

and hast loved them as thou hast loved Me." A good text!

In answer to the question, "What is Christian Unity?" Dr. Parker said that "it is not an affair of regulation, compromise, concession, toleration, for the sake of good neighborhood, and easy social and ecclesiastical movement. That view of Christian unity certainly receives no support from the Lord's intercessory prayer. The deepest meaning of Christian unity is union with Christ, oneness with the Son of God, identification with Christ in spirit, purpose and labor; and coming out of that, as a cause and an inspiration, union of Christians, genuine brotherly love and trust, a love that sees the Christian in the man, and that sees Christ in the Christian. Christian unity is living sympathy with Christ; it is being so like Christ as to be almost Himself; it is to be under the sweet dominion of passionate devotion to the blessing and all blessed Cross of Christ."

This was certainly the nature of the unity which existed among the disciples of Christ in the early days of Christianity. The historian of the Apostolic Church says that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." With such a unity among these who lived by the faith of the Son of God, the divinely inspired apostles with great power testified to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. During this most delightful experience, first of unity with Jesus, and second, as coming out of that genuine brotherly love and trust, the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and even a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. The union for which our Lord prayed was such a union as that which exists between the Father and the Son, and certainly this was not a compromise, a concession, a toleration.

The doctor, in this recent discourse, pronounces ringing words concerning the ultimate authority in matters pertaining to our holy religion. He exhorts those who would promote Christian unity to get rid of all simulations and mockeries which have gathered around the subject, and to go back to that which is fundamental and biblically authoritative, *let us judge everything by the standard of the written word.* He says that "any man, or any body of men, who would attempt to set up a doctrinal standard, saying, by this alone can unity be determined, would assume a tremendous responsibility. Who are they? By what authority do they erect this standard? What are their credentials? How does it come that they claim to have a right to say for unborn generations, what is formally and dogmatically correct and orthodox?"

But the reunited church must have a creed? Certainly. What shall it be? Dr. Parker says: "Why may not our creed be substantially reduced to one line—'I believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world?'" After that he says we might welcome differences, we might be pleased to hear diversity of speech and accent. Of course this diversity must be within the limit of the one book which the eloquent minister of the City Temple holds up as the one standard by which to judge all things. The creed above suggested was without doubt the creed of the united, aggressive, and victorious church during the life-time of the holy apostles. "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a lively temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the spirit."

Something more on the same subject, from the same quarter, but this is enough for the present.

THE GOSPEL—IS IT ESSENTIAL?

Does God directly operate on the hearts of sinners by His mighty power, or an immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, and thereby make them new creatures in Christ Jesus? If so, why did Jesus of Nazareth, who was, and is supposed to have spoken the *miral* and acted in perfect harmony with the *will* of the Father, say to His disciples: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark xvi 15, 16.

Why preach the Gospel if men and women are saved without the Gospel? Why spend time and labor, if God, by a direct outpouring of the Spirit, subdues the hearts of the rebellious, enlightens the minds of those who are in darkness, pardons their sins, turns them from a life of sin to a life of righteousness, creates them anew, takes them out of the kingdom of darkness, and into the kingdom of His dear Son, making them heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ?

Again: If God directly operates on the hearts of men, by His Spirit, independently of the Gospel, and it is His *will* that all men should be saved, why is the world lying in wickedness? Why, the benighted condition of Africa, and the more refined but yet degrading idolatry of China, India and Japan? Why the great influence of the name of Mahomet, and the zeal and apparent sincerity of his many and mighty followers?

Why the corruptions of Mormondom, and, why the sin, corruption, wretchedness, misery and godlessness of our own beloved and comparatively enlightened land?

Could not God pour out His Spirit on every heart in a single day? Could not He have every one turned from darkness to light in a single hour? But, if it is His will that a definite and particular number, only, shall be saved, could not He have that particular number created anew in Christ Jesus, and so, as far as they are concerned, put an end to sin?

Again, we ask: Why do men, who profess to believe that God converts sinners by a direct, immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, receive pay (money where no value is given) for work which is alone God's work, and, which He does, when and where He pleases, without their assistance in any way?

There is only one way to clear them of the guilt of the charge of gross dishonesty, viz.: their being ignorant, either wilfully, negligently or unavoidably, of God's righteousness and His will, in reference to the salvation of men, yet being very desirous of a righteousness of some kind, go about, zealously trying to establish a righteousness, either their own or based on some other equally fallible human authority.

To be unavoidably ignorant may imply comparative innocence, but, to be negligently or wilfully ignorant, surely implies guilt. "He who knows his Master's will (or might have known) and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

Are there any Christians where Christ has not been preached? Have the hearts and minds of men been illuminated since apostolic days by a direct influence of the Holy Ghost (or even in the apostolic days) to make them Christians, they not otherwise having heard of Jesus of Nazareth?

How many Christians are there in the wilds of Africa where the foot of the missionary has never trodden—where his voice has not been heard?

Did not Paul say: The gospel is the power of God unto salvation? Is not Christ in the gospel? Is not preaching the gospel simply presenting Christ to the lost and perishing?

Is there any other name in which there is salvation for sinners? Is not the gospel a revelation of the mind of the Spirit—sent to convince (reprove)

the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment?

Does not the Spirit operate in, with and through the word in this great work of showing men their lost condition and persuading them to fly for refuge and to lay hold upon the hope set before them.

Paul was sent to the people to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, etc.—see Acts xxvi 18. If it was then, or is now, God's plan to enlighten men by a *direct influence*, no need to send Paul, no need to call Saul of Tarsus, no need to send the gospel message nor to invite sinners to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. No necessity for any unceasing, any troubling of the waters, God in His own good time would illuminate—one man in the mill; another in the forest; another in the busy mart; another in the counting house, another in the heat of battle; another as he stands beside the stone of sacrifice and offers the quivering human victim to appease the wrath of his (supposed to be) offended heathen deity. So life, time and wealth may be saved, and light, joy and gladness fill many hearts now in the shadow of death and the horror and gloom of the midnight darkness of heathenism which fills many corners of the earth with the habitations of cruelty.

Would to God that all might look at the matter squarely, and understand that Jesus had all authority and wisdom when He said: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, etc." That Paul, also, *by the direction of the Spirit* gave the thought: "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God; it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. i. 21.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i. 16 (The Jew and the Gentile)

"The Spirit (in the word) and the bride (the Church) say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Rev. xxii. 17.

None come without the invitation. None come except drawn. None come except those who hear and learn. See John vi. 44-47.

The drawing power is in the love of God and Christ, unfolded in the work of Jesus of Nazareth, and made known to the lost and the perishing in the glad tidings of love and mercy—the gospel of the grace of God.

O. B. EMBRY.

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TRUE NOBILITY.

"The Bereans were more noble than those at Thessalonica, because they received the word with all readiness of *mind*." Here is seen the strength and nobility of man. Not his pedigree or his titles, but his mental strength and ability, his virtues. Mind is eternal, and determines our standing and our enjoyment here and hereafter. To develop the mind is the work of life. The man increases with the mind, as the mind is the true measure of man. But how can the mind be developed? By the same principle we develop the body—the process of eating. It is impossible for body or mind to grow without food, and moreover, the food must be wholesome. The quality of the food is as important as the quantity. Truth is the pabulum of the mind. Truth was made for the mind or the soul, as light for the eye. The Bereans were noble because they searched the Scriptures. They were seeking for truth, and not for aesthetic refinement, or perverted literary taste.

The present condition of things is sapping the mind of its noble functions. Look at the light, trashy, sensational books that are being circulated and received. See the precious time spent or rather wasted over the trash that must inevitably