

*Nuggets
from
Ephesians*

Volume 2

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*Volume 2
Chapters Four, Five, and Six*

Selected by
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Publishers' Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we of Harvey Christian Publishers present this book which is a companion to *Nuggets From Ephesians, Volume One*. It covers chapters four to six and like its predecessor, it cannot be truly called a commentary as it only contains selections from the files which are the most pithy and full of meat.

Once again, it is owing to the loving labors of Peggy Black, Beulah Freeman, Jean Ward, and Margaret Smith, all of whom formerly helped Edwin and Lillian Harvey in varying capacities, that this book has been produced. They have spent long hours gleaning from the files and selecting the choicest nuggets. Surely the God Who has inspired these ladies to volunteer their time and energy to see these two books completed, will finish the work that He has begun by blessing them to all who read their pages.

Trudy and Barry Tait
Hampton, October 2006

Ephesians Four

Ephesians 4:1. *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.*

All Bible students know that the Epistle to the Ephesians is divided into two equal halves. In chapters 1-3 we have the Divine life in its heavenly origin as revealed in the heart of man by the Holy Spirit. In chapters 4-6 we have the Christian life in the ordinary intercourse and conduct of our daily walk. The two halves correspond to . . . devotion as an act, and as a habit.

The first three chapters begin with an act of adoration: “Blessed be God . . . who hath blessed us,” and tell of what all those blessings are. They end with the ascription of glory to Him Who is able to do above all that we can ask or think. In every act of prayer and praise, the soul takes its place in the midst of all those riches and seeks to enter more fully into their possession.

The last three chapters begin with: “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,” and teach us how to prove our devotion as a habit of the soul in all the most common actions of daily life. As in the Epistle, so in our experience, devotion lifts us up into the Heavenlies to return to this earth so charged with its blessings that, in all our tempers and actions, we may prove that, even as our prayers, so our whole life is devoted to God alone.—Andrew Murray.¹

It is with a faint shock of surprise, almost of disappointment, that we pass from the third chapter of this Epistle to the early verses of the fourth. The transition from Paul’s lofty and impassioned account of the present glory of the Church and of its infinite hopes to these exhortations . . . is sudden and unexpected. Our imagination has been set on fire; the invisible and eternal world by which we are environed has been revealed to us; the clouds which conceal the infinite future

from mortal vision have broken, and we have seen the endless ages which are our inheritance in Christ. Our hearts are throbbing with fervent affection at the discovery of “the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” of “the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” and the apostle’s prayer that we “might be filled with all the fulness of God”—“dark with excessive bright”—has made us tremble with wonder and joy at the greatness of our destiny. That he should charge us to “*walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called*” is only natural. It was Paul’s characteristic manner to connect faith and righteousness, to rest the obligations of human duty on the revelations of Divine love.

—R. W. Dale.²

What is it to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called”? It should always be remembered, that the word *walk*, in the language of the apostle, is of a very extensive signification. It includes all our inward and outward motions, all our thoughts, and words, and actions. It takes in not only everything we do, but everything we either speak or think. It is, therefore, no small thing to walk, in this sense of the word, “worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called”; to think, speak, and act, in every instance, in a manner worthy of our Christian calling.—John Wesley.³

Our Lord is constantly being crucified afresh by those who call Him “Lord, Lord!” and who do not obey Him. His most grievous wounds are those at the hands of the many who appear as His disciples. Staggering men and women in the gutters of sin are of little value to the devil; he prizes most those wearing the livery of saints, and living the lives of sinners. Indeed, our Lord is wounded by this foul and blasphemous world, but His deepest scars He gets at the hands of those who dare to own Him.—Vance Havner.

*Be what thou seemest; live thy creed;
Hold up to earth the torch divine;
Be what thou prayest to be made;
Let the great Master’s steps be thine.*

—Horatius Bonar.

