

whose breasts our spiritual life has been fed all these generations, has not merely called on us to pray for unity, peace and concord, but has placed us on our knees before God, and putting the words of prayer in our mouths, has, as it were, compelled us to offer them to Him.

And may we not believe that these prayers have been answered—answered best of all in producing in her children the true spirit of unity;—if not in all her children, yet in thousands and thousands who are now living—obscure, perhaps, taking no part in the controversies of the day, yet humble, lowly, penitent and obedient Christians;—and in vast multitudes who are at rest in the Paradise of God?

Is it not the evident prevalence of this religious mind and temper which has encouraged the Bishop of Rome to venture upon the appeal to us which he has made? And could there be a greater marvel than the spirit in which, after all that is past—the calm and respectful spirit, the forbearing spirit, the spirit of generosity and charity—in which this call from him to prayer for unity, peace and love has been received by the English-speaking Christians of the World?

2. This was a call to prayer, however, for the healing of the great open schisms in the body of Christ, for reconciling National Churches, between whom communion has been long suspended, and for the restoring of the great organized bodies of Protestant Christians to the National Churches from which they have broken away.

But is there not a previous duty so far as we of the Church in England are concerned? Must not the healing of our own internal divisions and dissensions come first? The great open sore of the divisions of Christendom is grievous enough. But for such a Church as ours is, holding the position she does by God's Providence as an acknowledged intermediary in the religious controversies of the day, a position

from which she would be able, if united, to hold out one hand to the rest of the Catholic Church and the other hand to the great separated bodies of her own children—for herself to be, as she is, internally rent and torn, is indeed a grievous, an unspeakable calamity, the cure of which ought surely to be first in our heart, in our prayers and in our endeavors.

3. "Our unhappy divisions" ought to be a heavy weight upon our heart and conscience, first, because they are our own personal sin.

The great open divisions in the visible Church of Christ are not our own sin. If I am a Roman or an Anglican, a Presbyterian or a Methodist, I am in most cases not responsible for my state of separation. That I find myself a member of a Body not in communion with the great majority of Christians in the world may well be a weight upon my heart, but it can be no weight upon my conscience. It is a sin of the fathers which is being heavily visited upon their children, a state of things which every faithful Christian must deeply feel and deplore, but not a sin for which he is personally responsible.

But the internal divisions of the members of our own Church are our own personal sin. All that is sinful in such divisions—for differences of judgment even upon the most important matters are not sinful—all the "envy, strife, wranglings, evil-surmisings that come out of questionings and disputes of words"—all the "bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil-speaking and malice,"—is the sin, not of past ages but of the living men in whose hearts these evil passions are mistaken for a zeal of God.

4. And how bitter are the fruits of our unhappy divisions!

First, there is the sin against the honour of our Lord, that we turn His own Household into a house divided against itself.