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**BAPTISTS AND
SOME CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

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by
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INTRODUCTION

The contents of this booklet were first presented as an address to ministers at the Pastoral Session of the Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union and Baptist Missionary Society in May 1968. This is a private meeting held under the auspices of the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship, the proceedings of which are not usually reported.

It is now published in response to many requests and with the approval of the Officers of the Fellowship. Such approval does not necessarily commit them to the author's expressed views which are entirely his own responsibility. Nevertheless they express the hope that the themes dealt with, as well as the manner of their development, will stimulate lively and informed discussion on several important issues which are very relevant in the contemporary life of our denomination.

BAPTISTS AND SOME CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

In his book, *God was in Christ*, D. M. Baillie has a very significant chapter which he entitles "The Paradoxes of Faith". There he writes of the supreme paradox of the Incarnation which presents us with the "hypostatic union" and declares that God Himself became incarnate in the Man Christ Jesus. He goes on: "But this is not the only point at which we are beset with paradox in our Christian belief; this is rather the point at which the constant and ubiquitous paradox reaches its peak". In our Christian faith there is a "constant and ubiquitous paradox" which runs through all our understanding of God, the Church and the world. Truth is to be found in Jesus Christ; but it does not always reveal itself to us in the form of a simple proposition. More often than not it comes in a series of tensions between two opposites or in an antinomy of two contradictory and logically incompatible assertions. Dr. Baillie illustrates this by reference to the doctrine of Creation (God created the material universe; but it is "creation out of nothing"); by reference to the doctrine of Providence (the crucifixion of Jesus was the worst thing that has ever happened through the sin of man; it is the best thing that has ever happened in the providence of God); and by reference to what he calls "the paradox of grace" (every good thing in me, every good thing I do, is somehow wrought not by myself but by God).

But he might equally well have illustrated his point in numerous other ways. For example, there is the paradox of election—God has chosen Israel as His Peculiar People and the Christian Church to fulfil that role; but He calls to nations afar off and declares through the sacrifice of His Son that all men will be drawn to Himself. There is the paradox of conversion which calls for the personal response of faith and yet tells me that I am saved utterly and entirely through the finished work of Christ upon the Cross. There is the paradox of Divine revelation which shows the saving of God making Himself known in many and diverse ways, but revealing Himself uniquely in the Person of His only Son. There is the paradox of Scripture which is the sole standard of faith and conduct but which, to be understood, needs to be interpreted by the Holy Spirit within the tradition of God's own people, the Church. There is the paradox of Christian relationship in which my liberty in the Lord is to be exercised within the discipline and pattern of the Church, in which

freedom is ordered by love, in which the free Spirit of God chooses to work through certain forms of ministry and Church discipline.

Truth is to be found in tension, at the intersection of different approaches. As I grow older I find myself more sure of my faith, but less dogmatic in my assertion of it. I no longer see things as clearly as once I did in blacks and whites; but the alternative to this is not the acceptance of a murky grey as once I thought; it is a deeper appreciation of the many-coloured wisdom of God.

Against this background let us consider now three paradoxes of a "domestic" character of which we in the Baptist denomination are very much aware during these days, three tensions, three contradictions, three pairs of irreconcilables which God has brought together and in whose union He is making known His will. They are these: the tension between independency and inter-dependency; the paradox of unity and diversity; and the incompatibility of the faith and its adequate expression in a confessional or credal statement.

I. The first paradox concerns the relationship between *independency and inter-dependency*, and states that *we Baptists are independents who depend on one another*.

The Baptist Union has come in for some very severe criticism in recent days on this score and some wild charges have been levelled against it. Let this be said at once: today as ever we stand by the Declaration of Principle which forms the basis of the Union when it declares that "each church (i.e. each local church) has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to interpret and administer His (i.e. Christ's) laws". This statement has stood since 1873 as an integral part of the Basis of the Union and it holds as valued a place there today as it ever did. But of course it goes much further back even than this, right back indeed to the beginnings of our Baptist witness in the early 17th century. Of interest in this connection is the Confession of the group which followed Thomas Helwys to Holland and returned with him to London in 1612 to found the first Baptist church in this land. There it is affirmed "that though, in respect of Christ, the Church be one, yet it consisteth of diverse particular congregations, even so many as there shall be in the world". The autonomy of the local church is stressed together with the right of its members to appoint their own officers. But how very different this is from what Dr. E. A. Payne has rightly called "the exaggerated independence, self-sufficiency and atomism which have sometimes been favoured of recent days" (*The Fellowship of Believers*, 1954, p. 37). How very different indeed! A Baptist minister, recently