Ephesians 4:2. *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.*

The one fruit of this astonishing revelation of the grace of God, the one mark that you are truly a partaker of it, will be *a deep and never-ceasing humility*, as the proof that God has come to you and revealed Himself, and brought everything like self and its pride down into the very dust.

And if you would enter still more deeply into the meaning of the words, just think that this lowliness and meekness do not comprise your disposition and attitude only towards God, but especially towards man. “With all *lowliness and meekness*, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.” You can have no surer proof that God’s spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus have reached and mastered a man than his *lowliness and meekness* in his intercourse with his fellowmen. The exceeding greatness of God’s power in us who believe, raising us out of the death to self and sin, with Christ Jesus to the throne, “and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” makes us like Christ, willing to wear the servant’s garb and do the servant’s work. What is impossible with men is possible with God. . . .

Let us ask whether, in the teaching and preaching of the Church, this *lowliness and meekness of Christ* has the place it holds in the Will and the Word of God; whether in the fellowship of Christians, as far as we know them, there is the endeavor to maintain this standard of Christian living, and to keep the unity of the Spirit from being disturbed by ought of pride or of self, and whether in our own life, and our search after the deepening of the spiritual life, this meekness and lowliness, so pleasing to God, so glorious as seen in Christ Jesus, so beautiful as a grace in a believer, is in very deed our heart’s desire and our confident hope? Oh, let it be in every act of devotion the first thing we ask of God, a heart humbled and brought low by His infinite love, and yielded to His Holy Spirit to work out in us, and in His Body around us, the blessed likeness of Jesus our Lord.—Andrew Murray.⁴

The *lowliness*, the *humility*, which Paul inculcates, is a characteristically Christian virtue. Only occasionally does it receive recognition from heathen moralists, but it has a large place in the Old

Testament Scriptures and a still larger place in the New. Christ Himself was “lowly in heart.” He had descended from Divine heights, and knew the immeasurable distance between God’s infinite greatness and the limitations of human life. In taking “the form of a servant” He had also taken the spirit of a servant; He had come, not to do His own will or to seek His own glory, but to do the will of God and to seek the glory of God. Having become man, He was absolutely dependent on the Father; and lowliness of heart is the immediate result of the consciousness of dependence on God and of the vision of God’s majesty. It is deepened, in our case, by the consciousness of sin. . . .

Humility, “*lowliness*,” is disciplined by prayer, by communion with God, by the vision of Divine and eternal things; by meditation on God’s righteousness and our own sin, on the greatness of God and the limitations of all created life, on the eternal fullness of God and our own dependence on Him; on the blessing which God has made our inheritance in Christ and the dark destiny which would have been the natural and just result of our indifference to God’s authority and love.

Where there is “*lowliness*” there will be “*meekness*,” the absence of the disposition to assert personal rights, either in the presence of God or of men. Meekness submits without a struggle to the losses, the sufferings, the dishonor which the providence of God permits to come upon us. It may look with agitation and distress upon the troubles of others, and the miseries of mankind may sometimes disturb the very foundations of faith, but in its own sorrows it finds no reason for distrusting either the Divine righteousness or the Divine goodness. It is conscious of possessing no merit, and therefore in the worst and darkest hours is conscious of suffering no injustice.

The same temper will show itself in relation to men. It has no personal claims to defend. It will therefore be slow to resent insult and injury. If it resents them at all, the resentment will be a protest against the violation of Divine laws rather than a protest against a refusal to acknowledge its personal rights. There will be no eagerness for great place or high honor, or for the recognition of personal merit; and therefore, if these are withheld, there will be no bitterness or mortification.—R. W. Dale.⁵

Ephesians 4:3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is an ideal of unity for the Church of Christ attainable here and now. It is not a unity of faith, or of knowledge, but “*the unity of the Spirit.*” . . . This is the unity after which all Christians should earnestly strive, by seeking to cultivate fellowship for all others who are true disciples of Jesus. “The unity of the Spirit” is the unity of fellowship which is begotten of the Spirit. “And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,” says the beloved disciple. The Holy Spirit is continually working within believing hearts with a view to bringing them into full realization of this fellowship with the Father and the Son, and thereby into blessed and uninterrupted fellowship with each other.

