

inculcate, in reference to the diversities that exist among the true members of the visible Church of Christ? As to *ourselves*,—they require us to bring all our religious opinions to the test of the word of inspiration, and with docility of mind, and deep devotion of heart, to search the sacred records, that saved from error and established in the knowledge of the truth, “the word of God may dwell in us richly, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” With regard to *others*, who though of the household of faith, accord not with us on points of secondary consideration, they enjoin the cultivation of a spirit of love and forbearance; representing it as nothing less than an unhallowed usurpation of the prerogative of Deity, to criminate and condemn them on that account.

The divided state of the Christian Church has long been the subject of poignant regret to men who, with a piety unusually elevated, have combined a benevolence of heart nobly superior to the littleness of bigotry. However much we may deplore the existence and consequences of such dissonance in religious views among real Christians, it will awaken the less surprise the more we reflect on the plurality of causes that are in constant operation to produce and perpetuate it; such as—the power of habit and educational prejudice—the influence, often of adventitious associations in life—the susceptibility of error incident to minds of the highest order—and last, though not least, the infirmity and deceitfulness of the human heart. “Nor ought we, in tracing the causes of these differences, by any means to forget, that on many points of a merely secondary nature—those particularly which relate to *modes* of worship and of church government—there is to be found, in the divinely authorised records of the Christian revelation, very little of precise direction; and thus is there obviously left, in reference to such points, a considerable scope for the formation of different views.”

But surely, amidst all these diversities, there is ground of sufficient breadth and pre-eminently holy still left, on which all who maintain the fundamental principles of the gospel may stand, and keep, what is of infinitely greater moment than a mere accordance of speculative sentiments or of ritual observances,—“the *unity* of the *Spirit* in the *bond* of *peace*.”

Nothing more directly tends to sever that bond than the spirit of dogmatism and exclusiveness. I am anxious to believe that it was remote from the intention of the Rev. Mr. Crawley, to display such a spirit in the ‘Treatise on Baptism’ by the publication of

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