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(John 17:21)

By
Philip Mauro



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In the days of the Apostles "the unity of the Spirit" was manifestly existent. "All that believed were together and had all things common." They constituted one body, were indwelt by one Spirit, were called unto the one hope of their calling, acknowledged one Lord, confessed the one faith by receiving the one baptism and worshipped the one God and Father of all (Eph. 4:3-6). That unity, I say, had a manifest existence and all believers were aware of it and of their duty to "keep" it "in the bond of peace," a bond whereof the world has no knowledge. It was the unity of **the Holy Spirit**, Who, having given it existence, continues to this present time bringing into it all who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and this He accomplishes by giving them a new birth, whereby they become children of God and free-born citizens of the Kingdom of His dear Son. They were from early days called "Christians" and they recognized none other name than that which, though far "**above** every name" is yet the only Name "given **under** heaven among men, whereby we must be saved."

When, in those early days, it came to the ears of the apostle Paul that there were signs of divisions among the Christians at Corinth (in that one was saying, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," and another, "I am of Cephas,") the apostle sharply rebuked them; and the Holy Spirit has caused that rebuke to be recorded for the ad-

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monition of all subsequent generations of Christians (I Cor. 1:12). Can we then suppose it is any less a serious offence in God's eyes for Christians in our day to be saying, one "I am of Luther," another "I am of Calvin," and another, "I am of Wesley;" while other groups denominate themselves by names less worthy of respect?

Wherefore the responsibility of the first generation of Christians was—not to organize a fellowship and to give it a name, but—to "keep" the divinely formed fellowship of the Son of God, "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." **And this they did.**

The Christians of those early centuries could truthfully have sung: "We are not divided; all one body we;" whereas we of these latter days, though professing the same "faith and doctrine," cannot rightly do so. For "the unity of the Spirit" has not been **kept**. It is no longer in manifestation. On the contrary, the aspect which Christianity now presents to a skeptical world is that of utter **disunity**.

A "Willing" People Needed

What then can **we** do? It is obviously impossible for those whose eyes have been opened to the evils of divisions amongst the people of God to restore the unity of the Spirit by their own efforts or through the agency of any plan or means of their own devising. What then? This being a question that is both practical and also opportune, it is the object of this paper primarily to awaken an interest therein. For this paper is written under the strong conviction that the situation is not hopeless. The fact that the unity of the Spirit once existed and for a long time continued in existence

despite powerful opposing influences, fully warrants our confident belief in the possibility of its re-attainment. That nothing is impossible with God we are assured. Hence there remains only the question: Is it His will? We believe it is, this belief being grounded upon the Word of the Lord discussed below; and if it be His will, He doubtless has His own plan for its achievement and also His own time therefor. But we are not warranted therefore in being unconcerned about a situation throughout the world so grieving to the Holy Spirit, Whose unity is involved. For it clearly appears by the Scriptures that God acts in such matters through the agency of His "willing" people. Are we then **willing**? He may be asking at this very hour, "Who will go for US?" And He may be waiting for some of us (who have been heretofore indifferent to this crying evil, or even helping promote it) to respond in the words of the prophet, "Here am I, send me." Who then is willing to take part in this great enterprise? Among the Father's promises to His anointed Priest-King, at the time of His enthronement in heaven, is this: "Thy people shall be **WILLING** in the day of Thy power" (Ps. 110:3). And **now** is the day of His power. For He Himself declared, when about to ascend to His Father's throne, "**All power** is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. **Go ye therefore . . .**" The omnipotence wherewith He is now invested is at the disposal of His willing people for the accomplishment of the mission, whatever it be, upon which He sends them (Mat. 28:18, 19).

Another object of this paper is to arouse those of the household of faith whom it may reach to a recognition of their individual responsibility with

respect to the existence and the perpetuation of a state of things that is dishonoring to their Lord and Saviour as well as detrimental to the cause for which He willingly endured the agonies and shame of the cross. Once a believer's interest in this great subject is awakened and his conscience quickened sufficiently to cause him to ask: "Lord, what wilt Thou have **me** to do?" he will feel impelled to search the Scriptures for God's answer.

