

PRINCIPLES FOR
CHURCHMEN

A MANUAL OF POSITIVE STATEMENTS
ON SOME SUBJECTS OF CONTROVERSY

WITH AN

*EXPLANATORY INTRODUCTION ON THE PRESSING DANGERS
WHICH BESET THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND*

BY THE RIGHT REV.

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"LIGHT FROM OLD TIMES" ETC.

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IV.

CAN THERE BE MORE UNITY AMONG CHURCHMEN?

THE question which heads this paper is a very hard one to answer, and I scarcely know how to handle it without giving some offence. Scylla is on my right hand, and Charybdis on my left. On the one hand I am afraid of being too narrow, and on the other I am afraid of being too broad. In short, I feel I am entering a path where I cannot walk without treading on somebody's feet, and fingering a knot which perhaps will never be untied. If I come in collision with any cherished opinions, I ask my readers to bear with me, and give me a patient hearing.

One thing I premise at the outset, and a candid statement on the point may save trouble. I mean to stick closely to my subject. I am not going to handle the grand topic of unity among all true believers. What I have in view is more unity among zealous and pious *Churchmen* of different schools of thought.

Let it then be understood that I shall say nothing about unity with Nonconformists. That is not the question of this paper, and I purposely leave it alone today. It is unity among Churchmen—unity in our own camp. Let me add furthermore, that I shall waste no words on the idea of unity with those within our pale, who disclaim all sympathy with Protestantism, who vilify the Reformers, and openly avow their Romish proclivities. We all know that there are many such men among us. That they are often zealous religionists I willingly admit, but that they are genuine Churchmen I flatly deny. I want no unity with such men, unless they will give up their peculiar views. So long as they hold their present opinions, they are in the wrong place inside the Church of England. Our Church no doubt is very comprehensive. In our mother's house are "many mansions." But she certainly cannot accommodate at one time the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope of Rome.

Nor yet shall I waste words on the idea of unity with those unhappy men within our pale, who declare plainly that they wish to do away with all Creeds and Articles, and to make a vague "earnestness" a substitute for faith and sound doctrine. I find no place for unity with such men, however clever and amiable, simply because I know not where to find them. You cannot build on a fog or a quicksand. A house must have a foundation, and a Church must have a creed. The Church, whose peace and well-being I wish to promote today, is not a mere creedless Pantheon, but a body which has a distinct, well-defined, Scriptural theology,— a body which can point to its Articles and Liturgy and say, "*Si quorris fidem, circumspice.*" Unity purchased at the expense of creeds and doctrines is a miserable, cold, worthless unity. I, for one, want none of it.

The unity whose possibilities I desire to consider, and whose increase I want to promote, is unity among "pious and zealous Churchmen,"—Churchmen who, while they occupy different standpoints, are honestly agreed on certain common fundamental principles. They love the Church of England; they love her Articles; they love her Prayer-book. They labour for her prosperity. They do not want her to be un-Protestantized. They do not want her to give up her Confession of Faith. On these points they are at one. There are hundreds of

such men, I am persuaded, at this moment in each of the four great schools of thought,—High, Broad, Evangelical, and No-Party-men,—Godly men, Christ-loving men, converted men, holy men, gifted men, hard-working men, men who have a common belief in the Trinity, the Atonement, and the Inspiration of Scripture; men reading the same Bible and using the same Liturgy,—and yet men sadly estranged and separated from one another. And the one subject to which I propose to confine myself is this: “Can a greater degree of unity be obtained among Churchmen?” Perfect unity, I admit at once, it is vain to expect, and I do not pretend to speak of it. It is eminently an age of free and independent thought. We shall never have perfect unity till we are in heaven. But can we attain more unity than we have now, while we are on earth? I shall open the whole question with two general remarks.

The subject before us is a very *painful one*. We are brought face to face with a melancholy evidence of the fall of man, and its effect on reason and intellect, as well as on heart and will. We see the broad fact that hundreds of Christian men, speaking the same language, members of the same Church, subscribing to the same Articles, believing the same Creeds, reading the same Bible, using the same Prayer-book, are divided into at least four distinct schools of thought, and appear utterly unable to agree. Each school contains scores of learned, gifted, hard-headed, hard-working men. There is no monopoly of these things now in any quarter of the Church, whatever there may have been formerly. And yet we stand aloof from each other, disunited, suspicious, mistrustful, and apparently incapable of arriving at a common understanding. What a lamentable spectacle it is! I pity the man who does not mourn over it, and long to discover some “*irenicon*,” or means of bringing us together. The millennium has evidently not begun yet. We do not yet see eye to eye.

