

This is certain from the reason added to his petition, viz., "that the world may know that Thou hast sent me." He surely then besought a unity manifest even to the world, to unspiritual men. That this supplication may be prevailing, the grace of God must produce in believers the marks of identical spiritual life. They must not merely be one, but appear one. And these marks must pertain to their entire nature, to their intelligence, affections, and will. There must be sameness in their beliefs, experiences, character, and action. And this is not inconsistent with the utmost variety in such types of thought, feeling, and phases of character and action, as result naturally from those peculiarities which constitute individuality.

It is not admissable, after what has been stated, to entertain the opinion that the manifestation of the unity of believers, demonstrative of the fact to the world, is not possible. If there is moral government, what *ought* to be *may* be. If God is not without ample power, adequate wisdom, and persistency of purpose, what *ought* to be *will* be.

It cannot be affirmed that all methods and means devised for the attainment of this end are impracticable. Some may be. But unless God is without wisdom and men are utterly unteachable, the right way and the best instruments will be found. Meanwhile they are to be encouraged and honoured who are thoughtfully bent on discovering the true path, and are prudently venturing on cautious experiment. Those are surely to be condemned who are indifferent to the great object and opposed to the tentative movements directed toward its accomplishment.

The time has come for the discussion of the vast subject opened up to consideration. The importance of the end in view demands it. The manifestation of Christian unity is by so many acknowledged to be essential to the witness bearing function of believers as to make it opportune to advocate it, and to put all energy into the effort to discover the way and means of effecting it. And it cannot be forced into being. It must come through the intelligent convictions, and conscientious volitions of Christians. Discussion is therefore in order, and is essential. But to be effective it must spring from a common desire to accomplish the end, to know the best methods and appliances. It must proceed in a candid, generous, and kindly spirit. We must not promote dissension in the interests of harmony.

But it is our present purpose to refer to somewhat that has been gained, and to urge our brethren to hold it fast.

The influences which have combined to effect a general movement in the direction of Christian unity during the last thirty years, have come to their best results in the various schemes of Christian co-operation which mark the age as an epoch in church history. Christians have wrought together and have cast their gifts into common treasuries to be applied under the direction of councils, in which all have been represented for the furtherance of the cause of Christ.

Of course we cannot include in this company Papists and Puseyites. Their special theory of the church excludes them from all fellowship whatever with any who claim to be believers, however thoroughly they may substantiate their claim to be such according to the criterion furnished by the Lord, viz., "by their fruits shall ye know them," who do not consent to be constructed into the mechanical framework of an external church of a peculiar order or antiquity. By their Master let them be judged for the blindness which cannot see the marks of the divine life in those who do not conform to their rule, or their perverseness in not recognizing them.

But Evangelical Christians have come to the exhibition of practical agreement in essential matters of faith, experience, and practice. By so doing they have given the response and refutation of deeds to three charges.

1. To the charge that they do not agree in faith, they have replied by the support of the Bible Society, giving actual demonstration to the axiom of