

“There Is One Faith”

The fifth of seven “ones” from Ephesians 4:4-5 is, *“There is one faith.”* These seven ones will produce unity among professing children of God. Unity cannot be accomplished any other way, although men have tried their own ways. Still Jeremiah’s words are true: *“Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps”* (Jer. 10:23). There will never be unity, of course, because Satan is still at work in the world and the *“whole world lieth in the evil one”* (1 Jn. 5:19) But, there could be unity if men would follow God’s instructions.

The one *“faith”* of which the apostle spoke is the doctrine revealed by Jesus. Faith is used to define the conviction men have in their heart; their belief (Heb. 11:6), but faith also is used in the “objective sense;” a description of the system of teaching which came from Christ. It is used in both its subjective and objective sense in Romans 1:16f when Paul tells that in the gospel is revealed a *“righteousness of God from faith unto faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith.”* Faith in the objective sense is found in Acts 6:7: *“a great company of priests were obedient unto the faith;”* in Acts 24:24 when Felix sent for Paul that he might hear him *“concerning the faith in Christ Jesus”* and in other passages as well.

There are many Bible words which serve as synonyms for the faith. It is the *“gospel;”* the *“word”* and the *“doctrine”* of Christ (Mk. 1:16; 2 Tim. 4:1f; Gal. 1:6-9). These words have different meanings, of course, but they all describe the faith. It is the gospel because it is good news (1 Cor. 15:1-4). It is the word because it came from God (1 Pet. 1:25). It is the doctrine because it is the teaching of Christ (2 John 9). It is the faith because of preaching of it will produce faith (Rom. 1:17). A common error taught in the world is that we have liberty in Christ, which liberty guarantees us the right to believe what we wish. It is true that we have liberty in Christ (Gal. 2:4), but that liberty does not grant us right to believe whatever we wish to believe, which belief will not affect our salvation. We can believe a lie, if we wish, but if we do, we will be damned (2 Thess. 2:11f). It does matter what a man believes! Paul warned the Galatians that some were troubling them by teaching a different gospel other than which he had preached to them. His words are plain and directly to the point: *“I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him who called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel, which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema”* (Gal. 1:6-8). God’s wish (as Paul expressed it to the Corinthians) is that we *“all speak the same thing, and*

that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). It is true that Paul's chief concern for the Corinthians was because they were divided over men, but it cannot be denied that division over doctrine is equally as serious.

We can all speak the same thing and teach the same thing because God has given us a complete and final revelation. "*Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3). In Jeremiah's day it was said "*to the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to these words it is because there is no life in them"* (Jer. 8:20). We are not under the law which Moses gave; Christ removed that law, but we are under revelation which came from God's Son and to whom we must take heed that we hear (Heb. 1:1f; Mt. 17:5). It behooves us all that if any man speak, "*speaking as it were the oracles of God"* (1 Pet. 4:11).

John wrote, "*Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine hath both the Father and the Son. If any man come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither give him godspeed ..."* (2 John 9-11). God could make such a warning as this because there is one faith, which faith has been fully delivered to us.

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