returned from abroad, told me that he had visited his home town where he had been brought up as a boy and in which there are seven Baptist churches. At least four of them are in a parlous condition, barely managing to keep their heads above water, struggling along, making a most ineffective witness in a neighbourhood teeming with life and crying out for the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. The other Baptist churches might as well be in Timbuctoo for all they care. They have no responsibility for what is going on in the other local churches or in other parts of the town. They are independent, autonomous churches and as such are a law unto themselves, and woe betide anyone who tries to make them see differently. This may be an extreme case (although from letters I have received it cannot be said to be altogether rare), but it is a travesty of the Gospel; it is based on an entirely inadequate theology and an utterly false doctrine of the Church.

Such an atomistic view of the Church owes much to the 19th century and has little or nothing to do with our earlier Baptist tradition which stressed the inter-dependence of our local churches on one another, whilst not using that particular word, and stressed that they belonged to one another because they belonged to their common Lord. Indeed, Thomas Helwys's "Confession" reminds us in some ways of P. T. Forsyth's illustration of the outcroppings of rock in a field. A novice will point to this one and that one as separate pieces of rock, but the geologist will remind him that these are simply outcroppings of the *same* rock so that in a sense when he stands on any one of them, he stands on the whole. Similarly, when we take our stand in the local church we can truly say, "This is the Church" and indeed "This is the whole Church"—but only if we recognise that, in the providence of God, the several local churches belong together, not just because they happen to believe the same theology or practise the same rites, but because God in His grace has made them one. Dr. Payne reminds us that the General Baptists, for example, rejected false notions of independency and emphasised their corporate fellowship in the Gospel. He refers to a London church in the 17th century which operated as one unit in the election of Elders and Deacons, although it met in at least seven sections in different parts of the Metropolis. Similarly in Slapton, in Northamptonshire, there was a church whose members met in nine or ten villages round about, presided over by an Elder who lived 15 miles away in Northampton. It is interesting and extremely significant that by reason of the fact that these local fellowships could seldom meet together to transact business or partake of the Lord's Supper the most important symbol of their unity was to be found in their officers, their Elders and Deacons. As ministers of the Gospel, a tremendous responsibility rests on your shoulders in this respect also. You can be the most powerful uniting or divisive force in this

denomination. I would ask you to do nothing which would abuse the trust which the neighbouring churches as well as your own local fellowship have vested in you.

I have referred to the General Baptists, but of course the Particular Baptists were not, in this respect, very far behind. It is perfectly clear that although for them the autonomy of each local church was fully recognised, it was not "a law unto itself". Stress was laid on the value of "Associations" and the need for each local church to be willing to consult with representatives of other local churches meeting in Assembly. Such an assembly had no "church power", we are told; but its moral and spiritual authority was quite considerable. I was brought up with a jolt when I read these words in the recent Report on the Associations: "From the 17th century Baptists cherished the principle of association over against that of independency; they never were Independents, strictly speaking, but were Connectionalist almost by instinct"; and again this quotation from T. Richards' *The Puritan Movement in Wales*: "From the beginning the Baptists were far more inclined to united action than either of the other two denominations", meaning the Presbyterians and the Independents. The words of the great Independent leader, John Owen, referred to by Dr. Payne, are worth quoting here: "The church that confines its duty unto the acts of its own assemblies, cuts itself off from the external communion of the church catholic; nor will it be safe for any man to commit the conduct of his soul to such a church". We shall examine some of the implications of that statement presently on a broader canvas; here we are thinking simply of the churches within our own Baptist communion. No particular form of Church government or Church policy is sacrosanct, but some we believe are truer to the meaning of the Gospel than others. We believe that the form of government and policy worked out over the centuries by our forefathers is part of a precious heritage. Let us be true to it, by all means, without being bound by it. We are independents who depend on one another for the power of our witness and our fellowship in the Gospel. In this paradox lies our strength. By denying one another we deny ourselves and our Lord. The independence of the local church is a precious safeguard of Christian liberties; but without a true inter-dependence, it becomes a sheer travesty of the truth. Authoritarianism leads to coercion and subversion; isolationism leads to dogmatism and licence. Neither is the way of Christ for His Church. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; but liberty is ours for the well-being of the whole family of God. In the resulting tension there is life.

