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The One Faith and The Creeds of Christendom

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THE ONE FAITH

AND

The Creeds of Christendom

The source of authority in Christianity is Christ. The Father gave Him this authority (Matt. 17:5; 28:18), and we are told that God hath in these last days "spoken unto us in His Son" (Heb. 1:1,2.) The Lord promised His disciples that after His departure the Holy Spirit would come unto them (John, chapters 14 and 16.) The apostles waited for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4,5), and when the Holy Spirit came unto them on the day of Pentecost that promise was fulfilled. Both the apostles and the writers of the New Testament were under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are given by the inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16,17.) The word of God is sufficient for all of our spiritual needs.

One's attitude toward the truth of God is a major concern. Obviously, those who spurn the Bible, deny it, refuse to abide by its decisions, or twist it to suit their own notions, **CANNOT** possibly be well pleasing in the Father's sight! Our attitude toward the word of God may be summed up in a few words: study it; believe it; preach it—all of it; preach nothing except it; oppose error with it; in obedience to it, withdraw from false teachers.

Gospel preachers are under the charge of preaching the word of the Lord. This was Paul's charge to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:1-4). And, in pleading for Christian unity among the Ephesians, Paul declared that there is "one faith" (Eph. 4:4-6). When modern denominationalism presents a number of faiths and man-made creeds, rests upon such, fosters such, and will not give them up, we are faced with a very serious problem. The spirit of the day is 'It doesn't make any difference what you believe, just so

you are sincere and honest'; or, 'One faith is as good as another'. You may hear a person say: 'Mr. —— is not a member of our faith.' The writer had such an experience during a meeting in the northern part of this state. A lady, who had been attending the services, spoke of a certain minister in another state, adding, 'He is a member of your faith, isn't he?' Well, of course, she meant that she believed one thing and I believed another. So, we had between us TWO faiths! But how should anyone feel in talking about "his faith," "their faith," "my faith," when God's word affirms there is "ONE FAITH"?

Thousands of good, conscientious people are the unfortunate victims of a misunderstanding regarding the truth of God, often expressed as: "What does YOUR church teach about divorce and remarriage?" or, "Our church receives members without baptism, whether the others do or not." The thought is unscriptural and misleading. Each different denomination is made the source of authority, and Christ is left out! The idea might be expressed: "I'll find out what the Church of Christ teaches on dancing and divorce, and if I do not like its teaching I will join some other church: some church whose teaching agrees with my ideas." Of course, such an attitude has not even a semblance of the proper spirit. Those who are determined to follow Christ, to live by the "one faith" which God has set forth, will ask, "What is the will of Christ, my Lord, who is the head of the church, and to whom I have given my life, in regard to these things?"

The church of the Lord (as set forth in the New Testament) has a creed—the "one faith"—but it is not the product of human thought. "Creed" is from a Latin word which means "I believe." Christians are to believe Christ and His will as revealed in the New Testament. But, we are not to follow man-made creeds. The creed-makers say that they write creeds to

make God's teaching easy to understand, for "the Bible can't be understood without the creeds." Then, if God **COULD** have made the Bible so men might better understand, but **WOULD NOT**, then He was not gracious! Who will charge this? If God **WOULD** but **COULD NOT**, and man can, then man is both better and wiser than God! Who envies the terrible position in which men place themselves when they thus speak, or write?

There are too many creeds (faiths) in so-called "Christendom." If all human creeds were burned today, and men would take **ONLY THE BIBLE**, to study it prayerfully and intelligently, to practice it conscientiously, religious division among professed followers of the Christ would be **DOOMED!** Men are what they are because they have thought that way. Many different beliefs produce many different denominations. "One faith" will produce but one church! That is why the word of God declares there is "one faith" (Eph. 4:4-6), and urges men to follow that in order to preserve the unity of the Spirit.

Those persons who think that a person can believe anything, whether it is taught in the Bible or not, will do well to consider these Scriptures:

"Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). "If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not unto sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain" (I Timothy 6:3-5.) "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith

and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13.) "Speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine.....in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us" (Titus 2:1,8.)

Jesus warned of false prophets (Matt 7:15); John urged Christians to "prove the spirits" (I John 4:1); Peter spoke of "false teachers" and "destructive heresies" (2 Peter 2:1); Paul counselled the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:28-31), spoke of the "falling away from the faith" (I Timothy 4:1), and described "the man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:1-12); just so did Jude speak of heresy (Jude 3,4,18,19). Since the Bible presents to us the "ONE FAITH," there is great significance in Paul's charge to Timothy: "As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus when I was going to Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrineso do I now" (I Timothy 1:3,4.) We are further taught: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them (Romans 16:17.) Not only should Christians mark and turn away from those who cause divisions contrary to the "one faith," but they should not compromise with, nor bid false teachers "godspeed" (2 John 9-11).

Friend, will you accept the "ONE FAITH," live by it, plead for it, and lead others to accept it, so that there may be unity among professed followers of Christ? May God help you so to do!

(Fifth in a series of tracts on "Christian Unity")

Prayerfully Presented by
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