

193. The Unity of the Christian Church.

Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph. 4, 3.

A union of churches is well-pleasing to God. We are, therefore, earnestly praying and willing to work for a true and holy union of all the different Christian churches. But we realize that it must be a union in fact and not only in form, a union in spirit and not only in outward organization. It must be a union brought about by the common acceptance of every sacred doctrine clearly revealed in the Scriptures; a union of true believers who confess Christ as their Savior in the Biblical sense of the term; a union in which the love of God and His Word is the all-pervading principle. Such a union it is to which our Master refers when He says: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The Christian Church is divided because men have forced their own interpretations upon the Bible instead of accepting all its teachings as divine truth. Therefore the Savior says in His high-priestly prayer: "That they may be one even as we are one." Such a union is possible by means of religious discussion and religious controversy carried on in the proper manner.

We deplore the divided state of the Church; but the church union movement of our day is in great part a manifestation of the spirit of indifference, which proceeds from the thought that it does not matter greatly what a person believes and that the Bible is not sufficient to settle every point of doctrine at dispute among Christians. As long as they hold such a view, they make it impossible for true Christians to join hands with them. How willingly we would join hands with other churches if they would but accept the teachings of our Church, that is, the whole Word of God, pure and unadulterated by false teachers. That is the one condition of church-fellowship and church union.

Prayer.

O Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us all our sins and so rule our hearts that we may live together in a peaceful and Christian spirit, blessing Thy name here in time and hereafter in eternity. To that end we must continue in Thy Word. But, sad to say, there are many false doctrines in vogue among the different churches, and hence there is no unity of the Spirit. How can there be unity of the Spirit among churches with different creeds and tenets, one opposing the other? There is not one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, and therefore the outward union is a delusion. Oh, let us be one in truth and in Spirit! Amen.

He His Church has firmly founded,
He will guard what He began;
We, by sin and foes surrounded,
Build her bulwarks as we can.

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