

The Unity of the Spirit and the Word of God

by John Nelson Darby

The true unity of the church is based on the unity of the Spirit of God, and we must submit to the word of God, allowing it to act directly on us, rather than confiding judgment to our minds.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:6

Topics: "Divine Revelation", "Unity Of The Spirit"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the necessity of true unity in the Spirit over superficial religious unions, warning against the dangers of amalgamating corrupt practices that God judges. He critiques the tendency of churches to seek unity based on human wisdom and creeds, which ultimately leads to a dilution of true Christianity. Darby asserts that the revelation of God's truth comes through the Holy Spirit, and that understanding should not be based on human judgment but on divine inspiration. He highlights the importance of receiving God's word with humility and allowing it to act upon us rather than attempting to judge it. The sermon calls for a return to the unity of the Spirit, which is essential for the body of Christ.

Transcript

There is a great craving in the world for union, particularly in religious things; and we have to watch that, because we can rightly recognise only the union of the Spirit. Churches, so called, are wanting to get united; the divisions are a constant reproach; but true union is on the principle of holding fast what we have got in truth, and is the expression of the unity of the body by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Protestants seek this union. The Church of England is wanting to unite with the Greek Church (an utterly corrupt thing); and it all failed about an article of the creed. You find these thoughts of union assume as its basis the very thing that God is judging the state of; they accept the thing that God is judging, and so it is all a snare. There is but the unity of the Spirit of God. Patching together the corruptions that God is judging in the church, or amalgamating where division is still maintained, is not the unity of the Spirit, nor the body of Christ.

One word more. The mind of man is let loose. Old landmarks and institutions are breaking down, and you get all kinds of statements as truth; and what are they seeking to do? Either war with creeds, or form an external union; and to do this the truth is swamped until I have no Christianity at all. You've got your truth, and I've got mine, and God has got none. That is what it comes to. It comes back to man's competency to judge the word of God; but in this case it is not God's word at all to the soul. Men who do this really begin with denying it. Their starting point is the activity of man's mind, and this is utterly incompetent to judge

God. But I accept it as God's word, and then hear what God has to say to me; that is another position of heart and soul. If I am to judge it, then it is not God's word. A man must be a madman to say, "Here God has spoken, and I am going to judge whether God has spoken right."

In 1 Cor. 2 the apostle says, "Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world nor of the princes of this world that come to nought, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; for what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

There I find, first of all, revelation. Paul had it revealed to him, and then he goes on to say "which things also we speak," now it is communication, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," this is Divine inspiration which we have in the word. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." There are three things brought out, first the revelation to Paul, then next he communicates them in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, and when we get them, they are spiritually discerned.

Of course man must have intelligence to be acted on by the word, but that is not the activity of my mind on it. It acts on me and judges me and not I it, and it is really in the conscience that intelligence comes in. "Sir, I perceive thou art a prophet," came from telling the poor woman all that ever she did. This puts God in His place, but this man does not like; and the more mighty the word of God the more mischief I do if my mind acts. If I upset a perambulator, I might spoil it; but suppose I take a steam-engine, when incompetent, the more power the worse. And so here, the more wonderful the truth the more beautiful; but, the moment man's mind begins to work, every sort of opinion comes out, and there is no end to mischief and folly. One has to be as a child "desiring the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." The church would hinder God's word from acting directly on me; the rationalist proclaims my competency to judge it, confiding it to my mind. The inlet it comes in by is not the mind, but the conscience; often, no doubt, the heart, but mainly the conscience; and I have to be subject to it. It acts on me, and then I get the mind of Christ.

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