

24 The Message of the Disciples of Christ

It cannot be denied that natural sociability and mutual advantage impel men to union. It is an inherent force in human nature. One of the chief purposes of Christianity is to remove every barrier and make it easy, permanent and spiritual for men to come into a fellowship for which they were created and out of it to develop into the highest of earth's products. Instead, the schismatic condition of Christianity is defeating the purpose of its existence and making the impression upon unbelievers that schism is the order of heaven, which the most worldly of unbelievers knows is not true from his own natural desire for friendliness. Thus millions are hostile to the Church and see no advantage in its fellowship.

The prayer of Jesus is the breath of God against the walls that divide the flock, whether those walls be built upon national peculiarities or doctrinal differences. The walls must come down. It is the prayer of Jesus, and just as the Holy Spirit came at the fullness of time in answer to His prayer, a united Church shall arise to its world task, likewise in the fullness of time, in answer to the prayer of that same Jesus. He knew the weakness of Peter and He prayed that his failure might not be absolute; so He knows us—us Christians of all creeds and names—and, looking through the centuries, He saw our weakness—our schismatic spirits—and the power of