II. The second paradox relates to *diversity in unity* and states that *each individual church has its own inalienable rights but that it belongs to a whole greater than its separate parts*. It is this paradox that Paul recognised when he wrote of many members and one Body. No member must despise or usurp the function of any other, but all must work together for the common good. The metaphor, of course, cannot be pressed too far; but it illustrates the point well that variety in unity belongs to the pattern of God's purpose for his Church. In a sense it is the same problem of "independency and interdependency" writ large, spelt out on a different ecclesiastical plane as it were. But how are we to see it working itself out in the present ecclesiastical context and especially in our own denominational affairs?

Let us look first of all at the broader ecclesiastical scene and in particular at our place within it as Baptists. The Report, *Baptists and Unity*, in a valuable piece of biblical exposition, argues that unity is God's will for His Church and God's gift to His Church and observes rightly that with such a statement few, if any, of our Baptist churches would disagree. This unity is not, moreover, something we create; it is something we receive. The truth of the Gospel is bound up with the wholeness of the Church in its givenness by God. But where we begin to differ is in the form or visible expression which such unity is to assume. There are those who would argue that it requires no visible expression at all; that it is essentially a spiritual concept and that "unity of spirit" is all that is called for. I believe that the biblical doctrine of the Incarnation is a salutary reminder to us that it is the avowed intention of God to make His will visible to men, be it in the gift of His Son or in the gift of His Church. In the New Testament, the Church is described in terms of the Body and not just the Spirit—no less than the very Body of Christ our Lord. And the Body is something visible, something tangible. Christian fellowship means a life of sharing, a life of mutual trust and united witness. The unity which God reveals throughout the cosmos and which He has made known in the incarnation of His Son is to find expression in His Church.

Most Baptists, I imagine, would be prepared to go thus far in their interpretation of this divine mystery. But having gone thus far they come to the real nub of the problem. It is this: how is this unity to express itself? What *is* unity and what form should it take? I say this is the nub of the problem because none of us knows the answer. Indeed, it is this very question that the whole ecumenical dialogue is about and to which no answer has yet been found. One thing at least is clear to me and that is that we Baptists, with our particular and precious insights into the Gospel, must go on striving (together with our fellow-Christians of other persuasions) to know

more perfectly the will of God in this matter. Here let me make two personal observations. First, I think so highly of my Baptist position and believe in it so deeply that I am not afraid to expose it to the winds of ecumenical controversy; and second, I cannot bring myself to believe that Baptists, among all Christians, have alone the whole truth and am eager to examine the truth as others also claim to have received it from God. There are those who may say that this is to compromise my Baptist witness. I refute the charge! There are others who may say that such an exposure is dangerous. I accept the charge! I prefer to live dangerously than to live in isolation from my brothers in Christ.

I have said that none of us knows what form the unity of Christ's Church must take. However, we can hazard a guess and express a hope. Let me simply tabulate three things that, in my mind, must characterise any such great Church where Baptists at least are concerned:

First, it will express itself in diversity, not uniformity. The great monolithic structure typified (however mistakenly) by the Church of Rome, is "out". Nottingham's 1980 must not be an ecclesiastical version of Orwell's "1984". No take-over bid! No "Big Brother", be he in the shape of President, Bishop or Pope!

Secondly, it will be based on conviction, not compromise. In all our ecumenical conversations we must beware of anything that smacks of "political double-talk", of saying one thing and meaning two things which are diametrically opposed. Syncretism in religion inevitably leads to decay and the demise of truth. By all means let us share our spiritual gifts and seek to know the fuller truth of God. But heartfelt conviction must remain the ground of our one-ness in Christ.