Holy Ground

We believe that the mind of Christ touching the subject of our present study is clearly revealed in the prayer He made to His Father, in the hearing of His disciples, on the eve of His offering Himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world (John XVII). It behooves us to approach this chapter with deep consciousness that the place whereon we are standing is holy ground; that we are about to overhear the words addressed by the Son to the Father on an occasion so unspeakably sacred that we have no words wherewith to describe it. Everything pertaining to that occasion is well calculated to enhance the solemnity of the words which then came from the heart and lips of Him Who spake as "never man spake;" words which, though overheard **by** men (whom God had chosen for that holy privilege) were not spoken to men, but—to God the Father Himself.

As we listen with holy awe to those heart-melting words, we perceive that our Lord's thoughts in that "hour" were centered upon **the purpose for which the Father had sent Him into the world**. Repeatedly He refers to the fact that He had been "sent" by His Father to do a specific work (vv. 3, 4, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25); that work being "**that He should**

give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (v. 2). Thus it is brought most impressively to our minds that eternal life, that priceless gift of God's love and grace (Rom. 6:23) comes **only through knowing GOD AS HE IS REVEALED IN THE PERSON OF THE SON**. This fundamental truth of "the gospel of God concerning His Son" is here declared by the Son Himself in these crystal-clear words: "And this **IS** life eternal, that they might **know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent**" (John 17:3). We recall, moreover, the words He had spoken only a short time previously: "I am the way: . . . No man cometh unto the Father **but by Me**" (John 14:6).

What then is this particular knowledge of God, which is so truly **vital** that it is indispensable to the attainment of eternal life? Is it something very profound? something that can be understood only by persons of superior intelligence? God be praised that this knowledge is of such nature that a child can acquire it as readily as (yea, even more readily than) the most erudite scholar. For the life-imparting truth which, by the gospel of God, is now proclaimed to all the world is simply that **JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD; that HE AND THE FATHER ARE ONE** (17:11 and 22). This is the very essence of **saving truth**, the acceptance of which brings eternal life. And this is one of those things which God has been pleased to hide from the wise and prudent and to reveal unto babes (Mat. 11:25).

It should be recalled in this connection that the declared purpose of John's Gospel is to certify the vital truth "**that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of**

God." For he himself says: "These are written that ye might believe that JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD; and that, **believing**, ye might have LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME" (John 20:31).

That the World through Him might be Saved

It should be noted that our Lord prays—"not for the world;" but—primarily for those whom the Father had given Him, His immediate disciples (v. 9). This strong contrast between "the world" and His own people appears again and again (vv. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 23). This too is of importance for the purpose of our present study. God's love embraces the whole world and therefore His purpose in sending His Son for salvation comprehends the whole world: "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the World THROUGH HIM might be saved. **He that believeth on Him is not condemned**; but he that believeth not is condemned already because **he hath not believed in the Name of the only-begotten Son of God**" (John 3:17, 18). If therefore we have apprehended though but feebly the truth of **God's love for the world** (because of which He sent His only-begotten Son into the world that through Him the world might be saved) we will readily perceive that anything which tends to frustrate that purpose is an offence to God and an injury to those for whom Christ died. And sectarianism does just that.

By careful attention to our Saviour's prayer it will be clearly seen that it is not composed of disconnected items, but on the contrary there is a close relation between the several things for which

He prays. The sequence of related topics may be stated thus:

- (a) God sent His Son into the world that the world through Him might be saved;
- (b) In order that the world may be saved, it must believe that Jesus is the Son of God and was sent by His Father;
- (c) In order that the world may believe that Jesus was sent by the Father He prays for the manifested oneness of His people throughout the world;
- (d) Therefore His prayer culminates in the petition, "That they [His redeemed people] **all** may be one . . . **THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME.**"

For Them also who shall Believe on Me

Resuming now our detailed study of the prayer, we note further that our Saviour prays not for them alone whom the Father had already given Him, but (quoting His words) "For them also who shall believe on Me through their word" (v. 20). Thus all who should thereafter believe on Him as the Son of God are embraced in that special thing for which He entreated the Father in the supreme "hour" which then had "come."

