**A Study of 1 Corinthians 1:10**

*by Irvin Himmel*

To begin, let us read the verse in three different translations.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (King James Version).

"I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment" (Revised Standard Version).

"Now, brethren, I beseech you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you; but that you be perfectly united in the same mind, and in the same judgment" (Living Oracles).

**Context**

It had been reported to Paul by certain ones of the house of Chloe that there were contentions among the saints at Corinth. Some declared themselves to be of Paul, others of Apollos, others of Cephas, and still others of Christ. These brethren had fallen into a sectarian or partisan striving. The apostle charged them with carnality, "for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men7" He went on to point out that he and Apollos were mere servants by whom they believed. Paul had planted and Apollos had watered, and neither was to be an object of glory. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (3:21, 22.) The apostle urged these brethren "not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another." Then he raised the question, "For who maketh thee to differ from another?" (4:6-7)

While the Christians at Corinth had different spiritual gifts (chap. 12), they had made each other to "differ" in the sense of separating into factions, discriminating, or distinguishing one group from another. They had come to "differ" by having "contentions" among themselves. Their strife had led to "divisions," that is schism, a rending, or cleaving asunder. Then Paul reminded them of their being called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ (1:9), he proceeded to earnestly entreat them to be perfected together and not divided. This is the setting of our text.

**Remedy for Divisions**

In this text the apostle mentions three points, which if observed, would bring an end to divisions among Christians. Notice them briefly.

**1. "THAT YE ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING."** Obviously, if we must speak the same thing to remedy divisions, we must continue to speak the same thing to prevent future divisions. But some will argue that we cannot all speak the same thing. Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). When men speak as the oracles of God, they always speak the same thing. Divisions result when men leave God's oracles to speak human opinions, speculations, theories, and philosophies.

**2. "BE PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER IN THE SAME MIND."** Most schisms in the church result from divided sentiments. Unity cannot be restored and maintained without oneness of sentiment. Thus we must be perfected together in mind as well as in speech. The word mind here refers to "thoughts, feelings, purposes" or "a particular mode of thinking and judging." (Thayer.) But some will argue that men simply do not think alike. Was Paul here commanding the impossible? Was he entreating the Corinthians in the name of the Lord Jesus to do something that is beyond human reach? I think not! The disciples in Jerusalem were of "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32). The Philippians were told to "be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:2).

**3. "AND IN THE SAME JUDGMENT."** Thayer defines the word judgment here as "that which is thought or known.... view, judgment . . . mind concerning what ought to be done . . . resolve, purpose, intention." Partisan strife cannot be eliminated until men learn to agree in what ought to be done and how to do it. The Holy Scriptures furnishes our only basis for such agreement.

Unity in SPEECH, MIND, and JUDGMENT – here we find Paul's positive cure for divisions. This necessitates conformity to the will of God in all things. On the negative side he prescribes "no divisions." What is here applied to a specific situation at Corinth will apply with equal force to schisms whenever and wherever they might exist. If Corinth's condition was a critical situation, factionalism is equally critical today. If Paul's solution be called an "emergency measure," let the same treatment he applied now where it is needed. Unity will not be found in urging that we cannot understand the Bible alike, we cannot all think alike, and we might as well agree to disagree. Some of our modern "peacemakers" would make 1 Corinthians 1:10 read something like this: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye realize that ye cannot all speak the same thing, but there ought not to be divisions among you, so be joined together in the same fellowship, leaving plenty of room for differences in mind and judgment." Shall we rewrite the Bible to make it fit what some are now preaching?

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