

erring that relieved and sympathetic sentiment which the poet has taught us to call "the larger hope."

II.—OUR TRINITARIAN PRAYERS.

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"As he" (the Trinitarian worshipper) "directs his prayers, now to one" (person of the Trinity), "now to another, they sit apart within his faith; and his awe, his aspiration, his affection, flow into no living unity."—*Dr. James Martineau*.*

Thus justly and incisively Dr. Martineau puts his finger upon a weak point of our devotions. He acquits us of Tritheism, and fairly enough explains to his co-religionists our standpoint as Trinitarians, yet his charge against us of thought-confusion in our worship is unquestionably true. In our anxiety to be orthodox we have come to acquire a habit of thought and expression in public prayer that can hardly be described as either rational or scriptural. If we closely analyze our mental vision in addressing the Deity, we seem to have three divine beings before our spiritual eye instead of one. We conjure up a misty conception of three celestial thrones, one occupied by the Father, another by the Son, and the third by the Holy Ghost. We address the first in the name of the second, imploring, as we do so, the aid and influence of the third. In the venerable Litany of the English Church an appeal is made for mercy to "God the Father of heaven;" this is followed in similar terms by prayer to the Son as Redeemer of the world; then succeeds a like petition to the Holy Spirit; after which comes the adoration of the Trinity; the prayer concludes with earnest supplication to the Son as Lord.†

Who is the central object of worship in this prayer for mercy? If we scrutinize our inner consciousness while offering it we must frankly acknowledge that there is "no living unity." Our thought seems to wander in the presence chamber from Father to Son, and from Son to the Blessed Spirit; we localize their thrones by habit, we appeal to each consecutively, but with no unified conception in our minds of one divine image and likeness—one conceivable and approachable form, in whom the fullness of the Godhead is embodied; one whom we can worship with all reverence and affection in spirit face to face.

It does not help us out of our difficulty here to return to the dreary controversies of the early Church. Origen, Clement, Irenæus, Tertullian, and others were confronted in their times by theories of the Godhead and ten-

* *The Christian Reformer*, February, 1886.

† In striking contrast with the English Litany stand the Public Prayers of the Church of Scotland, which are addressed exclusively to the Father (*v. Directory*). This is unity indeed, but the unity desiderated by the Unitarian.