The subject, moreover, is a very *delicate and difficult one*. In treating it I feel like one handling Sevres china, and I dread making a slip and doing harm. Between a narrow spirit and a spirit of compromise it is very hard to avoid mistakes. An excessive zeal for pure doctrine is apt to make us illiberal and uncharitable. An excessive love of unity is apt to blunt our spiritual discernment, until we sacrifice God’s truth on the altar of peace. I hope I shall not err in either direction. Whether I shall succeed in hitting the golden mean remains to be proved.

Now the utmost I can hope to do with such a subject as this,—so painful, so important, so delicate, and so difficult,—is to offer a few suggestions for the private consideration of my readers. Some of them may appear at first sight weak, trivial, and small. Calm reflection, I trust, will show that they are not so. Great reformations are seldom effected “*per saltum*.” The “bit by bit” reformer in the long run is the most useful man. By repeated little bites the mouse gnawed the cable through. Some of my suggestions may appear crude, visionary, and impracticable, and yet some master-hand may shape these rude materials into an excellent work. Such as they are, I will proceed to lay five suggestions before all into whose hands this volume may fall, and I will ask them, like the Speaker of the House of Commons approaching the throne at the opening of a new Parliament, to put the best construction on what I say.

I. My first suggestion is this. If we went to obtain more unity among Churchmen, *we must cultivate the habit of recognizing the grace of God and love to Christ, wherever that grace and love are to be found.*

Admission of this principle lies at the root of my whole subject. That real saving grace in the heart is perfectly compatible with much error in the head, is a matter of fact which no well-informed Christian can ever think of denying. It is a phenomenon which it is hard to explain thoroughly. To what length of false doctrine a man may go and yet be a true child of God, and to what height of orthodoxy a man may attain and yet be inwardly unconverted, are two of the deepest practical mysteries in theology. But the proofs that a Christian may be very wrong in doctrine while thoroughly right in heart, are clear, plain, and unmistakable.

I need not weary my readers with evidence upon a point with which most students of the Bible are familiar. Think of the instance of the apostles before our Lord's crucifixion. Who can fail to see that their knowledge was most imperfect, and their views of Christ's atonement very obscure. Yet they were all good men.—Consider the case of Apollos in the Acts. Here was a man who was "fervent in spirit, and spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord." But he only knew the baptism of John, and needed to be taught the *way* of God more perfectly. Yet he was a good man. There is many an Apollos, I believe, in England.—Look at Martin Luther, and the whole company of his fellow-labourers in Germany. They all held stoutly the unscriptural doctrine of Consubstantiation. Yet they were good men.—Examine the history of our own English Reformers. How dim and indistinct were their perceptions of the Lord's Supper in the days of Henry the Eighth! Yet they were good men.—Ponder well, above all, the records of the Church of Rome. Remember the names of such men as Ferus, Jansenius, Pascal, and Quesnel. They erred on many points, no doubt; yet who will dare to say they were not good men? He that wants to see this point well worked out by a master mind, should study Hooker's first sermon.

Facts such as these demand very serious consideration. They teach a lesson which must not be overlooked. They show us that many Churchmen with whom we now disagree may be real Christians, in spite of all their errors. Their hearts may be right in the sight of God, though their heads are very wrong. However erroneous we may consider their views, we must charitably hope that they are in the way of life and travelling toward heaven, and shall be "saved by the grace of God, even as ourselves." However much we may believe they mar their own usefulness by their imperfect statement of truth, we must not rashly pronounce them godless and graceless, lest we be found condemning those whom God has received. To speak plainly, it never will do to brand people as unconverted heretics, and children of wrath, because they differ from us about the effect of the Sacraments, and the precise nature of inspiration. Firmly as we may cling to our own views of such subjects, we must carefully remember that it is possible to hold the Head and stand on the rock, under a great cloud of error.

