

not calculated to reach the heart. The same denominations are at work to-day making proposals for Christian unity, and I do not think I can be charged with bigotry if I say they want to do it their own way, as the following will show. In December, 1885, an essay on Christian Union was read before the Convocation of Greenville, at its 39th session, which finished up as follows: "The conclusion of the whole matter is that the basis of Christian unity is the Episcopal form of government; the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds in belief; the two sacraments, baptism and the holy communion; with liturgical worship." (*Church Guardian*, April 7th, 1886.) But I do not wish to say anything disparaging of any effort that has been or will be made to bring to pass the prayer of our Saviour, "that all who believe on Him through the Apostles' word may be one," but merely mention this instance to show that Christian Union can never take place on any human basis.

The late declaration of the house of Bishops sent to our brethren in the United States leads us to think that the fire is still burning; and the Christian manner in which our brethren have received the declaration shows that they not only appreciate the advances made, but are hopeful for the future, and in the meanwhile determined to stand by the Truth and contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints.

That external as well as internal unity is required will be admitted by all, but to be merely united in name and church government, without being united in heart and belief, would be presuming that God is better pleased with formality than with heart worship. So it would be well for us to consider well what Christianity is in order to see why there should be Christian Union, and how to proceed for its attainment. It follows from the nature of Christianity that Christians are not simply individuals placed by the side of one another, but that they are a real and living unity, or else how can we understand the Apostle Paul who in writing to the Ephesians says, "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit."

That Christianity is not an abstract doctrine is clearly shown by such passages of Scripture as the one just cited. But it is a life communicated to mankind, or rather to the Church; for, says the Apostle, "The life was manifested, we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." This new life given to redeemed man is contained essentially in the person of Jesus Christ. It was given him of the Father "to have life in Himself." And this life is given to all those who are united to Christ. A union which is assured by believing in certain divine facts accomplished by Him—in His humble incarnation, in His expiatory death, in His glorious resurrection, in yielding obedience to His divine command. The new life which we have communicated to us being in the Son. Faith, by establishing an intimate union between the Son of God and the believer, becomes by this very act the source of religious life in man, but from this intimate union of the Christian with all who receive the life of Christ. The eternal life which is in Jesus and which flows for me is the same which flows for all who are the children of God by faith, no matter where they may be, whether in far distant India or in our native land. Christians are not, then, a mere plurality; they are also—they are especially—a living and organic unity. To deny plurality in regard to the existence of Christians would be folly, but to deny unity would be hardly less absurd. Now this unity, this organization, this body, all the members of which have but one head, one blood, one life, is the Christian Society, the Church. If this be so, if

what I have stated is truly Christianity, and if all who are Christians are connected by this great life, are members of the one Body, governed by the one Head, why are those who profess Christianity—I speak of the various denominations—divided into so many parties? But I will not review this question in the present article. Only it grieves those who would like to see the children of God united, to hear the silly arguments some men get up in defence of partyism, and see the Redeemer, who gave his life for the Church, so badly used. We cannot fail to admire the unity that prevailed in the early Church when first established, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, for instance the following. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." (Acts iv. 32.) Here we find unity in every sense of the word, and well might we, as a people who are seeking to do the will of the Lord, sound out in stentorian tones that will reach the uttermost ends of the earth, Come, let us return to primitive Christianity! With such a plea, backed up with such examples, ought we not to succeed? Is it not possible to awaken the followers of the Master to full realization of the importance of this question? Can they still continue to lie dormant and allow a question of such moment to pass by unheeded? We say, No. But on the contrary the subject will be proclaimed by the minister in the pulpit, by the mechanic in the workshop, and by every follower of the Master, as God has given him or her ability. If Christians would unite with other Christians in the same city, determined that neither the words nor the works of man shall separate them when the Lord Jesus would have them to be united, and then that city would unite with other cities in the same country, and that country with other countries in the same world, which God has honored and rescued from rebellion and death, by the sacrifice of the cross; how soon the earth would be filled with the glory and knowledge of God. Money that is now used to uphold partyism would then be used to spread the gospel, scepticism would then be almost unknown, the God of Heaven would be glorified and the heart of the Saviour gladdened; innumerable blessings would then be bestowed upon the children of God by a loving Father who loves to commend His children in well doing; families that wish to be united in Heaven, but are now separated by doctrines and creeds, would then be happy and united on earth. We could then say with the Psalmist, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for these the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore." As the ointment upon the head and beard of Aaron pervaded his whole being even to the skirts of his garment, so would that life which is found essentially in our Head, even Jesus Christ, pervade the whole body, even the Church of Christ. That this unity has become a great need, cannot be denied, it has even become a great fact at the present day. In some countries it is more advanced than in others, but everywhere it exists it advances and must still advance. That the people known as the Disciples of Christ have to a certain extent been instrumental in the hands of God of bringing this great subject to its present standing on this continent at least, is a fact too positive to be opposed, and too prominent to pass by without remark. The difference in the religious sentiment which exists to-day, and that which existed in 1800, is almost beyond conception. The condition of religious society in that day is clearly expressed in the following extract: "When the Campbells

