

V. Is such a union practicable? The answer is: Yes. Such a union existed under the ministry of the inspired apostles, and can exist again if Christians will only be satisfied with what God says in these last days by His Son. Is such a union practicable? Yes. For Jehovah has decreed that the Christ shall have the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. But this glorious result can only be secured by a hearty spiritual union with the Christ, and so with those who recognize His ownership of them.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself," said the Son of Man. As men are drawn to Him, the common centre, they are of necessity drawn to each other; and herein lies the true solution of the problem of Christian union.

I choose, therefore, to be especially identified with the Disciples in church fellowship and ministerial work, because they seem to me to regard divisions among Christian believers from the point of view occupied by the Christ, and to present the only consistent and practical solution of the confessedly difficult problem of Christian union.

The spirit and basis of this Christian union movement, it will be seen, is catholic. It is removed as far as possible from sectarianism. There is nothing in it necessarily even denominational. There is no reason why any person entertaining the sentiment here presented, and striving for their realization in the life of the Church Universal, should be denied fellowship in any Christian community, church or society. Here is common ground. The Disciples desire to walk and work in fellowship with all in every place who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord—both theirs and ours.

I am a Disciple because of the position to which the Christ is assigned in their thought, and worship, and teaching. This is unique. He is the centre, He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last; He is the solution of all mysteries. Every problem in theology, in morals and in religion is studied from the standpoint of the Man of Nazareth. All questions for time and eternity are answered by Him. The Christ of the New Testament is Christianity. He is the Alpha and Omega of revelation. He is the soul of the Bible. God speaks to us in these last days by His Son. Belief in Him is saving faith. A man may believe, from first to last, every article contained in the most orthodox doctrinal creed and be damned, but "he that believeth on the Son hath life." All power, legislative, judicial and executive, in heaven and on earth, belongs to the Son of Man—the Son of God. Receiving Jesus in this sense the sacred literature called the Bible is accepted as true. He is the centre and the circumference of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. The fingers of the Old Testament prophets pointed to Him. He quoted the Old Testament as the Word of God. The men who wrote the New Testament were His agents. The Son of Mary was the desire of nations. The Old Testament in its types and shadows, in its ritual observances and its prophetic announcements, is full of the Messiah. He is the seed of the woman mentioned in Genesis. He is the prophet like unto Moses spoken of in Deuteronomy. He is the descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in whom the families of the earth were to be blessed. This is the gospel preached to Abraham, of which Paul speaks in the Epistle to the Galatians. He is the root of Jesse and the offspring of David. Remove the thought of the Messiah from the Old Testament Scriptures and but little of value would remain. Directly or indirectly the burden of Old Testament teaching is the coming and reign of Christ. The New Testament describes His coming, His person, His life, His doctrine, His wonderful works, His

atoning death, His triumphant resurrection, His glorious ascension, and His priestly intercession in the highest heaven. The historic Christ is the centre of the best theological thought and teaching. The personal Jesus is the inspiration of the Christian life. Cutting loose from all theological systems the Disciples have from the first, and do now, seek to present a system of faith and life of which Jesus is the centre—a Christology rather than a theology. There is nothing in Christianity of any value apart from Him. Every person seeking membership in a congregation of Disciples of Christ is asked: "Do you believe in your heart Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God?" If other questions are propounded they are only intended to bring out more distinctly the thought involved in this enquiry. Jesus is confessed; not doctrines. Belief must lay hold on the personal Christ; not on a set of opinions, good, bad or indifferent, concerning Him. When Disciples baptize penitent believers they do so in obedience to the command of the Christ, and into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is not so much an ordinance of the Church as it is a personal transaction between the baptized and the Saviour. Jesus says: "Come unto me." In baptism the sinner makes his response. "Here, Lord," he says, "I give myself to Thee." At this point in the soul's experience there comes a divine assurance of remission of sins and acceptance of God. This assurance is contained and conveyed in the plainly written promise of the divine Word—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Baptism is into the name and not alone in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. In this act of obedience God is formally and solemnly recognized as Father, Jesus as Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as Guide and Comforter. Apart from the Son of God and faith in Him baptism is of no value. For this reason Disciples do not baptize those who are unable to believe—who have not faith. The Lord's table is spread in the congregations of Disciples on the first day of the week in remembrance of Him. The communion is with Christ rather than with one another. Disciples in their treatment of Jesus are peculiar in this—that, while others make belief in Him an essential part of the creed, Disciples, in theory and in practice, make faith in Him the creed, which entitles one to baptism and to membership in any church of Christ on earth. Their thought, as expressed by one of their most highly esteemed and influential ministers, is: "Put Christ in your temple and whatever ought not to be there will depart at His bidding. Is your congregation disturbed by the presence of birds and beasts that defile it? Open the door to Him and give Him full possession, for He alone has power to drive them out. Is the temple of your heart infested with the beasts of selfishness, which show their presence in the works of the flesh? You cannot expel them by your will alone. Put Christ in your temple. There are those who are vainly trying to cleanse the temple of its falsehoods by a scourge of small cords of doctrine spun out by their own brain. * * * There are not wanting those who are seeking to cleanse their own lives by trusting in their own strength. Put Christ in your temples, and whatever ought not to be there He will drive out."

