

I beg leave before I proceed to point out any particular course by which I think it possible that some steps towards this great object of the reconciliation and reunion of the divided members of Christ's body in this country might be accomplished, to say that I do not ask you to adopt any course whatever to that end; and I take special care to name that circumstance, in order that no views of mine may interfere with your adopting the resolution which I desire to place before you, namely, to promote the object which I have specially in view in this motion, of making it the subject of general prayer throughout the Church of England. I believe, sir, I need not dwell here upon the evils resulting from this separation. I have, almost to my surprise, found reason to know that there are indeed some in the present day who have come even to think that there is good in separation; to think that each time another sect arises, it is as it were another instance of the formation of another of those societies which are engaged in the cause of truth. But amongst ourselves I say that there can be none who think so; not, indeed, that it is for a moment to be thought that we deplore, as we must and do deplore those miserable divisions which distract the cause of religion and of Divine truth in this land, from any selfish motives; not that it is because it may be thought to tend to any loss to ourselves, or to any disadvantage to ourselves, or that we have regard to any personal matters;—and I say this only because some observations of the kind have formerly been made when the subject has been mentioned, in some of the journals of the day. I speak with the utmost confidence when I say that it is from no such feelings and no such motives that the clergy and I believe also a very large proportion of the religious laity of the Church of England are anxiously desirous to take such steps towards the accomplishment of so great an object as that which I am bringing before you; but it is on account of its obstruction to true piety—it is on account of the way in which these miserable divisions occupy men's minds and thoughts at a time when they should be devoted to higher and holier causes—it is, above all, on account of its tendency to the promotion of infidelity. I hope it will not be supposed that I charge any particular party with a desire to promote infidelity. I am not here to accuse others; on the contrary, I believe we ought all to admit that *Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extrâ*, and to confess that there are faults on both sides, and if we are anxious for reconciliation we must be ready to acknowledge faults. But infidelity is promoted even by the circumstance of men seeing how little agreement there is, and how much less there seems to be than should be apparent in a religious country. This we cannot doubt; and we cannot doubt, at the same time, that the energies of many highly religious men, which are now distracted in these miserable controversies, might be devoted to a much better purpose in refuting existing heresies, or in promoting the cause of truth. Nor can we doubt that the existence of these dissensions reacts in a most disadvantageous way upon the minds of all engaged in them. We cannot doubt that a higher state of piety might be obtained by men if they were not engaged in these dissensions which now engage their minds. Above all, we cannot forget, and I hope we never shall, the words of our Divine Master himself, that “by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have charity—if ye have love one to another.” And it is not only at home that this feeling assails us—it is felt also abroad. We boast of our power, we boast of our commerce, and we boast of our importance, till I cannot but think that many good men must tremble, while they hear the boast, to remember whose it is to raise and whose to destroy that power, and that it is as easy to destroy that greatness and that importance which had been granted, and might expect them to be destroyed if they were not used for the purpose for which they were given. But while this empire flourishes, while in our colonies and wherever our flag with the banner of the cross upon it is held to view,