

Let's look at 'Press Together'

I wish to share some thoughts on the subject of what 'press together' and 'see eye to eye' really seem to mean in the Spirit of Prophecy. From my studies over the years I have never seen anywhere that she says we all will see every point on every scripture the same. What I have seen is that we will be united on the basics—the main message; the basic religious concepts; and above all The Sabbath Message.

I believe that the test we are experiencing as a people right now is not so much to see whether we will all come to view every passage of scripture exactly the same; but rather what our attitude is towards our brethren and if we will show respect to one another also allowing for a certain amount of individuality in minor views. There is no way this side of heaven that we all will view every single passage in exactly the same light or esteem them all the same—because to some a passage may be most precious while to another there may be another passage that speaks most to their hearts.

I am going to place some Spirit of Prophecy below here and suggest a careful reading rather than just grabbing the one phrase and running home with that. I do apologize that I have not been able to locate all the quotes on this I know I have read in the past but will try and find a good selection anyway.

Please note:

While it is true that all the Millerite Preachers preached the same message, it was only that main message they were united on, they did hold differing views on other parts of scripture.

While it is true that the Apostles were fairly united on their Main Message, they did hold differing views, and although they had a conference and decided on some basics as far as teaching was concerned—they still went on having different views on some things like ceremonialism and so on.

There are different levels to view texts as well; I think we all agree that Genesis 3:15 is a prophecy and the foundation of the gospel; we know quite a bit about what it really means; but I have heard of various folk who used it as a Promise, claiming it in a different way to break clear of an unhealthy relationship. Asking the Lord to put 'enmity between them and the woman' and their prayers were answered in remarkable ways! The Living Word cannot be placed in a box and dictated to what it can mean in all circumstances.

Spirit of Prophecy and comments:

"Never let Satan have the control of your powers. As a people we need humility. In this conference we are sowing seeds that will yield a harvest, and the results will be as enduring as eternity. Young workers are watching to see what spirit you manifest in this meeting, and how you treat those who hold views that differ from yours. You know that precious light has shone forth in connection with the law of God, as the righteousness of Christ has been presented with that law. Dr. Waggoner has opened to you precious light, not new, but old light which has been lost sight of by many minds, and is now shining forth in clear rays. Let a spirit of fairness come in. Though you think his ideas upon this subject may not be all sound, do not make false statements, do not mistake his words; place him in no false light; maintain the spirit of Christ; keep the commandments of God, love God supremely, and your neighbor as yourself." 1888 174.

"Here are two brethren laboring together. Will these brethren, if the spirit of Christ reigns in their hearts, be found warring against each other? Will they cherish envy, evil surmisings, and hard feelings against each other? Impossible. Neither one will possess exalted views of himself while he undervalues his brother. Each will esteem the other better than himself. "A new commandment I

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give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” The love here spoken of is not that sentimentalism, that low order of love, that attracts the affections from Christ and places them upon one another. The love here described is pure; it arises from having the affections centered upon Jesus, making him first, and last, and best in everything.” HS 125.

“Brethren, it is your privilege to carry with you the credentials that you are Christ's,—love, joy, and peace. Will you seek earnestly to have this heavenly plant of love become rooted in your hearts, and then will you tenderly cherish it lest it wither and die? Let Christ appear. Do not cherish a spirit of independence which will lead you to feel that if your brethren do not agree with you they must be wrong. The opinions of your brethren are just as precious to them as yours are to you. Christ in you will unite you to Christ in them, and there will be a sweet spirit of union.” HS 126.

In the above we can see it is being united in Christ that binds us to one another—not that we hold the exact same views of everything.

“I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question to unite the hearts of God's dear, waiting saints.” Early Writings 33.

The Sabbath and the main parts of our message that directly bear on the part the Sabbath plays in these end time evens are where we will all preach the same thing; and mostly we do. We may see some axillary passages differently. So if we set up a group of folk from various ministries and then have them hammer and chisel away on the views, each of which is precious to them, and somehow come to some consensus and then impose that on all the rest, this is not what the Lord is meaning when He talks about eye to eye and press together. The goal is heart work, not head work, and certainly not setting up something or some group as authorities where we all have to submit all concepts before to have permission to teach! We have to have respect and true Agape Love flowing from Jesus, through us, to one another.

