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CHRISTIAN UNION VS. UNITY

We have pointed out repeatedly the tendency of Christian people toward Union; showing, too, that such a union is predicted in Scripture; but that its results, while designed to be good, will really be bad; and this because it will be a mechanical union instead of a *heart unity*. The following clip from the *Pittsburg Times*, February 22d, shows that worldly people discern that the various denominations, while crying aloud for union, are far from united in heart or head.

STRUGGLING FOR THE UNATTAINABLE.

"We have read with care most of the last number of *The Church Union*, and seldom anything more melancholy. The object of this paper is to induce believers and congregations everywhere "to manifest to the world their essential unity in faith and spirit," and almost every article in it is evidence that the object is unattainable.

"A distinguished Bishop of the Episcopal Church writes that there are two theories of the ministry, personal and official, that his denomination [R1504 : page 85] holds to the latter, 'and enjoins it upon her members as the one exclusive ministry, which they must accept or fall under discipline as law-breakers.' To the many who deny this 'one exclusive ministry' there is not much hope for unity in that quarter.

"Another writer lays down as prerequisites to unity, belief in the Bible as the sole guide to spiritual life, faith in the divinity of Jesus, and baptism; but a third writer, mocking at creeds as they exist, says: 'Let us have more thinking, then, upon the higher criticism, evolution, the intermediate state, the duration of future punishment, and such like matters, but whenever anyone rises to

impose his opinions in regard to such subjects upon the brotherhood, let us resist him to the uttermost.' The latter permits the discussion and the overthrow, if it comes to that, of what the former sets forth as final truths, without the acceptance of which there can be no union.

"A fourth writer asks: "Why not come together in a loving fellowship of worship and work on the basis of the Christian religion as propounded by Jesus and his elect ones in the New Testament?" Upon this a fifth writer remarks that upon it all churches, Greek, Roman, Protestant orthodox and Protestant heterodox, ought to be able to unite, as they one and all "claim to hold a primitive belief and to practice the primitive ordinances." Whether he meant it or not he revealed the absurdity of attempting to find a basis of union in that which in its very nature is the cause of disunion, and which was never more incisive than now."

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PALESTINE.

"A good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey."
– Exod. 3:8.

Blest land of Judea! Thrice hallowed of song,
Where the holiest of memories pilgrim-like throng:
In the shade of thy palms, by the shores of thy sea,
On the hills of thy beauty, my heart is with thee.

With the eye of a spirit, I look on thy shore,
Where pilgrim and prophet have lingered before;
With the glide of a spirit, I traverse the sod
Made bright by the steps of the angels of God.

Blue seas of the hills! in my spirit I hear
Thy waters, Gennesaret, chime on my ear;
Where the lowly and just with the people sat down,
And the spray on the dust of his sandals was thrown.

Beyond are Bethulia's mountains of green,
And the desolate hills of the wild Gadarene;
And I pause on the goat crags of Tabor to see
The gleam of thy waters, O dark Galilee!

Hark! a sound in the valley where, swollen and strong,
Thy river, O Kishon, is sweeping along;
Where the Canaanite strove with Jehovah in vain,
And thy torrent grew dark with the blood of the slain.
There, down from his mountain, stern Zebulon came,
And Napthali's stay, with his eyeballs of flame,
And the chariots of Jabin rolled harmlessly on,
For the strength of the Lord was Abinoam's son!

There sleep the still rocks, and the caverns which rang
To the song which the beautiful prophetess sang,
When the princes of Issachar stood by her side,
And the shout of a host in its triumph replied.

Lo, Bethlehem's hill-site before me is seen,
With the mountains around and the valleys between,
There rested the shepherds of Judah, and there
The song of the angels rose sweet on the air.

And Bethany's palm-trees in beauty still throw
Their shadows at noon on the ruins below;
But where are the sisters who hastened to greet
The lowly Redeemer, and sit at his feet?

I tread where the twelve in their wayfaring trod;
I stand where they stood, with the chosen of God –
Where his blessing was heard, and his lessons were taught,
Where the blind were restored and the healing was wrought.

Oh, here with his flock the sad Wanderer came –
These hills He toiled over in grief are the same –
The founts where He drank by the wayside still flow,
And the same airs are blowing which breathed on His brow.

And throned on her hills sits Jerusalem yet,
But with dust on her forehead and chains on her feet;
For the crown of her pride to the mocker hath gone,
And the holy shechinah is dark where it shone.

But wherefore this dream of the earthly abode
Of humanity clothed in the brightness of God?
There my spirit but turned from the outward and dim,
It could gaze, even now, on the presence of Him.

Not in clouds and in terrors, but gentle as when
In love and in meekness He moved among men;

And the voice which breathed peace to the waves of the sea,
In the hush of my spirit would whisper to me!

And what if my feet may not tread where He stood,
Nor my ears hear the dashing of Galilee's flood,
Nor my eyes see the cross which he bowed Him to bear,
Nor my knees press Gethsemane's garden of prayer.

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Yet, loved of the Father, thy spirit is near
To the meek and the lowly and penitent here;
And the voice of thy love is the same even now,
As at Bethany's tomb, or on Olivet's brow.

Oh, the outward hath gone! – but in glory and power,
The spirit surviveth the things of an hour;
Unchanged, undecaying, its Pentecost flame
On the heart's secret altar is burning the same.

– *J. G. Whittier.*
