

this good feeling exists more generally than it once did. Whether the world is growing worse or better, the Christians of different churches are learning to treat one another better, to have a more cordial respect for one another's conscientious convictions, to speak more kindly of one another, to rejoice more sincerely in one another's spiritual successes, to adopt one another's methods of worship and work, and to co-operate more freely in preaching the Gospel of the common salvation to lost men. We thank God, and take courage. But is this Christian Unity? No, it is one result or manifestation of it, but Christian Unity itself is quite another thing. Let us hear the prayer of our Lord for this as He pours it forth in thrice repeated cry:—

*"Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given unto them: that they may be one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me."* (John 17: 21-23, Revised Version.)

Strictly speaking, this is not a prayer for *union*, but for *unity*, and it has primary reference, not to the relation of Christians to one another, but to their common relation *in Christ*. "That they may be one, even as We are one," "that they also may be *in Us*." This it is for which our Lord so earnestly prayed, the unity of all of His followers in Him, a unity so absolute, so blessed, so vital, so complete, that nothing short of His perfect unity with the Father can fitly represent it. More than a merely outward combination of forces, more than a mere manifestation of mutual good-will, it is a life, a perfect oneness, of thought, feeling, counsel, purpose, will, manifesting itself in a perfect oneness of character and conduct, of worship and work. It springs from the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in the hearts of all of His own, and it appears in the reproduction of His life of holy love and glorious self-giving in their lives. Through this *visible* unity of His disciples the world might see the Crucified One living on earth after He had gone back to Heaven, and know that the Father had sent Him.

Now, is there nothing of this unity on earth to-day? Are not all true believers in Christ essentially one in Him? One in their faith which is the root and substance of all personal religion? One in their hope of salvation through Him? One in the great object of their