Thirdly, it will be built on liberty, not coercion. Fears have been expressed by Baptists in this connection that one of these days they will be "sold down the river". If I know my Baptist people they will not allow this to happen; and if I know my Baptist leaders, they will not think of allowing this to happen. That liberty which is part of our precious heritage is something we can bring as treasure to the one great Church of God.

But let us now turn to look at our relationships with one another within the Baptist Union and try to sketch our situation with one or two affirmations, each of which has the element of paradox or tension about it:

The first thing is that there are few things as divisive as discussions on unity! This does not mean, of course, that such discussions are wrong or are to be avoided at all costs. Rather, it

emphasises all the more the need for complete integrity, a deep humility and an open-heartedness which will engender love and not hate, confidence and not suspicion, trust and not prejudice. I am more than ever convinced that although theological factors are of the greatest significance in such discussions, non-theological factors play a bigger part than we are sometimes prepared to acknowledge. I wish sometimes that we could get rid of the word "ecumenical" altogether and substitute for it a more understandable Anglo-Saxon word or phrase. To many people it has become an emotive word, touching off emotions which inhibit reasoned thought and blur the real issues in question. I would plead that, to whatever wing of the denomination we may belong, we try to be scrupulously fair in all our judgments of our fellow-Baptists who differ from us, and endeavour to judge them, if judge we must, with the mind and heart of Christ.

The second paradoxical affirmation is this: We Baptists are a fellowship of like-minded people who are at the same time a fellowship of un-like-minded people! What a motley crowd we are! Dr. Torbet in his book *The History of the Baptists* lists no fewer than 44 types in the U.S.A. alone—from the Primitive Baptists to the United Baptists (whoever they may be!), from United Free-Will Baptists to Two-seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists! If ever there was an illustration of unity in diversity this is it.

Now, the variations within our own British Baptist scene are much less marked and much less dramatic. Nevertheless they are quite real and considerable—differences of scriptural interpretation, of theological insights, of liturgical interest, of evangelical emphasis and so on. What is more, this is no new phenomenon; it is something that has been with us all through our fairly long history and has to be recognised if we are to be true to our past as well as to our present. Our roots go far back not only to the Calvinistic Particular Baptists but also to the Arminian General Baptists and, indeed, to not a few variations in between. Another factor which must also be taken into account here is the fact that many Church traditions, and none, are represented in our membership and not least in the ranks of the ministry. We have ex-Anglicans, ex-Methodists, ex-Pentecostals, ex-Plymouth Brethren and ex-almost everything else—and thank God for them! But, whether we are imported or home-grown products, do let us recognise that we in fact belong to this diverse fellowship and not simply assume that our particular brand of Baptist is the norm to which all others must conform. I can do no better at this point than quote a fine passage from the 1965 Report of the Baptist Union Council. It reads like this:

"The Council would remind all those who use the name Baptist that it is the glory of the denomination that

there belonged to it in the seventeenth century, John Bunyan (to whom we have good, though not exclusive claims), Roger Williams and Benjamin Keach; in the eighteenth century John Gill, Daniel Turner, Robert Robinson, Andrew Fuller and William Carey; in the nineteenth century, C. H. Spurgeon, Alexander Maclaren and John Clifford; while in the twentieth century Baptist churches have had as members F. B. Meyer, T. R. Glover, Henry Wheeler Robinson, Harry Emerson Fosdick, K. S. Latourette, Billy Graham and Martin Luther King. These men differed widely in their theologies. Let him pause who would draw the boundaries of our fellowship so narrowly that any of these names must be repudiated and banished”.

Surely these are salutary words for us all today. I know that we must not be bound by history but be free to be led by the Holy Spirit, that history is our guide and not our chain; but it behoves us to examine carefully the rock from which we have been hewn and to acknowledge that within our family there are many insights and many gifts. We are nonconformists who reserve the right to differ as well as to agree.

That leads me to my third affirmation which is this: My demand for freedom for myself binds me to grant an equal freedom even to those who differ radically from me. And this applies not only to individuals but to local church fellowships as well. Historically, we have been ready to grant this right (in the words of Thomas Helwys) to “heretics, Turks, Jews or whatsoever”, but we have not always been ready to grant it to our fellow-Baptists within the fellowship of our own denomination. The demand for conformity is a denial of the right of dissent, and Baptists have, from the very beginning, been Dissenters, not in any negative sense but rather in the positive sense of claiming the right of independent judgment under the leading of the Holy Spirit of God.