Where the “fellowship of the Spirit” is realized, sectarian bigotry and prejudice will no more appear. We may not be able to see or believe alike concerning many things of minor importance, and consequently we may be connected with various church organizations, and may labor in different divisions of the army of the Lord; but we shall not allow any minor differences of this character to divide us in spirit and fellowship from any of God’s dear people. We shall recognize *all* Christians as subjects of the same King, Jesus Christ; and all as enlisted in the same cause, struggling to the same end, and sustained by the same hope. Together they compose “the household of God,” the ruling and unifying principle of which is LOVE. Hearts that are “knit together” by this hallowed principle permit no denominational barriers to interfere with the flow of their mutual fellowship.—W. T. Hague.⁶

There is a unity of the Spirit of which the text speaks, which is **worthy to be kept**. You will observe it is not an *ecclesiastical unity*, it is not endeavoring to keep the unity of the denomination, the community, the diocese, the parish—no, it is “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.” . . . There is nothing in Scripture which says, “Endeavoring to keep up your ecclesiastical arrangements for

centralization,” but the exhortation runs thus: “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.”

Again, you will observe it does not say, “Endeavoring to keep the *uniformity* of the Spirit.” The Spirit does not recognize *uniformity*. The analogy of His work in nature is against it. The flowers are not all tinted with the same hue, nor do they exhale the same odors. There is variety everywhere in the work of God. If I glance at providence, I do not perceive that any two events happen after the same form—the page of history is varied. If, therefore, I look into the Church of God, I do not expect to find that all Christians pronounce the same shibboleth, or see with the same eyes. The same, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all,” we rejoice to recognize; but as to uniformity of dress, liturgical verbiage, or form of worship, I find nothing of it in Scripture. Men may pray acceptably standing, sitting, kneeling, or lying with their faces upon the earth; they may meet with Jesus by the river’s side, in the temple porch, in a prison, or in a private house; and they may be one in the same Spirit although the one regardeth a day, and the other regardeth it not. . . .

This unity of the Spirit is caused by a *similarity of nature*. Find a drop of water glittering in the rainbow, leaping in the cataract, rippling in the rivulet, lying silent in the stagnant pool, or dashing in spray against the vessel’s side, that water claims kinship with every drop of water the wide world over, because it is the same in its elements. And even so, there is a unity of the Spirit which we cannot imitate, which consists in our being begotten “again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” bearing in us the Holy Ghost as our daily quickener, and walking in the path of faith in the living God. Here is the unity of spirit, a unity of life, nature working itself out in love. This is sustained daily by the Spirit of God. He Who makes us one, keeps us one. . . .

It is said of some men that they appear to have been born upon the mountains of Bether, for they do nothing but cause division; and baptized in the waters of Meribah, for they delight in causing strife. This is not the case with the genuine Christian; he cares only for the truth, for his Master, for the love of souls; and when these things are

not imperiled, his own private likes or dislikes never affect him. He loves as much to see another church prosper as his own; so long as he can know that Christ is glorified it is a matter of comparative indifference to him by what minister God's arm is made bare, in what place souls are converted, or to what particular form of worship men addict themselves. . . .

Let us remember that we cannot keep the unity of the Spirit unless we all believe the truth of God. Let us search our Bibles, therefore, and conform our views and sentiments to the teaching of God's Word. . . . We want unity in the truth of God through the Spirit of God. This let us seek after; let us live near to Christ, for this is the best way of promoting unity. Divisions in Churches never begin with those full of love to the Savior. Cold hearts, unholy lives, inconsistent actions, neglected closets—these are the seeds which sow schisms in the body; but he who lives near to Jesus, wears His likeness and copies His example, will be, wherever he goes, a sacred bond, a holy link to bind the Church more closely than ever together.—C. H. Spurgeon.⁷

To each believer who longs for the power of the indwelling Spirit, *the unity of the Spirit* is a rich, spiritual blessing. In previous writings, I have used the expression of Pastor Stockmayer: "Have a deep reverence for the work of the Holy Spirit within you." That assertion needs as its complement a second one: have a deep reverence for the work of the Holy Spirit in your brother. . . .

