

20 The Message of the Disciples of Christ

living in the alphabet period of the world's history and to each of us is assigned the task of arranging the letters in order to read the message of another's cause, and to the degree of God in us the letters spell the worth of what we read.

If it be asked whether the interpretation that I am now giving to the message of the Disciples is universally believed and practiced by the 1,300,000 members, I do not hesitate to say that I regret my answer has to be in the negative, and I need not go into the causes other than to say that the tendency to legalism has often stolen the spirit of catholicity from the message of the Disciples and made it sectarian and weak. We are a democracy with no commanding voice among us and consequently there are varieties of interpretations, and these in time will settle themselves. Those, however, who dissent from my interpretation are no less my brethren, and the interpretation that I give has back of it the conviction and practice of hundreds of thousands in all parts of the world, both in the pulpit and in the pew, whose lives and utterances are giving vision and hope to hearts that are sincerely yearning for peace in the house of God.

Christian union is not a doctrine; but, like Christ Himself, it is a life, and only this phase of it is the chief interest to us. The Church is divided by schism and consequently love is marred, life is weakened and the conversion of