landed on the shores of America they found the various denominations in a deplorable condition, and the Presbyterian 'branches' were, if anything, more powerless, as spiritual agencies, than any other 'branch of the Church.' All around, as they viewed the religious horizon, and as they gazed upon broken ranks of fiery zealots, they saw nothing but dissention and disunion. Bigotry, party intolerance, and sectarian selfishness, were everywhere phenomenal of divided churches, and of distracted members. Infidelity—gross infidelity—was fattening and waxing wanton on the spoils of an inglorious conquest. The aspect of religious affairs was dark and gloomy in the extreme. The great soul of Thomas Campbell was moved within him when he saw the whole land was given over to idolatrous worship of opinions, speculative theology, scholastic dogmas and men made creeds, and to visions and dreams, and to mysticism and dreary superstition. He saw that where there is 'no vision'—no divine revelation—the 'people perish' for want of spiritual food. In the fearfully distracted condition of things, he saw the immediate necessity of providing an antidote, and that antidote was to be found in pleading for Christian union, in making an effort to remove all barriers, and in a determination to unite all hearts, if possible, upon the Word of God, as the only solvent of an intolerable evil." (*Apostolic Church Restored*, p. 136). There is no effect without a cause, and a degenerated state of religious society which surrounded Thomas Campbell in his new home caused him to take a stand which has placed his name on the list of Reformers, and has had the effect of causing through the Providence of God many thousands to take the same stand. His thirteen propositions are well worthy our consideration, more especially the first three which refer to the subject under consideration, namely, Christian Union. But I close the present article with the hope that the day may yet arrive that will see the prayer of our Saviour answered. "That they which believe on me through the Apostles' word may be one, even as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee." We add our humble petition to this and say, "even so, Lord Jesus."

W. HARDING.

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CHANGING OUR VILE BODIES.

PHIL. III. 21.

Could we have the power given to us at this moment of looking into all the homes that fill our land what an amount of evidence as to the corruptibility and natural vileness of our bodies would meet our eyes. Yonder we would see some aged man or woman who has lived far beyond the allotted "three score years and ten," lived till they had seen the scenes of their early youth change and put on new appearances, so that the play-ground of childhood looks like a strange spot; lived to see the associates of their youthful days pass over the dark river, and to see new faces and forms stand in their places, so that the soul becomes filled with a feeling of utter loneliness. They have lived to see their children who once were the objects of their most tender care grow from childhood to manhood or womanhood, and now grown old and gray, their steps already beginning to falter with the approaching childhood of old age. Nothing of past is left save in memory's casket; yet when they look over their past in company with memory, and see again the once blooming cheek, dancing eye and active figure of the loved brother or sister of their childhood, of the loved husband or wife, or all loved companions of maturer years, and suddenly waking up to the fact that these have all passed away from the earth and that they are still left here alone, then memory only becomes an unbearable companion, bringing sadness