

which he gave them, before leaving this world, are not mentioned in the Gospels, but there was one subject of too great importance to be omitted, and that was:—*the unity of all those that would believe on him.* The Saviour knew too well the corruption of the human heart, not to caution them against the temptations which were likely to arise out of small differences of opinion among them. He exhorts them in the most affectionate terms to “love one another,” reminding them that they would be known as his disciples and friends, by their being *all one*, even as he was one with the Father. “Holy father,” says he, “keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, *as we are.* That they may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou has sent me.” Here it is very clear and plain that the Lord did not wish his disciples to be divided into parties and sects, but rather that they should be *all one*—that all those who should believe on him were to be united together “into one body,” which is the Church, having Christ for its head.*

Now, when we examine the writings of the first

* It is a great error to suppose that the Christian Church upon earth must be a pure body of men. We nowhere find in Scripture that any church ever existed which was composed entirely of true christians. Jesus Christ himself, while describing the Church, openly declared that “the tares” will grow along with “the wheat”; that “the foolish virgins” are to be found among “the wise,” &c.—It is now a long while since Dissenters have been at work, endeavouring (they say) to organize a pure church, but unhappily, so far, all their attempts have been fruitless. This should teach us to bear with small, or supposed defects in the true Catholic and Apostolic Church, rather than separate without sufficient reasons.

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