The whole state of things may puzzle us. It may puzzle us to understand how some of our brethren can reconcile the hymns they sing with the unsatisfactory sermons they preach. It may puzzle us to understand how men can read the Bible, and pray, and love Christ, and live holy lives, and yet remain in such darkness about the truth. Above all, it may puzzle us to understand how men holding such strange and unsound views can be in the way to heaven, and stand at last at Christ's right hand. Still, for all this, we must steadily school ourselves to hold the principle that this state of things is possible, however in-

explicable, and that it is part of the mysterious economy of grace.

What good will the admission of this principle do to the cause of unity? someone will ask. I answer unhesitatingly, Much every way! It will teach us the habit of *respecting* many Churchmen of other schools of thought, even while we disagree with them. How can we refuse to respect men who are washed in the Saviour's blood, heirs of the same kingdom, travellers in the same road, servants of the same Master, though we may think them terribly mistaken? How can we refuse to respect those whom we admit we shall meet in heaven, and dwell with for evermore? Thank God, there will be no imperfect knowledge there! As good old Berridge said, "God washes all our hearts on earth, and in heaven He will also wash our brains." Surely to have arrived at this stage of feeling is an immense gain. It is not unity itself, I freely grant; but it is one step towards it. To have learned to *respect* our brethren while we differ from them, and to admit that they may be servants of Christ in spite of much obscure and unsound doctrine, is a long day's march in a right direction. In such an intricate and difficult question as this, it is a great thing to get firm hold of a right principle. And, whatever some may please to think, I maintain that the admitted hope of a common heaven at last is a uniting principle, and must insensibly tend to draw men together.

II. My second suggestion is this. If we would obtain more unity among Churchmen, we must *cultivate the habit of speaking charitably and courteously of those who disagree with us.*

I desire to touch this point gently and cautiously. It is debatable ground at any time, and I am not sure that I am a very fit person to give an opinion about it.

Some may think that I am not quite the man to be "*censor morum*" in this matter, and may remind me of the Scriptural proverb, "Physician, heal thyself." Well, I believe I have been an offender in my time, and in the heat of speaking in a controversial age, I have doubtless said sharper and hotter things than I ought to have said,—things for which in calmer moments I have been sorry. I hope, as I grow older, I grow wiser. This, at any rate, is my present deliberate conviction,—that nothing so disunites and divides Churchmen and Churchmen, as the use of uncivil and discourteous language.

Let no one mistake my meaning. To strong and plain language in condemning what we disapprove, I see no objection. It is often the truest charity to speak out, and call things, and even persons, on fit occasions, by their right descriptive names. In a dull, sleepy world, it is positively necessary sometimes to speak strongly and sharply, like the first lieutenant in a ship when a man is overboard, in order to get men's attention. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself spoke of Herod as "that fox." St. Paul told Ananias, the high priest, that he was a "whited wall;" and called Elymas the sorcerer "a child of the devil, and an enemy of all righteousness;" and applied to the Cretans the old proverb, "Always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." It is evident, therefore, that strong language is not always wrong. But we must carefully distinguish between phraseology that is strong, and phraseology that is violent, offensive, and abusive. It is possible to speak very strongly, and yet to be dignified, courteous, and gentlemanlike. But it is surely desirable to avoid expressions which are stinging, irritating, vexatious, and opprobrious. It is written, "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword." We should never scold, nor rail, nor

revile. If we want more unity, we should never forget this.

There is nothing like giving instances and examples, when handling a topic like this. When a hard name is sweepingly and ruthlessly applied to a whole school of Churchmen, which only belongs in reality to a few individuals,—when all Evangelical Churchmen are held up to scorn as Zwinglians,—when all Ritualists are called Jesuits and liars,—when all Broad Churchmen are called Neologians,—when all who hold baptismal regeneration are called Papists, when sweeping language of this kind is indiscriminately used, without remembering St. Jude’s advice, “Of some have compassion, making a difference,”—in my judgment it does great harm. It drives many to an immense distance from our own camp, and creates breaches which perhaps are never healed.