Look persistently at what there is in your brother of the image and Spirit of the Father. Do not value him by what he is in himself, but by what he is in Christ. Then you will feel how the same life and Spirit is in him, too. In this way the unity of the Spirit will triumph over the difference and dislike of the flesh. The Spirit in you, acknowledging and meeting the Spirit in your brother, will bind you in the unity of a life that is from above.

Keep this unity of the Spirit by having fellowship with other believers. The bond between the members of my body is most living and real, maintained by the circulation of the blood and the life it carries. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." "There is one body

and one Spirit.” The inner union of the life must find expression and be strengthened in the manifested communion of love.

Do not fellowship only with those who are of the same way of thinking and worshipping as yourself. Let your unity be more in the Spirit than in the flesh. In all your thoughts and judgments of other believers, practice the love that thinks no evil. Never say an unkind word of a child of God. Love every believer, not because he agrees with you or is pleasing to you, but because the Spirit of the Father is in him. . . .

Take part in the united intercession that rises up to God for the unity of His Church. Continue the intercession of the Great High Priest for all believers to be one. The Church is *one* in the life of Christ and the love of the Spirit. Unfortunately, it is not *one* in the manifested unity of the Spirit. Thus the need for the command: keep the unity. Plead with God for the mighty working of His Spirit in all countries, churches, and believers.

When the tide is low, each little pool along the shore with its inhabitants is separated from the other by a rocky barrier. As the tide rises, the barriers are flooded over and all meet in one great ocean. So it will be with the Church of Christ.—Andrew Murray.⁸

If the Church is to vindicate her claim to sincerity, she must come together. She must make every effort, and even sacrifice, to realize “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

The word “bond” in this connection is finely suggestive. In the original it stands for the ligaments or sinews by which the joints of the human body are knitted together. Now a bodily ligament is a piece of vital tissue. It is a bond which life itself creates and sustains. It is not something superimposed upon the living organism from outside and detachable from it without damage to its parts. It is life’s own product and provision, woven from within for the very purpose of safeguarding its functions and securing the effective working of all its parts towards the ends for which the organism exists. Any rupture or strain of the ligamentary tissues of the body, unless repaired or relieved, will induce a permanent weakness of the parts.

And so with the ties that bind together the different members or Body of Christ. They are neither outward nor artificial, but inward and vital. So much so, that either to rupture them by violence or to weaken them by neglect is to imperil the organism which they assist to unify, and thus to threaten its life. If we are in Christ, we are sharers in a common life which holds us all in its vital grasp, and ever seeks to organize us into a corporate unity. Do not let us, by whatever name we may be called, resist and grieve that Spirit Who is everywhere and always making for the healing of division and fulfillment of the Savior's prayer: "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." . . .

The "Bond" that binds together the Church of God may thus be very rightly designated the "Bond of peace." But just as in the physical body dislocation does take place to the straining and damage of the parts, involving the whole system in distress, so in the body ecclesiastic there have been dislocations and ruptures which have plunged the Church into misery, and sadly reduced her efficiency as a working force. You cannot have dislocation without discomfort, and you cannot have discomfort without diminished utility. . . .

From all of which I desire to show that there is no need in the Church for uniformity in order to unity. On the contrary, there is not only plenty of room, but absolute need, for variation in form, structure, and function in the Church, which is the Body of Christ—if she is to fulfill her manifold relations and stand in the world of men as the organized will of God—the working plant, or if you will the standing army, whose business is the annexation and federation of all the kingdoms of man in a worldwide kingdom of God.

—Rev. Henry Howard.⁹