

to have secrets revealed to thee which to most disciples are a sealed book. The wisdom will lead thee into the mysteries of complete redemption. Abide in Him as thy righteousness, and dwell clothed upon with Him in that inner sanctuary of the Father's favour and presence to which His righteousness gives thee access. As thou rejoicest in thy reconciliation, thou shalt understand how it includes all things, and how they too wait the full redemption; 'For it pleased the Father by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven.' And abide in Him as thy sanctification; the experience of His power to make thee holy, spirit and soul and body, will quicken thy faith in a holiness that shall not cease its work until the bells of the horses and every pot in Jerusalem shall be Holiness to the Lord. Abide in Him as thy redemption, and live, even here, as the heir of the future glory. And as thou seekest to experience in thyself to the full, the power of His saving grace, thy heart shall be enlarged to realize the position man has been destined to occupy in the universe, as having all things made subject to him, and thou shalt for thy part be fitted to live worthy of that high and heavenly calling.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND CHRISTIAN UNITY.

II.

Since, then, as I pointed out in the former paper, the true position of the Church of England is so absolutely Catholic; since, by the confession of its formularies and the lips of its founders, its motto is, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, entire unanimity with all true believers in whatever church, and thorough doctrinal agreement with all the recognized evangelical denominations; since, from the Scripturalness of her formulations, the fitness of her services for all the purposes of devotion and edification, the breadth and adaptability of her system of government, she commands the respect if not the admiration of all the Christian bodies, it is my firm conviction and hope, that if ever it is the will of God that the scattered regiments of His church should fight in His cause in one uniform, as well as with one heart, *the Church of England will be the centre to which all will flow, and the form which all will gladly adopt.* In confirmation of this it is a noticeable fact that where in city or country parish the pure gospel is faithfully preached in our church, there as by an invisible attraction men flock from other denominations. The Presbyterian forgets his abhorrence of prelacy, the Methodist the contumely and scorn with which churchmen assailed him in the past, the Baptist remembers that in the matter of immersion, at least, the church is sound, and—in they come. They love the quiet service, and they love to hear the gospel. Yes, in they come. Would to God that that mighty magnet—the pure, simple, free, glorious gospel were found in every pulpit of our church.

Whether, however, it is the will of God that such a happy consummation shall ever be arrived at, is a thing which in my judgment it is almost impossible to determine. If it is His will we may rest assured of this, that such a union will be brought about, whether instantaneously, or by gradual unfolding or evolution of His purposes, which is much more in keeping with His general government. But even if it is not, there would be no cause for man to doubt the Divine Omnipotence, or be confounded by the distractions and dissensions of a schism-vexed Christendom. Even if men never find a universal church, there is no reason to believe that our Lord's prayer for unity has not been answered, and I hold, and in this paper will endeavour to show, notwithstanding all the distress about Christian divisions, there is *now* absolute and essential unity in the church of God, and that in the great and important sense Christ's prayer has been realized "that all may be one."

It's a hard matter to pull up the root of an an-

cient tree, its thousand ramifications have made it one with the soil. It is really hard to uproot an idea which has been embedded in the brains of succeeding generations of men. It must be true because they have always thought so. Now, if there is an idea which has got sure hold of the minds of most Christians it is the conceit that true Christian unity can only be realized by uniformity, and the enrolment of all professing Christians into one vast single corporation. The scene of differing denominations suggests at once the thought of contention, and waste of power. The idea is sedulously circulated and kept alive by the false Church of Rome, many in our church aid and abet, and so the leaven works until men almost universally fancy that the prayer of our Lord "that all may be one" has reference only to a visible and corporate unity. The general craving is for a unity which shall represent *quantity* as well as quality, and the picture of a vast, unbroken, unanimous army moving onward kindles the imagination of the ardent believer.

Now to my mind the idea is a false one, and the interpretation of the prayer entirely wrong. Christian unity is a very different thing. Such an event would mean *denominational* unity, *i.e.*, unity in form and name, but not necessarily Christian unity. Christian unity is only secured when a number of men become one in life, aims, end, desires, thought, will, and action, not when they join the same order. *This unity we have*: we have it in spite of denominational differences; and it *may* be the Lord's will that we should have it as we have it and in no other way.

Let us get clearly established in this point first, that *true Christian unity* can only be secured in true Christian men, *i.e.*, among Christians who are in truth and inwardly what they are in name and outwardly. There can be no true Christian unity between nominal Christians, and real Christians; Christian unity exists among true believers, the truly converted, the sons of God, who are born again into newness of life. In proof of this read John xvii. 6-23. What is the exact sense of our Lord's prayer? It is the unity of those who are *in Him, who have eternal life, know Him, are not of the world, believers.* Among these alone there can be unity.

