

the force of high motives; we should be thrown directly upon all that is vast, ennobling, and pure, in the objects of our faith: we should view the whole path of duty as from heaven. Breath, now wasted in controversy, would be turned into the incense of prayer. Christian intercourse would then be, what it always should have been, a religious ordinance—an exercise of mutual benevolence—a channel of grace. And the only spirit invoked in the Church would be the Spirit of grace.

XVII. In a variety of ways, the union of Christians would greatly increase their capacity for usefulness. "Union is strength." When it was once demanded of Agesilaus why Lacedæmon had no walls, he replied, "The concord of the citizens is its strength." And as a city or a kingdom becomes powerful in proportion as its parts act in concert, so would it be with the Christian Church. Talent, which is consuming itself in the flames of angry controversy, would then be sacrificed, and set at liberty, for holier a office. Zeal would come from one part of the Church, to be directed by Wisdom from another part. Preaching, where it is now, in consequence of the withering influence of dissension, productive of comparatively little good, then, by being devoted intensely to the exhibition of Christ crucified, be attended with Pentecostal success. Churches which have now to complain of weakness and worldliness, would then, by copying the visible unanimity and concentrated zeal of the primitive saints, be crowned with primitive triumph, and be more than a match for hostile myraids. Resources, which, divided, are not equal to the religious cultivation of a country, would, when united, be equal to an attempt on a continent. And, having made the attempt, instead of fearing in every Christian stranger that approached our sphere of labour, an agent from a rival church deputed to supplant us, we should hail him, from whatever section of the Church he might have come, as a brother beloved, and as a reinforcement of our spiritual strength.

XVIII. Christians would be inspired with a sacred fortitude and courage. The desertion or mutiny of part of an army, disheartens all the rest. And Christians, "unless united, signify but as so many single persons; each one caring and contriving only how to shift for himself. Love makes them significant to one another. Every one understands himself to be the common care of all the rest." The conviction that they cannot fail without grieving those whom they love and who love them, would keep them from the thought of declining; and the assurance, that in every enterprise of benevolence they carried with them the sympathies and prayers of the Church, would put them on deeds of heroism in the cause of God, which would call forth the applauses of all heaven.

XIX. But especially would union increase their capacity for usefulness, by increasing their capacity for the reception and operation of that Holy Spirit who alone can crown their activity with success. In order that the slain in the valley of vision might become an efficient body, it was necessary, not only that life should enter into each separately, they must fall in to order with a view to the union and organisation of the whole—and, then, as "an exceeding great army," a skilful commander alone was wanting to lead them forth to conquest. The Leader of the hosts of God is already waiting. Let them not only be compact in their several sections, but let those sections be united with each other, and as one body, he will lead them forth "terrible as an army with banners." Nothing shall be too great for them to attempt; and every conflict shall be a victory.

XX. How loudly is such a union called for by the fact that, although at present they refuse to co-operate, God is graciously commending them to each other,

by employing them all, as far as their divisions permit, and, according to the amount of their piety and zeal, impartially blessing them all. Where is the denomination which engrosses all religious excellence to itself? or which pretends to a monopoly of the Divine favour? Where is the Christian Church which has not been the means of saving some souls from death? Shall we ascribe this, as the Jews maliciously ascribed the miracles of Christ, to Satanic agency? If not, there is no alternative left us but to ascribe it to God. And shall we cast from our presence those whom God is distinguished with his favour? In honoring their instrumentality, he is answering their prayers, and sending them from his throne with his blessing; and shall we meet them on the way, and "curse whom the Lord hath blessed?" Shall we meet them as they descend from the mount, and look angrily on those on whom God has been smiling? Shall we admit that every instance of their usefulness is an attestation, under the great seal of Heaven, that they are his servants—an "epistle of commendation" to our hearts; and shall we yet close our hearts against them, and thus affront the Being whose signature they bring? Let us be assured that the Lord whom they serve is saying to them, as he did to his first disciples, "He that despiseth you, despiseth me." As we would not despise the Lord that bought us, then, let us recognise the usefulness of all whom he employs; and, by co-operating with them, let us seek to augment that usefulness, and to participate in its joys.

XXI. Such a union could not fail to strike the world with awe. Whether it was announced by any public manifesto from the united churches or not, so remarkable an event would necessarily attract general attention. That Christians should have consented to hold their differences in abeyance, that they should have agreed to sacrifice their particular predilections. The sacrifice of every predilection, tending so exclusiveness and bigotry, involves no slaughter of principles, in any case; but simply the intelligent exercise of the scriptural duty of Christian forbearance,—and that they should have done this solely to facilitate the progress of the Gospel—this would evince so unquestionable a zeal for the conversion of the world, that cavillers would be confounded, the prejudiced conciliated, and the general heart be impressed. Only let the proclamation go forth, "Christians are one"—the "gates of hell" would tremble at the sound; and more honour would accrue to the Gospel than it has received from the Church since the days of the martyrs.\*

XXII. But not merely would it arrest the public eye, it would assail and effect the public heart. The world would not long be left at leisure to speculate and wonder. Men would find that the Church had united for an object—that that object was themselves—that they were assailed on all sides by the combined and omnipotent forces of love. The Spirit himself would be the leader of the Christian host; his sword, the weapon they employed; his inspiration animating them to the fight; and his power crowning them with success. Scenes of apostolic triumph would be witnessed again. Jesus would see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; for men, convinced that such a union of disinterested love in a selfish world could be resolved into a heavenly cause, and breathed upon by the great renewing Spirit, would at length believe that God had sent him, and would gratefully capitulate to his offered grace.

XXIII. From all this would necessarily result a vast enhancement of our happiness. Happy, indeed, we may now be comparatively in the favour of God; but how much happier should we then be in the superadded favour of all his people; for in their sympathy we

\* This view is powerfully enforced in the New Model of Christian Missions.