Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds** (2 John

9-11).

Therefore, we must not only refuse fellowship to those who bring a doctrine contrary to the doctrine of Christ, but are Divinely obligated to mark those who so do:

**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:17-18).**

To sum up this principle, it is impossible to be in fellowship with Him Who is light and to be in the light with God, and to be in fellowship with those who practice darkness, whether it be darkness in religion, in morals or whatever it may be. Again, by inspiration of God, the apostle John makes this abundantly clear:

**This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:5-7).**

#### **DOES BEING OF THE “SAME MIND” MEAN THAT WE MUST BE IN AGREEMENT IN OUR THINKING AND BELIEFS? ARE THERE DANGERS IN TOLERATING ONE WHO HOLDS AN ERRONEOUS POSITION?**

Unequivocally, the answer to the foregoing questions is YES. The very expression “**the same mind**” indicates unity in our thinking. When Paul stated that we are to endeavor to “**keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**” (Eph. 4:3), did he mean that we may hold to differing beliefs and still be the unity which the teaching of the Holy Spirit, through the Bible, provides? Obviously not. Moreover, in the Bible, those of earnest and strong convictions on the truth could not but speak these things, like Peter and John (Acts 4:19), and like Jeremiah, in whose bones God’s Word was as a burning fire and he could not hold it in (Jer. 20:9).

Therefore, the idea that one may hold to error as long as he does not teach it, would imply a betrayal of conscience or a dishonest heart. If this person has an ounce of sincerity, he would eventually come out with his position either privately or publicly and hence, become: “**a little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump**” (Gal. 5:9), infecting the Lord’s people with false doctrine!

It would be impossible to conform to the teaching of Paul to the church at Corinth and allow for brethren hold false positions to be in good standing with faithful brethren:

**Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).**

Brethren simply cannot be of the same mind and in the same judgment and be in disagreement on matters of the faith!

**Thus, according to the New Testament, the Lord’s church may not hold in good standing one who holds error on a doctrinal position, as long as he agrees not to proclaim or promote this position!** This has been exemplified in holding up “gospel preachers” in a congregation or in the brotherhood regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. For example, there are some who apparently are sound in many ways, but who hold that the guilty party in a divorce who has been put away, has authority from Christ to remarry. Where is this authority given by Christ? We are to do “**all in the name of the Lord Jesus**” (Col. 3:17), that is by the authority of the One Who has all authority in heaven and on earth (Mat. 28:18), namely, Jesus Christ!

In a Matthew 19:6-God-joined-marriage, the innocent-of-fornication-spouse is authorized by the Lord to put away the spouse who is guilty of fornication and contract another marriage with one who is eligible to enter into a Matthew 19:6-marriage. He said: “**And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery**” (Mat. 19:9). However, those who grant the guilty party the right to remarry are acting without Christ’s authority, as it is revealed in His Word!

There are many other examples of positions that men who appear to be faithful hold that are contrary to New Testament teaching. One example would be a preacher or congregations who do not incorporate the mechanical instrument of music in the worship, but have no personal convictions against it. They leave the appearance that they are faithful in worship, but they are not faithful in heart. Jesus emphasized that in what we say and do the heart must be right! He strongly rebuked those Jews whose worship was hypocritical, saying:

**Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Mat. 19:7-9).**

#### **HOW CAN ONE WHO HOLDS ERROR IN HIS HEART DECLARE THE “WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD”?**

Paul was pure from the blood of all men because he did not hold back any truth from them. To the Ephesian elders he said: “**And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house**” (Acts 20:20). The inspired apostle also stated to those same elders: “**Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God**” (Acts 20:26-27). Thus, those who do hold back anything from precious souls, that is, any

part of the whole counsel of God, the faith, the New Testament, will be accountable to God for these souls in the Judgment! All of it was profitable for their souls.

Paul was in harmony with Christ when the apostle said what he did to the Ephesians elders. Before leaving this earth for heaven the scripture records:

**And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen** (Mat. 28:18-20).

The Lord demanded of them and us to teach every person to observe all things that He had commanded them! Thus, whether anyone holds a false position personally or not, or if one fails to teach—all must stand before God in the Judgment and answer for this! **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”** (2 Cor. 5:10; cf. Rom. 14:10-12). Let us not forget that the preacher is charged before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, **“Who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;”** (2 Tim. 4:1), to: **“Preach the word”** (2 Tim. 4:2), and that means all of it!

Obviously, if we all have the mind of Christ, then we will all have the **“same mind,”** and it will produce the same fruit. He said, **“If ye love me, keep my commandments”** (John 14:15).

#### **DOES GOD ALLOW SPACE FOR REPENTANCE FOR ONE WHO HOLDS SUCH ERROR BUT IS WILLING TO STUDY WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ON THE MATTER?**

Does God authorize anyone who mentally holds an erroneous view or fatal error the opportunity to be taught and to correct the error? Obviously, such a person must be honest, sincere, and open to what the Word of God teaches. One who will not be warned or who persists in error must be rejected. Paul instructed Titus: **“A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself”** (Tit. 3:10-11). Such individuals must be marked, avoided, and have the fellowship of the church withdrawn from them (cf. Rom. 16:17-18).