That special thing, was, as we have seen, "**THAT THEY ALL**"—those the Father had already given Him and those also who should thereafter believe on Him through their word—"MAY BE ONE" (v. 20). And this brings us to the crucial matter, to which a brief reference has already been made, viz., that the oneness for which our Saviour prayed was **not an end in itself**, but was with a view to A SUPREME OBJECT, which He emphasized by repetition, namely: "**THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST**

SENT ME" (v. 21), "THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW THAT THOU HAST SENT ME" (v. 23).

Hereby it clearly appears that our Lord prayed for the manifested oneness of His redeemed people in order that the supreme purpose of God, for the attainment whereof He spared not His own Son, might be furthered thereby. It follows that, whatever mars or hinders that oneness tends to frustrate the express purpose for which God sent His only-begotten Son into the world. Can any of His loyal people, knowing this, give countenance and support, or even be indifferent to, that which opposes itself both to the declared purpose of God and also to the prayer of His Son?

"That They may be One as We Are"

In the preceding pages we have reviewed our Saviour's prayer in a somewhat cursory fashion, because it seemed not well to keep its conclusion longer out of the reader's view. But now, for the better accomplishment of our object, let us briefly retrace our steps in order to give attention to some points not noticed in the preceding pages.

Specially would we call attention to the **particular character** of that Oneness, which the Redeemer desired His people should manifest in the presence of a hostile or an indifferent world. For our hearts must be deeply impressed by the fact that what He desired to be manifested in them is a oneness like that which subsisted between His Father and Himself: His prayer is, **"That they may be one AS WE ARE"** (v. 11); **"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" (vv. 22, 23).

Here is **ONENESS** of a most exceptional kind; a oneness of life, of heart, of spirit; a oneness that is not only heavenly but divine. Here is a unity that transcends our present powers of mind, and for the understanding of which we must await the day when we shall apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12). Nevertheless we are well able to understand from the words of our Saviour's prayer that "the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 4:3) is so precious in God's eyes as to demand of us the utmost "endeavour" whereof we are capable to "keep" it, that is (according to the sense of the particular word here used) **to guard its integrity with the utmost vigilance.***

Let us now briefly contemplate the divine **method**, whereby that all-important knowledge, which brings to those who gain it eternal life, was to be made available and to be authenticated to the world. First the Father sent the Son into the world that He should impart this knowledge to men (the apostles) chosen by the Father and by Him given to the Son for that express purpose (John 17:6); and then the Son sent those men—chosen by the Father, taught by the Son and empowered by the Spirit—into the world for the purpose of proclaiming to all men this life-imparting truth of the gospel. For

* The sense is, "to guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye upon;" thus differing in meaning from another word rendered "keep" in the A. V., which signifies "to prevent escaping;" and from yet another word which signifies "to keep safely as in a fortress or dungeon" (See Strong's Greek Concordance).

our Lord says: "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, **even so** have I also sent them into the world" (v. 18). This has been God's method from the beginning; and, inasmuch as all His ways are perfect, this method does not admit of improvement. In order, however, that its operation may be entirely successful, in order that the gospel may fully attain its intended object, the preaching thereof must be "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" and should be supported by the united testimony of the people of God.

The Burden of His Heart

This brings us to the matter which specially concerns us,—the effect of the existing divisions among Christians upon the purpose for which God sent forth His Son into the world, the purpose for which the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to abide throughout this day of salvation, the purpose for which the risen Christ sent forth His disciples into all the world. What was it for which our Lord besought His Father in that supreme "hour?" This was then the burden: "That they ALL"—those the Father had given Him and those also who should believe on the Son through their word—"MAY BE ONE" (v. 21). The desire of His heart and soul was centered in that "hour" upon the petition which He expressed in those few monosyllables; which petition He repeated in the same verse and yet again in verse 23.

And further—this being exceedingly important—He specifies with great precision the **nature** of that oneness for which He was praying: "That they all may be one **as Thou, Father art in Me and I in Thee**, that they also may be one in US" (v. 21); "that they may be one, **even as We are One**" (v.

22); "I in them and Thou in Me, that **they may be made perfect** in one" (v. 23). This oneness, the unity of the Spirit, is God's own work, which cannot fail; whereas its manifestation is **our** responsibility.

A New Commandment

To all instructed Christians it is familiar truth that the Father sent His Son into the world to save sinners. They are well acquainted with texts such as the following: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15), "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Lu. 9:56), "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mat. 9:13).