I must plainly say that in this one point I think many of the Reformers greatly erred. They often used terribly hard words in speaking of their adversaries. In this matter let us not be their successors. Unhappily they have been too often imitated. Wesley and Toplady last century wrote positive rubbish about one another, and scolded like Billingsgate fishwomen of a day long past. Let us take care we do not let their mantle fall on us. A good cause need not be supported by violent language, and it is a sign of weakness when men resort to it. It never ought to be said that when a man becomes a decided theologian, he often forgets to be a courteous gentleman. It was one of Coleridge’s best sayings, that “the Christian ought to be the highest style of gentleman.”

I admit it is very hard to draw the right line. There must needs be controversy, and it is very difficult to conduct it in loving and courteous language. “The tongue is a world of iniquity.” Of one thing, however, I am very sure,—the more lovingly we conduct it,—the more likely are we to win opponents to our views. Of course we wish no man to be always complimentary, flattering, smooth-tongued, and carrying butter and honey everywhere in a lordly dish. But we do need to remind ourselves that the Holy Ghost says, “Grievous words stir up anger.” Few men were more faithful to Christ’s truth, and more firm in opposing error, than our honoured Fathers, Bickersteth, Haldane Stewart, and Marsh. Yet few made fewer enemies and more friends. And why? Because they were eminently men of courtesy, charity, and love. People will stand almost anything without taking offence, if they are convinced that you love them. A day is coming when a word spoken in love will outweigh folios of controversial divinity.

The words of Matthew Henry to a young minister are weighty and wise: “Be not censorious. Widen not your differences. Judge charitably of all. Praise that which is good, and make the best of what you dislike. Let us be offensive to none, but obliging to all.” (Life, p. 297.)

None feel more deeply than I do, that it is much more easy to preach all this than to practise it. The love of saying smart things, of having the last word, and of saying all that can be said, is a terrible snare to poor human nature. Well says Charles Bridges: “There is a self-pleasing sarcastic spirit, which would rather lose a friend than miss making a clever stroke.” (Bridges on Proverbs, vol. i. p. 291.) But of no principle in my paper do I feel more confident that it is true than this,—that as a general rule, courtesy in language is a great help to unity.

III. My third suggestion is this. If we would obtain more unity among

Churchmen, *we must cultivate accurate acquaintance with the real opinions and phraseology of other schools.*

The point is one of no mean importance. Ignorance, I firmly believe,—pure ignorance of one another's doctrinal sentiments,—is one great cause of the dissensions among Churchmen. Few Churchmen thoroughly comprehend any views excepting those of their own school. Their conceptions of the views of other schools are often picked up second-hand, and no more like reality than bad caricatures. Just as Nero is said to have clothed the early Christians in the skins of beasts, and then to have baited them with dogs, so we are all apt to attribute to our opponents all manner of strange and monstrous opinions, and then to denounce them as heretics. No wonder there is so little unity among Churchmen, when they understand each other so imperfectly.

The extent of this ignorance is something marvellous and appalling. I frankly own that it is only within the last few years that I have realized its length and breadth and depth and height.

On the one hand, how many High Churchmen have the most absurd conceptions of what is held and taught by an Evangelical clergyman? They imagine he is a kind of disorderly, wild person, who alters the Prayer-book at discretion,—who dislikes baptism,—despises the Lord's Supper,—admires dirty churches,—cares for nothing but preaching,—makes light of the prayers,—prefers Dissenters to Churchmen,—hates Bishops,—disapproves of good works,—and does not see much beauty in the Church of England. Ludicrous as this picture may appear, I am afraid it is a correct account of what many High Churchmen think! I often think that they know no more about the true type of an Evangelical Churchman than a native of Timbuctoo knows about skating and ice-creams, or an Esquimaux knows about grapes, peaches, and nectarines.

On the other hand (for I wish to mete out equal justice), how many Evangelical Churchmen have the most crude and inaccurate ideas about the amount of sound doctrine held by High Churchmen! They fancy that every man who does not pronounce their shibboleths and speak their language must be a Papist. They are frightened out of their wits at the idea of any one holding "baptismal regeneration" and the "real presence," and imagine it impossible he can be a right man.—Yet they forget there are two senses of the word "regeneration" among divines, a high and a low sense, and that some good men, like Bishop Hopkins, have held that *all baptized people are ecclesiastically, though not all spiritually, regenerate*. They forget that there are two meanings attached to the phrase "real presence," and that many teach a real spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, who indignantly repudiate the idea of a corporal, local, material presence in the bread and wine. The late Archbishop Longley said, in his last charge, "The real presence in one sense is the doctrine of the Church of England;"—but he carefully added, "as to a presence elsewhere than *in the heart* of a believer the Church of England is silent." I do not, for my own part, endorse Bishop Hopkins or Dr. Longley. I dislike the expression "real presence," as inseparably connected with Popery and liable to misconstruction. I do not the least understand any "regeneration" except a moral and spiritual one, and can see no warrant for it in Scripture. I only contend that we must make fair allowance for men using the words we use in a very different sense from that in which we use them. If we want more unity, we must not make men offenders for a word.