“There are the main pillars of our faith, subjects which are of vital interest, the Sabbath, the keeping of the commandments of God. Speculative ideas should not be agitated; for there are peculiar minds that love to get some point that others do not accept, and argue and attract everything to that one point, urging that point, magnifying that point, when it is really a matter which is not of vital importance, and **will be understood differently**. Twice I have been shown that everything of a character to cause our brethren to be diverted from the very points now essential for this time, should be kept in the background.” CW 77.

“The principle here laid down is the natural outgrowth of the Christian religion. Especially will those who are engaged in proclaiming the last solemn message to a dying world seek to fulfill this scripture. Although possessing different temperaments and dispositions, they will see eye to eye in all **matters of religious belief**. They will speak the same things; they will have the same judgment; they will be one in Christ Jesus.

“We are here today to compare ideas and to form plans so that all may labor in harmony. No one should feel that his judgment is faultless, that his ideas are above criticism, and that he can pursue a course of his own, regardless of the opinions of others with whom he is united in labor. When we think we know all that is worth knowing, we are in a position where God cannot use us. The third angel's message is not a narrow message. It is world-wide; and we should be united, so far as possible, in the manner of presenting it to the world.” HS 124.

“And while they are being brought into the unity of the faith, to see eye to eye upon the solemn, important truths for this time, Satan is at work to oppose their advancement. Jesus is at work

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through His instruments to gather and unite. Satan works through his instruments to scatter and divide. "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." 1 Testimonies 332.

"God designs that His people shall be a unit, that they shall see eye to eye and be of the same mind and of the same judgment. This cannot be accomplished without a clear, pointed, living testimony in the church. The prayer of Christ was that His disciples might be one as He was one with His Father. "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." 3 Testimonies 361

In the quote above, it sounds contrary to this, but it is not at all. Notice that it is the 'living testimony' that can bring this about; what is that? It is the Spirit of Prophecy and Bible viewed with the illumination of the Holy Spirit; friends, it is not some group studying something out and then telling all what they have to teach. We all need to be receiving that Living Spirit and He will bring about this unity.

Does that mean I think we should not meet together and study some passages and compare views? No of course we can do this, but the test upon us is not to just have mental consensus—the test is to have heart work and right attitudes one to another, because that is the only way we are going to receive the full guidance of the Holy Spirit, which alone can bring about this unity. It will do no good to get our heads together if we refuse to get our hearts together also!

We have to be willing to yield preconceived opinions when clear light from Spirit of Prophecy and Bible shows us we are mistaken. The Holy Spirit has to lighten all our eyes for this to take place.

"Some are deceived as to what constitutes true independence. Obstinacy is often confounded with independence. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, being clothed with humility, possessing that love which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, can not be obtained unless Christ rules the life. But every worker who will truly humble himself will be used by the Lord to do a great work.

"True independence never disdains to ask advice of the experienced, and it treats the counsel of others with respect. God desires His people to be disciplined and brought into harmony, that they may see eye to eye. This does not mean that they are to yield up their individuality. Individuality should not be sacrificed, but it should be refined and elevated. That personal independence which leaves one to trust to his own judgment, to be self-willed, and to despise the counsel of his brethren, is not what is needed at this time.

"When one loses hope and courage, and is driven hither and thither by this or that idea, and by what this or that one may say; when he is aimless and unstable, and accomplishes little, he needs more self-reliance and independence. But when one has a high opinion of himself, and thinks that his labors are of more real consequence than they are; when he pleads for personal freedom and self-direction in his work, he needs to humble himself before God." PUR, December 5, 1901.

When we come together heart to heart, with respect and courtesy one to another, having a care for each other's souls, then the Latter Rain will flow more freely among us and that is the way we will have unity. It is in Christ through the Holy Spirit, not by some group studying out a topic and then dictating to all what they are to believe. We can study together as brethren, equal in the site of God. We need no 'Bible Research Institutes' to be established among us!!

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“The teacher of truth must see eye to eye with Christ.” Letter 24, 1899, p. 7.

“The cross of Christ is the pledge of our fellowship and union. The time must come when the watchmen shall see eye to eye; when the trumpet shall give a certain sound; when "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim" any more.” RH, January 3, 1899

“Shall we not feel the weight of our personal responsibility, and maintain our individuality? While we should respect and love one another, we are to remember that no one can fight our battles for us. Every one has his appointed work, and upon the accomplishment of this work depends his salvation.” PUR, July 17, 1902