But **the world** does not know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and was sent by His Father upon His "Father's business." The words of our Saviour's prayer, "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me," imply that it would be no easy matter to convince the world that God had sent Him, and that He had come in order that the world through Him might be saved. That verse (John 17:21) also makes clear that an important part of the evidence needed to convince the world of this life-saving truth, is **a manifestation** of that "bond of peace"—perfect peace with God and with one another—which constitutes "the unity of the Spirit." "He that is joined to the Lord **IS ONE SPIRIT**." This is true of every believer in Jesus Christ; but how is the world to know it, when the professed people of God are manifesting everywhere—not unity, but—**dis-unity**? It cannot be

denied that each individual Christian shares the responsibility for this distressful, this God-dishonoring state of things, and for its consequences.

The Scripture has not left us in ignorance or uncertainty as to the corrupt source of these sectarian divisions. For "sects" are included by name in that appalling list of "the **works of the flesh**," found in Galatians 5:19-21. Unfortunately, however, this is commonly overlooked by the English reader, as the word signifying "sects" is there rendered "heresies;" notwithstanding that the same word is rendered "sect" five times in the book of The Acts. But what can the individual Christian do by way of a remedy? There are sundry things he can do to that end, as we hope to show. But first let us have before the eyes of our hearts our Lord's new commandment: "A new commandment I give unto you, **That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another**" (John 13:34). Certain it is that, if this commandment were written in all our hearts and influenced our lives in such manner as to be evidenced in our words and actions, a very different spectacle would be presented to the world from that which meets its eye on every hand. For then the world would behold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, whereof it has now no knowledge at all, as it is written, "The way of peace have they not known." How significant, therefore, that our Lord's very next utterance, following His proclamation of the new commandment, is in these words: "**BY THIS shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER!**"

As it Was in the Beginning

And at the first it was so. For it is recorded that,

—after the disciples, on the day of Pentecost, were all filled with the Holy Ghost and after Peter had, for the first time, "preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven"—"**All who believed** were together and had all things common," and that: "continuing daily **with one accord** in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they did eat their meat with gladness and **singleness of heart;**" by reason of which they had "**FAVOR WITH ALL THE PEOPLE**" (Ac. 2: 44-47). Here we have an actual historical example (and may it not be lost upon us) of what may be expected in the way of a reaction from the world when the people of God shall again give it a manifestation of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Therefore, encouraged and stimulated by this example, let us individually seek by earnest prayer that our Lord's new commandment may be "written not with ink, but with **the Spirit of the living God**, not in tables of stone but in fleshy tables of our hearts." This would indeed be an auspicious beginning for a movement which seeks to bring about a re-manifestation of the unity of the Spirit, for which our hearts long and which the world awaits.

Further, let us individually seek enlightenment from the Word of God concerning this great subject of the unity of the Spirit. Let us be deeply in earnest about it, remembering our Lord's solicitude concerning it, as evidenced by the prayer which He poured out of His heart and lips into His Father's ear when under the very shadow of the cross, permitting His disciples to hear the words He spake and inspiring them to make a

record thereof, so that we too might "listen in," even in this far off time and place. This unity is **not ours**. It is not of men nor after man. It is the unity of the **Holy Spirit**; and He will enlighten us in regard thereto if we earnestly seek enlightenment from the Scriptures. For God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

What saith the Scripture?

When recently this writer sought God's own answer to the question, "What IS the unity of the Spirit?" he seemed to be directed to passages of Scripture which point to **the Kingdom of God**. And quickly it became clear to his mind that the Kingdom of God is the unity of the Spirit. For it is by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, and not otherwise, that one enters that Kingdom. This basic truth of the gospel was the subject of our Lord's first lesson (in point of time) and it was strongly emphasized by His "Verily, verily," twice repeated. This occurred in His interview with a prominent "teacher of Israel." His words were, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee: Except a man be born again he cannot see, . . . Except a man be born of water and OF THE SPIRIT, he cannot enter into, the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5).