How this vast cloud of ignorance is to be removed, I do not pretend to say. Most of it, no doubt, arises from want of reading and study. It certainly is not a reading age, except for reading newspapers and periodicals. Only one of all the schools of Churchmen can support a quarterly review. Even the monthly organs languish, and receive very scanty patronage. Many Churchmen work round and round, like a horse in a mill, talking with nobody but those who agree with them, reading nothing but the *Record*, *Rock*, *English Churchman*, *Guardian*, or *Church Times*, or reading nothing at all! In such a state of things it is no marvel if we misunderstand one another and are estranged.

I can only express my own deliberate conviction, that a little more patient study of the books and writings of other schools would open all our eyes and do us good. We should find that some of our controversies were only logomachies, or strifes about words. We should discover the wisdom of that golden maxim in all theological discussions,—“First define your terms.” We should find that, under the surface of much diverse and varying phraseology, there is more substantial agreement among many Churchmen than we suppose. In short, we should discover that accurate knowledge is one great help to more unity.

IV. My fourth suggestion is this. If we want to obtain more unity among Churchmen, we should *cultivate opportunities of meeting men of other schools on neutral ground*.

Prejudice, or unreasoning dislike of others, is probably one of the most mischievous causes of division in the present day. Nothing is more common than to find one Churchman disliking another and speaking against him, without ever having seen his face, heard his voice, or read one line of his writings! To dispel prejudices, the best plan is to get men together, and let them look at each other face to face. They say in the City, that when they want a business matter pushed they seek an interview, and that one interview will do more than a score of letters. I can quite believe it. I suspect if some of us could have a quiet walk or spend a quiet evening in company of some Churchman we now dislike, we should be surprised when we got up next morning to find what a different feeling we had about him. We should say, “I like that man, though I do not agree with him.” Great is the power of the face, the manner, the voice, and the eye. Seeing is believing.

How we are to get opportunities of meeting men of other schools on neutral ground is a point of detail on which every one must judge for himself. But I may be allowed to say that to my mind here lies one use of Congresses and Diocesan Conferences, and one reason why we should attend them. They enable men of different schools to see one another; and if they do nothing else, they help to rub off corners and lessen prejudices.

I will not dwell on this topic, because it is one on which some do not agree with me. I do not particularly like Congresses. I never expect them to do very much for the Church, or to add much to our stock of knowledge. I have attended them purely as a matter of duty. I have advised others to attend them for the same reason. But one good thing, I am convinced, they do. They help Churchmen to understand one another, and in this way they are useful.

Whether those who go to Congresses take much harm by going I do not know. Personally I am not conscious of having imbibed any poison, or caught any theological disease. But whether good is done to the cause of unity by our

going, I feel no doubt at all. I believe some High Churchmen and Broad Churchmen have discovered for the first time that Evangelical Churchmen read and think, and are not always “unlearned and ignorant men.” They have discovered that they love the Church of England from their standpoint as much as any, and that they are not dissenting wolves in sheep’s clothing. They have discovered, not least, that they can talk civilly and courteously and considerately, and that they are not all unmannerly, rude, Johnsonian bears. And all this has come from meeting them face to face on neutral ground. Surely it did good.

I will not dwell further on this point. I will only repeat my firm conviction, that if Churchmen would strive to meet one another on neutral ground more often than they do, it would be a vast help towards more unity.

V. My fifth suggestion is this. If we would obtain more unity with Churchmen of other schools of thought, *we must co-operate with them whenever we can.*

I feel here that I am about to tread on very tender ground, and to handle a question which admits of much being said on both sides. I cannot hope that what I am going to say will be satisfactory to everybody. But I must be allowed to say what I think.