The test of Christian orthodoxy is not what one thinks of the creation of the world, the beginning of the race, the fall of man, the introduction of sin, the composition of the Pentateuch, the inspiration of the Scriptures, ordinances, orders or organizations; not what one thinks about the atonement, the resurrection of the dead, the middle state or the life eternal; but what he thinks of Christ. This was our Lord's test when He was on earth, and it was the only test of orthodoxy employed by those whom He appointed to represent

Him among men after His return to heaven. "What think ye of Christ?" "Whose Son is He?" "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest be baptized." "Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God."

This practical exaltation of Jesus draws me to, and holds me in personal and ministerial fellowship with the Disciples.

It is this conception of Jesus and their grand purpose which keeps the Disciples from assuming or accepting a human denominational name. They are willing to be known by any of the names applied to and recognized as appropriate by the children of God in the New Testament, but they steadily and universally decline to answer to any denominational designation of human derivation.

In an important sense a product of the spiritual awakening, of which I spoke in the first place, the Disciples have been, and are, an earnest, evangelistic people. In this work, thus exalting Jesus as at once the Son of Mary and the Son of God, as at once human and Divine, as the Prophet to teach men, as the Priest to make intercession, and as the legitimate King, whose rule is a reign of love, they seek to make men simply, only and altogether Christians. To believe in and to obey the Christ, they assume, makes one a Christian. This makes him a Christian and nothing else; not a Baptist Christian, not a Methodist Christian, not a Congregationalist Christian, not a Presbyterian Christian, not an Episcopal Christian, not a Lutheran Christian, not a Roman Catholic Christian, but simply and only a Christian. This, it is thought, is quite sufficient for the life that now is as well as for the life to come. And, besides, this is the only way to union. Christians can unite as such, but they cannot unite as Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans nor as Roman Catholics. I am charmed, and my being is thrilled by this exaltation of the Christ, and I am delighted beyond measure with what seems to me to be the necessary result of such an exalted conception and presentation of my Lord.

There is also an advantage in this practical exaltation of the Christ in our consideration of the social, moral economic problem of our time. The wise men of the earth will yet come to the carpenter of Galilee to learn political economy. He alone can adjust the masses to the classes, and the classes to the masses. He can make the twin one. Under His teaching and government the rights and duties alike of labor and capital will be respected. The rich and poor under His guidance will come into right relations. Of the intricate science of sociology this Galilean peasant teacher knows more than all the world besides. The rights of woman He alone perfectly understands and can vindicate; their wrongs, too, He alone knows and can redress. He knows the true solution of the liquor problem and He will solve it. The temperance puzzle He alone can unravel. To Him all men will yet come for an entirely satisfactory and permanent solution of all their hard questions. Out of chaos and confusion the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, will bring perfect order.—N. Y. Press.

BIBLE.—The Bible is the rule, the direction, by which man is to work out his own salvation, as the guide-board is the direction by which he is to walk out his journey. Religion is in the man, or it is not anywhere.—Beecher.

CONSCIENCE.—It should lead each man to be "a silent court of justice in himself. Himself the judge and jury, and himself the prisoner at the bar."