Moreover, the inspired definition of that Kingdom is given us in these few words: "The Kingdom of God IS—not meat and drink; but—righteousness and peace and joy IN THE HOLY GHOST" (Ro. 14:17). It is not visible; for, as our Lord said, "The Kingdom of God cometh **not with observation**." It is one of those "things which are not seen" but are "eternal." Its interests are not physical—"meat and drink"—but spiritual—"righteousness and peace and joy." It is a **unity**, one

Kingdom, ruled from Heaven by "**The King**, eternal, immortal, invisible," and it is "**in the Holy Ghost**." What more is needed to make as plain as day that the Kingdom of God is the unity of the Spirit?

Further it is to be remembered that **all** who believe in Jesus Christ, the absent King, are forthwith regenerated by the **Holy Spirit** and are, by **God the Father**, delivered "from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of **His dear Son**; in Whom they have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13, 14).

The Epistle to the Romans may be properly regarded as an elaborate and detailed explanation of the establishment of this Kingdom, the blessed realm wherein **grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord** (Ro. 5: 21). That Epistle shows how those, who by nature were under the dominion of sin and death, are brought into that Kingdom of God through the instrumentality of "the gospel of God concerning **His Son**;" are delivered from the curse and penalty of the law and are made subject to "the **law of the Spirit** of life in Christ Jesus" (Ro. 8:2).

The Kingdom of God is the one dominion which ignores all geographical and national boundaries and embraces all the redeemed out of "all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." That Kingdom is the **one thing**, which, in the soon coming day when the Almighty God shall shake, not the earth only, but also heaven, will survive the universal overthrow. For it is written that we have received "**a Kingdom which cannot be moved**" (shaken).

Our Lord has lovingly commanded His people, one and all, to make the Kingdom of God **their chief concern**, to give it the **first** place in their thoughts, even as it was first in His thoughts; to make the furtherance of its interests, the extension of its boundaries, the prime object of their endeavors, as of His own. To this end He has put it, in His teaching, ahead of the most necessary things of their daily lives—food, drink and clothing. His command is: “Seek ye **FIRST** the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness,” coupling this commandment with the promise that “all these things”—the necessities of this life—“will be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). How many of God’s people are suffering at this very hour by reason of neglect of this commandment? Probably the number of such sufferers is very great; although the fault may lie with those whose responsibility is to teach and to preach the Kingdom of God. For while some of these “stewards of the mysteries of God” fail to give His Kingdom its rightful place in their ministry, there are others who actually and dogmatically teach that these words of Christ are for the Jews and that they will be fulfilled by Jewish evangelists in a future “millennial age.”

It is this writer’s strong conviction that this very modern doctrine is responsible, more than any other single cause, for the present lamentable state of the household of faith in those parts of the world where evangelical truth has had its greatest triumphs.

Our Lord Himself, so far from giving the slightest countenance to the notion that the Kingdom of God had been postponed to another “dispensation,” devoted the forty days He spent on earth

after His resurrection to “giving commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen . . . and speaking of **the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God**” (Ac. 1:1-3). No other subject of His teaching during those days is mentioned. Thus the Kingdom of God stands solitarily conspicuous in the first verses of the Book of Acts; and likewise in the very last verses of that Book it is recorded that “Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, . . . **preaching the Kingdom of God** and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.”

But the glorious and vital truth concerning the Kingdom of God (at which we have given but a passing glance in this paper) has been so neglected, so obscured, so pushed into the background, that to a large majority of the Lord’s people the term is practically meaningless and its influence upon their lives has been a nullity. This, we believe, is due mainly to the gradual spread through centuries of time of the fictitious idea of a universal “church” throughout the world. The Word of God knows nothing of a “holy catholic church throughout the world.” Our Lord ordained two institutions or fellowships on earth for His people during this era of the Holy Spirit; “the Kingdom of God,” which includes all who are born again, and “the churches of God,” which are local congregations of saved people. In the New Testament there is no mention of, or precedent for, a national or other regional “church.” The Church which Christ said He would build (Mat. 16:18) is not on earth but in heaven; its descent from heaven to earth being scheduled for the beginning of the coming era of “the new heavens and new earth”

(Rev. 21:9-14). The wide-spread denominational systems that are falsely called "Churches," among which the people of God are distributed, by which they are divided, and in which they are constrained to have fellowship with unbelievers, are patterned, one and all, "after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and **not after Christ**" (Col. 2:8). Each one of them is under the authority of a central government, an oligarchy, called by one name or another—synod, convention, or general assembly—making it easy of capture by the enemies of Truth and impossible for the people of God to interfere. On the other hand, "the churches of God" are (or should be) in subjection—not to human legislation or authority, but—to the living Word of God and to the Spirit of God, Whose abiding presence with them is guaranteed by the Lord of "all the churches."