I hold it then to be a plain duty to co-operate with Churchmen of other schools, whenever we are able to do so heartily and honestly. To talk of unity when you can do nothing together, seems foolish and unreasonable. Nevertheless, it is vain to conceal from ourselves that there are limits in this matter. Co-operation with those you differ from is possible up to a certain point. But there is a point at which you must stop, and co-operation seems impossible.

Co-operation for objects of a temporal or semi-temporal kind is clearly a possibility. For the relief of poverty and distress,—for general aid to sufferers from war, pestilence, or famine,—for supporting the maintenance of a Scriptural system of education against a secular system—or maintaining the union of Church and State,—for helping forward the cause of temperance and purity,—for resisting the progress of infidelity,—for promoting measures of Church reform,—for all these ends I see no reason why “zealous and pious Churchmen” of all schools should not heartily work together. I go farther. I think they *ought* to work together. It would smooth down many asperities, narrow breaches, heal wounds, and induce a kind and genial feeling between men. Nothing so unites as real work. I should be ashamed of myself if I would not help to launch a life-boat to rescue shipwrecked sailors, or to work a fire-engine when lives were in peril, because I did not like my fellow-helpers. And I should be ashamed if I refused to assist works of mercy, charity, patriotism, or philanthropy, unless on condition that all who co-operated with me were Churchmen of my own school of thought. Hitherto I can go, and I should think it a plain duty to go so far.

But co-operation for direct spiritual work, for teaching saving religion, for direct dealing with souls, appears to me a rather different matter. Here, I must honestly say, co-operation with Churchmen who differ from you seems open to some objections. It may be my dulness and stupidity that at present I am unable to see the answer to these objections. But it is my deliberate conviction that if High, Broad, and Low Churchmen are sincere, outspoken, hearty, and earnest in their several views, it is not easy for them to work smoothly and

comfortably together in direct dealings with souls.

Can they often preach in one another's pulpits with comfort and profit? That is the best and most practical way of putting the subject. A young, enthusiastic, and unreflecting mind may fancy that they can. I answer, on the contrary, that, as things are at present, they cannot continuously and for any length of time, though they may occasionally. Let us just think. What decided High Churchman would like a decided Evangelical to occupy his pulpit and pour out his soul about regeneration?—And, *vice versa*, what Evangelical clergyman would like a High Churchman to address his congregation, and say all he thought about the sacraments? And where is the preacher, in such a case, whatever might be his desire for unity, who would not feel himself chained, and fettered, and muzzled, and hampered, an unable to speak freely and fully, for fear of giving offence? It is hard enough to preach effectively at any time; but to do it with a mind clogged and cramped is almost impossible. And where is the English congregation that would not feel perplexed and annoyed by hearing conflicting doctrines and arguments to which it was entirely unaccustomed? It is very easy for shallow thinkers, and writers in the daily press, to sneer at the divisions of the English clergy as “divisions trifles,” and to ask us why we cannot all unite in trying to “evangelize” the neglected populations of our large towns? With such men the model incumbent is the man who would have had Dean Stanley, Dean M’Neile and Dean Hook preaching in his church three Sundays successively, merely because they were all “earnest” men! With such men an eloquent sermon is an eloquent sermon, and they do not seem to think it matters one jot what doctrine it contains!—But what do such men mean when they talk of *evangelizing*? What do they suppose an evangelizer ought to say and teach? Why, here is precisely the whole question on which “schools of thought” are diametrically opposed to one another! What one calls evangelizing, another does not. What one would think wholesome milk, another would think rank poison. It is a sorrowful conclusion, but I know not how to avoid it, as things are at present. Co-operation of schools for direct spiritual work at home seems to be extremely difficult, if not impossible. It may come some time, but the Church is not ripe for it yet. Bishops may sigh for it, and newspaper writers may talk glibly of it as the easiest thing in the world; but it is not easy. If preachers of different schools, following each other in one pulpit, were to throw heart and soul into their sermons, the result would be a Babel of confusion,—a diminution, not an increase of unity,—quarrelling and not harmony,—strife and not peace. If we love unity and want more of it, I suspect that at present in direct spiritual work each school of Churchmen must be content to work on alone, and will do most good by working on alone. The acids and alkalis must be kept separate, lest there be effervescences and explosions, and a general blow up. Better days may be in store for us, but they have not come yet.

