

Living Brethren.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

A SERMON BY H. L. HASTINGS, PREACHED
IN THE FOUNDRY CHURCH, WASHINGTON,
U.S.A., FRIDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 1,
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[Mr. H. L. Hastings is well known as the editor of the *Christian*, Boston. His monthly is among the most welcome of our exchanges, always plain, pointed, faithful. He has uniformly acted kindly towards the *Canada Christian Monthly*, and we thank him here for his courtesy, and for sending us for our use the sermon on Christian Unity which we publish this month. We have been obliged to omit some paragraphs for want of space, but the substance of this excellent sermon is given here unbroken.]

TEXT.—“That they may all be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”—*John xii. 21.*

The union for which the Saviour prayed is in this world. It is very well to talk of union hereafter, but the Saviour said, “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.” The Church of Christ is placed here as a living protest against the sin, the war, the selfishness, and the hate that fills this world, and it is no part of our Saviour’s desire to take them away to bowers of peace, nor to give them wings like a dove that they may fly away and be at rest; but rather to keep them here in the world, in spite of all the rage and wrath of wicked men and devils; a light and blessing to mankind.

It had been a marvel to men how the Church has lived so long. It is a marvel still. When a heroic French nobleman went to his King to plead that he might spare his persecuted

brethren, and was repulsed and told that his plea was rejected, “Sire,” said he, “God’s Church is an anvil that has worn out a great many hammers.” That Church has been hammered for eighteen hundred years. I don’t know how many hammers have been spoiled, but the anvil is in a very good condition yet. The church lives because the life of God is in it. “It is kept by the power of God.” Not by the power of learning, of eloquence, of liberal institutions and beneficent laws, but through scenes of oppression, persecution, poverty, affliction, and distress, the Church is “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”

So long, then, as the people of God stand in the world in substantial unity, so long the Church presents a glorious and convincing argument that God sent Jesus Christ into the world; and that His Church are chosen and beloved of him. It is true that infidels make great capital of the dissensions and quarrels among Christian people. But for every quarreling sectarian you can find who professes Christianity, I will find you two loving believers who possess it. For every disputing, captious grumbler that disgraces the name of Christ by his bitterness and rancour, I will find you half a dozen lamb-like, sweet-spirited disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. So infidels who prefer bones to meat, and briars to berries, can hunt up their hypocrites and bigots, and make the most of them.

Christ prayed that His people might be one, but what is this unity which He desired?

1. It is not a local unity of all Christians in one place or in one house