However, faithful brethren should take the time to bring the humble soul who is willing to learn to repentance. It could be that he does not know any better, or has been led astray, or simply fallen into the devil’s trap. Paul wrote to Timothy:

**And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will**

**give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will** (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

However, until he has come to the truth on the matter, he should not be allowed to teach publicly or privately. It should be pointed out plainly to him that he may not in any shape, form, or fashion promote the false doctrine which he holds. If after sufficient time he refuses to give up his error, he must then be withdrawn from, because he is not sound in the faith and faithful to the Lord (1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:5).

#### **ARE THOSE WHO ARE NOT LIKE MINDED IN THE LORD FULFILLING HIS WILL AS EXPRESSED IN HIS PRAYER OF JOHN 17?**

In the shadow of the cross, our Savior prayed that all who would believe on His through the Word given by Him to the apostles would be one. This would include all true believers in Christ because they have all come to believe on Jesus Christ through the doctrine given to the apostles (Acts 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:12; Heb. 2:3-4). This is a reference to the gospel of Christ, the Word of God, the only means whereby man may come to faith (Rom. 1:16; 10:17). Jesus prayed:

**Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me** (John 17:20-23).

It is a matter of the greatest importance to understand the nature of this oneness for which Jesus prayed for His followers. It was to be a oneness like unto that between Him and His heavenly Father, which certainly implies unity of thought, love, teaching, purpose, and aim. The late brother Guy N. Woods points out:

The object of this prayer was that all of his disciples should be one; and the unity he desired for them finds its model in that close and indissoluble union obtaining between himself and his Father. This unity for which he so earnestly prayed in the shadow of the cross was not for unity of opinion or of organization alone, though these are certainly included; but for unity of faith, of practice, of aim, of purpose and of love. Such unity can be realized only when men of good will come to recognize Jesus as the only sovereign of his realm, the head of the church and the executor of his will on earth. Thoughtful men know that the only feasible, workable and acceptable basis for unity is the teaching of the New Testament. When men come to respect God’s Word as they ought agreement on the basis of its teaching is easy; but, it will never be possible to unite on the doctrines and commandments of men.

It is inconceivable that there would ever exist a difference in view and thinking between the Father and the Son. Likewise, we are to be one in mind, purpose, aim, practice, and

will, also.

**ARE THERE SERIOUS DANGERS IN  
ALLOWING FOR A DIFFERENT MIND  
BETWEEN BRETHREN?**

If brethren are of a different mind on what they believe, then one or both of them are in error. They all cannot believe the truth and not be of the same mind! Several years ago the story was related to me of an older brother from the north who was a member of congregation in a neighboring state. This brother held to the A.D. 70 doctrine which teaches that the Lord returned in A.D. 70, that the final resurrection occurred then, and the final Judgment took place. This would mean that the Bible doctrine of final things has already passed, which is false (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10-12; Acts 17:30-31; Rev. 1:7; John 5:28-29). The one relating the story indicated that the brethren in the church the brother holding this error worshiped did not deal with the problem, but in fact, allowed the man on occasion to lead the singing. The erring brother had agreed not to bring up his false doctrine! One wonders if the A.D. 70 proponent could in all sincerity sing songs such as, "There's A Great Day Coming"? To him the great day has already come. This shows the glaring inconsistency of having fellowship with those who cherish fatal error!

Not only is such conduct as the foregoing inconsistent, it is dangerous. Suppose a preacher in a congregation teaches the truth on many subjects, but holds to the false doctrine that before one is baptized one may divorce and remarry as many times as one please, but only after baptism does the truth of Matthew 19:6, 9 apply. Thus, those who were unscripturally married prior to baptism can simply keep their unscriptural mates. This would mean, contrary to Acts 2:38, that one can be baptized without repentance before his baptism. In the congregation there is a couple who divorce and remarried before their baptism and have been taught, based on this false doctrine, that they can remain in their unlawful

relationship. In one of the Bible classes taught by an elder, this issue arises and the elder teaches the truth on the matter, that those who would go to heaven must bring forth fruit worthy of repentance and get out of their unlawful marriage relationship. The couple is disturbed. They have confidence in the preacher who has brought many good lessons on other subjects, but has agreed not to teach or reveal his false views on divorce and remarriage. So, the disturbed couple goes to the preacher for his counsel, asking him his view of the matter.

Here are said preacher's choices: 1) Tell them his error and encourage them to live in sin and also break his word to remain silent on the issue. 2) Lie and tell them he agrees with the elder who teaches the Bible class. 3) Not say anything and leave the couple to wonder at his ambiguity which will also reflect on the elder who taught the truth. It is a no win situation. It can only result in great damage to precious souls and the cause of Christ generally.

Moreover, such a practice foments the very thing that the devil wants man to do, and that is do not speak up for selfish reasons. Gospel preachers are to believe, preach, and practice the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth! Those who do not hold to the truth and who do not stand up for it are a disgrace to the Lord's church and one day they will lose their souls. **"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins"** (Isa. 58:1). **"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me"** (Eze. 3:17). We are to be like courageous apostle Paul, and as he said: **"...that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak"** (Eph. 6:20).

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