Some excellent but impractical men, I observe, are very anxious that the various “schools of thought” should co-operate in the work of Foreign Missions. “Surely,” they say, “you might all agree to work together about the poor heathen.” A beautiful theory, no doubt! A very pleasing vision! But I take leave to say that the idea is utterly chimerical and unpractical, and the thing is impossible. It looks very fair at a distance, and sounds very grand in charges and platform speeches. But when you begin to look coolly at it, you find *it will not work*.

How are missions to the heathen to be carried on unless the managing Committees are agreed about the men they ought to send out, and the doctrines those men are to preach? Where is the likelihood of a Board of Missions consisting of High, Low, and Broad Churchmen agreeing harmoniously about points like these? Is it likely that men who cannot agree about curates will agree about missionaries? Can we imagine such a Board getting over its difficulty by resolving to ask no questions of its missionaries, and to send out anybody and everybody who is an "earnest" man? The very idea is monstrous. If there is any minister who must have distinct views of doctrine, it is the missionary. The whole scheme, in my judgment, is preposterous and unworkable. The difficulties of missionary work under any conditions are immense, as all who give their attention to it know well. But I can imagine no scheme so sure to fail as the scheme of uniting all "schools of thought" in a kind of joint-stock Board to carry it on. The certain consequence would be either a helpless feebleness or a scandalous quarrelling, and the whole result a disastrous breakdown of the movement. Co-operation in missions, whatever some may think, is, in my humble judgment, an impossibility. There is no wiser course, if we love peace, than to let each "school" work on in its own way.

The subject is a very humbling one, I grant; but it is useless to ignore facts. Facts are stubborn things; and I trust we are not so wedded to any favourite theory as to dismiss any facts that overthrow it with the sweeping remark, "So much the worse for the facts." The theory of exhibiting the unity of all zealous Churchmen by general and universal co-operation is a beautiful one, no doubt; but it is useless to struggle after impossibilities. There is a gradient beyond which no locomotive engine will work or draw a load; its wheels turn round on the rails, and the train comes to a standstill. We must remember this in our zeal for unity among Churchmen. We must strive to co-operate with one another where we can; but we must not attempt to do it when we cannot, lest we damage our cause.

My suggestions are now ended. Of course, I know not what Churchmen of other schools than my own may think of them. I can only speak from an Evangelical point of view. But it is my firm impression that attention to these five suggestions would produce a much greater amount of unity in the Church of England than there is now. It may be that my ideas are Utopian, and that I am aiming at more than it is right to expect in an evil world, "lying in the wicked one." It may be that God allows these divisions among us, in order to try our patience, make us humble, and teach us to long for Christ's second advent. The apostles Paul and Barnabas could not agree, and parted company. Luther and Zwingle could not agree about the Lord's Supper. Ridley and Hooper could not agree about vestments. Even the English refugees in Queen Mary's days on the Continent, could not agree at the time of the troubles of Frankfort. It may be that nothing will bring Churchmen nearer together except fiery persecution, just as the fire welds iron bars which will never unite when cold. It may be that God is about to break us up altogether, and to prove the failure of all creature machinery. All these things may be. In the meantime, I pray that we may all do what we can to promote more unity among Churchmen. Let us "contend earnestly for the faith," and value truth far more than peace. But let us never forget the text, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. xii. 18).

I shall now conclude my paper with two words of caution. They are, I venture to think, cautions for the times.

(1) For one thing, let us all take care that we do *not underrate the importance of unity* because of the apparent difficulty of obtaining it. This would indeed be a fatal mistake. I consider that the subject is of **PRESSING IMPORTANCE**. Want of unity is one great cause of weakness in the Church of England. It weakens our influence generally with our fellow-countrymen. Our internal disunion is the stock argument against vital unity among the masses. If we were more at one, the world would be more disposed to believe.—It weakens us in the House of Commons. Liberationists parade our divisions before the world, and talk of us as “a house divided against itself.”—It weakens us in the country. Thousands of laymen who are unable to look below the surface of things, are thoroughly perplexed, and cannot understand what it all means.—It weakens us among the rising generation of young men. Scores of them are kept out of the ministry entirely by the existence of such distinct parties amongst us. They see zeal and earnestness side by side with division, and are so puzzled and perplexed by the sight that they turn away to some other profession, instead of taking orders. And all this goes on at a period in the world’s history when closed ranks and united counsels are more than ever needed in the Church of England. Popery and infidelity are combining for another violent assault on Christ’s Gospel, and here we are divided and estranged from one another! Common sense points out that this is a most dangerous state of things. Our want of unity is an evil that imperatively demands attention.