There is no recognition in the New Testament of any regional "church." The first of "the churches of Christ" was at Jerusalem; and so long as it was the only church, the word was used in the singular number, as in Acts 2:47; 5:11; 8:1; 11:22; 12:1 and 5. But after other churches were formed, we do not read of "the church of Judea" but of "the churches throughout Judea" (Ac. 9:31); never of the church of Syria or Cilicia, or the church of the Gentiles, or the church of Christ, or the church of the saints, or the church of Asia, or of any other country. But we read of "the **churches** throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria" (Ac. 9:31), of "the **churches** in Syria and Cilicia (Ac. 15:41), of "the **churches** of Asia" (I Co. 16:19), "the **churches** of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2); and "the **churches** of Macedonia" (2 Cor. 8:1). These are by no means all the

pertinent passages; but we will only cite additionally, because of their great significance, "**The churches of Christ**" (Ro. 16:16) and "**the churches of God**" (1 Cor. 11:16; 1 Th. 2:14); these being in contexts where practically all modern writers would have said, "the Church of Christ" or "the Church of God."

Finally our Lord's message from heaven (Rev. II and III) was not to the Church of Asia, but to the individual "churches" of Asia; and to **each church there was a distinct message**, whereby the individuality and independence of each church was clearly recognized. Never does He say, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Church," but invariably, "Let him hear what the Spirit saith **unto the churches.**"

From the Scriptures referred to above it is clear that the unity of the Spirit exists throughout the world in the Kingdom of God. But that Kingdom, being spiritual and invisible, cannot be a **manifestation** of the unity of the Spirit. Therefore the responsibility for the manifestation of that unity as a testimony to the world rests upon the individual churches, each of which is (or should be) a miniature of the Kingdom of God as an exemplification of the unity of the Spirit. And it was so in the typical case (the only historical example given for our instruction) of the church at Jerusalem.

Undoubtedly "the churches of Christ" are intended to be, not only so many cities of refuge and citadels of the truth, scattered throughout the domain of the Kingdom of God, but to be each a manifestation to all in its vicinity of the unity of the Spirit as inherent in the bond of peace. Each one of them is "the house of God, the church of the

living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

This, moreover, is compatible with mundane conditions and human limitations the world over. For not only is the Kingdom of God spiritual in its nature and hence invisible; but even were it otherwise, the range of the human faculties is so restricted that the individual is capable of apprehending only the things which are proximate. Hence it is the responsibility of each of "the churches of Christ" to afford to **"the world" of its immediate environment** a manifestation of the unity of the Spirit. For it is only where a number of persons, of diverse dispositions and discordant traits, are seen living, acting, working, worshipping and rejoicing together, in perfect accord and directly contrary to nature, that the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace can be manifested to the world. This, we say, is contrary to nature. How then is it possible? The explanation is both simple and also sufficient. Those united in true church fellowship are able to "walk together" because they **"walk in the Spirit."**

And it should not be overlooked that the **intention** of God, with respect to the manifestation of the unity of the Spirit by congregations of His people here below, extends **beyond its effect upon the world**. For His intent is "that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known **by the church** the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). That "manifold" (or **many-sided**) wisdom of God is exemplified, as it could not be otherwise exemplified in "this present evil world," when a number of human personalities—by nature diverse, inharmonious and mutually an-

tagonistic because of conflicting interests—are seen living and working together, day in and day out, as one.

The **Christian Fellowship of the World** is a group of Christians who, restricting divisive doctrines and dogmas to the sphere of **personal** creed, recognize as the sole basis of religious fellowship conduct consistent with an earnest purpose to realize in character the fruits of the Spirit—the virtues and graces specified in the New Testament.

By the word **Christian** is understood, one who accepts Jesus Christ as "the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9).

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