

LESSON XXVI—GOD'S PLAN FOR UNITY

I. "That They Might Be One In Us" (Jn. 17:20, 21):

Believers must be united in Christ. Whatever unity might be effected outside of Christ is a failure.

II. "Speak the Same Thing" (I Cor. 1:10):

1. God's word is the only basis of unity. Unity on any other basis than Truth is a failure.
2. Recognition of proper authority in religious matters is essential. The teachings of Christ and the Apostles is the standard by which the judgment is to be rendered (Gal. 1:6-10).

III. The Divine Standard of Unity (Eph. 4:4, 6).

1. One God, Unity in Worship.
2. One Lord Jesus Christ, Unity in Authority.
3. One Faith, Unity in Message.
4. One Baptism, Unity in Practice.
5. One Body, Unity in Organization.
6. One Hope, Unity in Desire.
7. One Spirit, Unity in Life.

These seven Unities constitute the only basis upon which Unity is possible from the human viewpoint as well as the only basis upon which it would be acceptable from the Divine viewpoint.

8. To these Peter adds one name (Acts 4:11, 12).

IV. Denominational Corruptions of This Plan:

1. Present day denominationalism illustrates the first corruption. Described by the "Spiritual Union, Organic Division" plea. Based and furthered upon the plea that "One Church is as good as another," "They are just different roads leading to the same place," "We are all trying to get to the same place," etc. All of these are deceptive and illogical and furthermore the whole plan is in direct disagreement with God's plan. Make a comparison of this plan with the above.
 - a. This plan is based upon the following essentials:
 1. One God.
 2. One Christ.
 3. One Spirit.
 4. One hope.
 - b. But disrespects other essentials in God's plan, viz:
 1. One Faith (not just any faith).

2. One Baptism (not three modes).

3. One Body (not 200 churches).

No man has any more right to thus nullify God's plan for Unity on Faith, Baptism, or organization, than to worship more than one God. They are all essential elements of God's Plan.

2. Another plan offered by denominations is thus described: "Organic Union and Spiritual Division." This plan goes a step further than the one mentioned above and concedes that there should be one Church organization, insisting however that freedom of belief and practice should be allowed. This second plan is illustrated by the modern "Union Revivals." Such revivals within themselves admit that denominational names, creeds, organizations, doctrines, and practices actually prevent the salvation of souls. All of these are temporarily laid aside during the "Union Revival" in the interest of reaching more people. This should be done permanently and when all such party characteristics are forgotten and the Divine Platform of Unity is adopted God will be pleased and many more souls will be saved by the Truth.

Questions For Discussion

1. What was the prayer of Jesus for his people; for all?
2. What are all to speak and what is the standard?
3. Give the Divine plan of Unity, memorize the "seven units."
4. How do denominations thwart the Divine plan?
 - a. Give specific examples.
 - b. In their zeal, what is the basis of Unity, what four essentials?
 - c. What three essentials are omitted?
5. What is wrong with the claim of "Organic Union and Spiritual Division?"
6. How do "Union Revivals" show denominationalism is wrong?
7. What is always laid aside in "Union Meetings?"