I never felt more convinced than I do now, that the very existence of our Church in a few years may depend on our obtaining more unity among Churchmen. If disestablishment comes (and come it will, many say), the Church of England will infallibly go to pieces, unless the great schools of thought can get together and understand one another more than they do now. “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” A self-governing Church, unchecked by the State, with free and future synodical action, divided as much as ours is now, would most certainly split into sections and perish. To avoid such a consummation as this, for the sake of the world, for the sake of our children, for the sake of our beloved country, in the interest of Christ’s truth, and to prevent the triumph of Popery, Churchmen ought to strain every nerve, deny themselves much, and make every sacrifice except principle.

While we have a little breathing time and a little peace, let us see if we cannot make up our breaches, and build up some of the gaps in our walls. Why should the Assyrian come, and find us hopelessly divided among ourselves? Why should the Roman army approach our walls, and find us wasting our strength in internal contests, like the Jews at Jerusalem, when Titus besieged them? Were Churchmen more united, we might defy our worst enemies. Shoulder to shoulder, like the “thin red line” at Balaclava, which defeated the Russians,—back to back, fighting front and rear at once, like the Forty-Second at Quatre Bras,—we might hope to withstand Pope and Infidel and Liberationist, all combined, and be more than conquerors. But going on as we do now, disunited and divided, and ready to say lazily, “It cannot be helped,” we are weak, and ready to fall. “*Divide et impera*” is a maxim well known to the devil. “The Romans will come and take away our place and nation” (John xi. 48).

(2) For another thing, let us take care that the want of unity among Church-

men does not *tempt us to be content with a negative creed*, under the miserable idea that we cannot tell who is right, and that we wish to belong to no party. I address this caution especially to my younger brethren in the ministry, and I do beseech them, with all my heart and soul and mind and strength, to beware of tumbling into the wretched pitfall of having no decided opinions at all. From being a tame, colourless, timid, hesitating teacher, afraid of anything positive, with no more theological backbone than a jelly-fish, may the Lord deliver you! Pray do not be party-spirited; do not shrink from holding distinct doctrinal views, from the cowardly fear of being called a “party man.” Do not flatter yourself that you cannot help being undecided, and that it is not your fault if you cannot make up your mind about truth. Have you really used all appointed means? Are you sure you have read your New Testament, with special prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit about controverted things? Have you studied your Articles and Creeds, and the history of the English Reformation? Lay to heart these questions. Deal fairly and honestly with your soul.

Believe me, you will never be useful and happy unless you are decided in your views of truth. Usefulness is impossible if you are a prey to habitual indecision. Men will not believe what you say, unless they see by matter and manner that you have made up your own mind. Happiness is equally impossible. Nothing is more miserable than to live in a constant state of mental suspense. Oh, stand not still because Churchmen are divided! For your own soul’s sake, and for the good of others, dare to be decided, and make up your mind.

To each and all who read this paper, I say in conclusion, let us long for unity, pray for unity, work for unity, make many sacrifices for unity with all pious and zealous genuine Churchmen, by whatever name they may be called. But never let our thirst for unity tempt us to desert, to compromise, to hold back, to water down, to shrink from proclaiming, the distinctive doctrines of Christ’s Gospel. The more faithful we are to them, the more good men of other schools will respect us, even while they disagree with our views. Trimmers and compromisers are never respected, and carry no weight with them. John Bunyan’s “Mr. Anything” in the “Holy War” was kicked by both sides. Boldness and honesty are always respected, and especially when they are combined with courtesy and love. Then let us strive so to live, so to preach, so to work, and so to love, that if other Churchmen cannot see with our eyes, they may at any rate *respect* us. Above all, let us never forget to pray in the words of our Liturgy, that “all who profess and call themselves Churchmen, as well as Christians, may hold the faith in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.” Prayer for unity is prayer according to the mind of Christ.