I have not the slightest desire for unity with those who have not community of life and fellowship in Jesus. Tares have nothing in common with wheat except the insignificant matter of external resemblance. Given two fields of wheat with tares scattered here and there, with what has the wheat in the two divided fields communion? Where lies the unity? Between the wheat and the tares because enclosed by one fence, and their nearness to one another? No. But between the *wheat* in the one field, and the *wheat* in the other. Externally their unity is with the tares which occupy the same field. Internally there is union alone with that which is truly and really in affinity because possessed of similar life and organization. While the world lasts wheat and tares will never be in union. They cannot. It is a divine cannot. What man has sundered by difference of constitution, let no man dare to join together. Let there be a thousand fences, hedges, stone walls, between them, *wheat with wheat* will always be *one*. Let the external order be never so beautiful, the wall enclosing them never so strong, wheat and tares will notwithstanding all *never* be one. When men long therefore for the unity of Christendom through the fraternization of the Anglican, Eastern, and Roman churches, *e.g.*, they entirely overlook the essential distinction between community of *life* and community of organization, habitation, and external characteristics. The former alone is the guarantee of true unity. The latter is necessarily no guarantee at all. It is not the unity of the *body* of Christ, of those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is the unity of the tares and the wheat. However desirable a thing external unity is, no true Christian can long for union with those who he is sure are

not building their house of faith on the Solid Rock, and the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. The aim of Christianity is not to get a multitude of *nominal* Christians but a body of true believers, and these believers will always be one. Who wants unity with Rome? I don't. With the Eastern church? Pusey did. I don't. Who longs to see the Roman and Eastern churches one? It matters little to me. The union of two rotten stumps won't make one living tree. Who wants the union of the Anglican, Roman and Eastern churches?

God forbid! Peace! Peace!! when there is *no* peace and can be none, building up a slight wall and daubing it with untempered mortar! What peace can there be with our pure Scriptural church so long as the whoredoms of Babylon, the mother of harlots, and her witchcrafts continue? There can be no unity. Wheat will ever be one with wheat, but never with chaff, except in the matter of external resemblance.

The aim, the mistaken aim of Christendom has been to secure at any price almost an external unity. But such a unity will almost inevitably result in the admission of many who are not of the body of Christ, and in the unity of the leaven, and of the tares. The devil has got his desire, I think, in the unity of Rome. He knows that the evil spreads its contamination more quickly and surely than the good its influence. If he can, therefore, get a church to adopt any measure of organization which will secure the harmony and external union of the nominal and true believer, and reject any stringent test calculated to ensure the admission of true believers only, *i.e.*, of course as far as human eye can see, then he has gained his end. He knows that the chaff will outnumber the wheat, and make it insignificant, and that under unity of organization the unity of the body will be destroyed.

The majestic external unity of the Church of Rome is, then, not at all such a unity as was desired by our Lord, nor is it possible that the existence of a vast uniform ecclesiastical body, consisting of the various scattered denominations of Christendom welded into one, would be the actual realization of our Lord's desire. For consider, what is the will and preference of God as discerned in the teaching and conduct of our blessed Lord? Certainly it is the preference of the internal to the external, the real to the nominal.

Therefore a real unity with Him is preferable to and external and nominal union.

What is the will and preference of God as discerned in the history of the Church in our Lord's day, and in His express teachings, a numerical majority or an essentially valuable minority?

Certainly a minority of quality, as against a majority of quantity.

What, again, was the will and preference of God as shown in the history of the apostolic and divinely guided primitive church. An external unity of organization, corporally undivided, and numerically great, or a scattered and small minority with the bond of unity not primarily and *prominently* unity of organization, government or ritual, but community of faith in a risen Saviour, and newness of life through believing in His name? Certainly the latter.

Therefore a unity such as is now proposed by the scattered and differently ordered bodies or communities of believers, holding in common, faith in Jesus and newness of life through faith in His name, is in God's sight preferable to the great and perfect and numerically splendid nominal unity of an external, and lifeless, and shadowy organization.

In fact, strange as it may appear, these present *divisions* (so called) of Christendom have been the means in our Lord's inscrutable wisdom of bringing about the unity of His church. For centuries before the Reformation there was this rotten devilish unity of organization. The tares were in possession, and the field was apparently one. Then came the Reformation. It was the dividing to a great extent of the wheat from the tares, the union of the wheat, the bringing them together "that they all might be

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