I can detect two causes of grievance at this point within our Baptist fellowship to which we ought to give the most charitable consideration lest there be any unnecessary and unseemly breach among us. On the one hand there are certain churches of the conservative evangelical kind which feel that they have not sufficient representation in the affairs of the Union and, in particular, have not sufficient liberty to register dissent from decisions taken by the Council in the name of the Union. On the other hand, there are churches of the less conservative kind which object to what they would regard as the imposition of dogmatic affirmations of faith both as a text of orthodoxy and as the ground of fellowship in the Gospel. Every attempt must be made to listen with sympathy to such grievances lest it appear that any church or individual is being

robbed of the right either to dissent or affirm. Meanwhile, I would beg you to discourage every attempt, on the part of ministers and churches alike, to take matters into their own hands by withdrawing from our fellowship without there being first of all the fullest opportunity for Christian conversation and understanding in the Gospel.

III. The third paradox refers to *the faith as once for all given to the people of God and its definition in credal and confessional formulations* and states that *the faith which can be gloriously experienced cannot be adequately expressed.*

Let me again quote from D. M. Baillie:

“The attempt to put our experience of God into theological statements is something like the attempt to draw a map of the world on a flat surface, the page of an atlas. It is impossible to do this without a certain degree of falsification, because the surface of the earth is a spherical surface whose pattern cannot be reproduced accurately upon a plane. And yet the map must be drawn for convenience sake. Therefore an atlas meets the problem by giving us two different maps of the world which can be compared with each other. The one is contained in two circles representing two hemispheres. The other is contained in an oblong (Mercator’s projection). Each is a map of the whole world, and they contradict each other to some extent at every point. Yet they are both needed, and taken together they correct each other So it is with the paradoxes of Faith. They are inevitable, not because the divine reality is self-contradictory, but because when we ‘objectify’ it all our judgments are in some measure falsified, and the higher truth which reconciles them cannot be fully expressed in words, though it is experienced and lived in the ‘I-and-Thou’ relationship of faith towards God”.

Now this statement, I believe, is a good reflection of the historical Baptist position in this whole matter. It states two things which for centuries we have been saying to one another and to our fellow-Christians in other denominations:

First, you cannot give precise definitive formulation to the mystery of the Eternal; you cannot parcel up the faith in neat doctrinal formulae. Baptists claim—and I think rightly—that they have been as true to the great creeds of Christendom as any other branch of the Christian Church; but they refuse to be bound by them as in any way finally authoritative. The creeds of the Church point to the truth; they do not encompass the truth. They are rather like the pole you see on the fairway of a golf course on the top of a rise between the tee and the green. You know that if you aim there,

you will get a pretty good lie for your next shot or even reach the green itself; but there is no guarantee you will hole out in one! As an expression of the truth of the Gospel, the creed is an approximation, not a definitive and binding rule.

Secondly (and following on from what has just been said) the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. I hope you recognise in these words a reference to the Declaration of Principle of the Baptist Union. However paradoxical our expressions of faith may be we cannot, as D. M. Baillie reminds us, fall back on paradox too easily and make this an excuse for not thinking our way through our faith. A credal expression of faith must have a direct connection with the faith itself which it is attempting to express. For this reason it must be subjected to the scrutiny and judgment of Scripture and be true to the revelation which Scripture conveys of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great creeds of the Church, however honoured and hoary, are not to be placed on a par with the Scriptures either as vehicles of revelation or as doctrinal authorities. The Scriptures, with their two acted creeds of Believers' Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are for us authoritative, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in a way that the creeds can never be. With our Baptist forefather, John Robinson, we believe that the Lord has "more light and truth yet to break forth out of His Holy Word".

Now whereas Baptists have eschewed the use of creeds, they have from time to time produced Confessions of Faith which have had a significant rôle to play in our Baptist history. Broadly speaking these Confessions have had a two-fold purpose:

The first is confessional. That is, they give an account of the convictions held at a particular time by churches of a particular order so that (in the words of the 1658 Savoy Declaration) "others, especially the churches of Christ, may judge of us accordingly". They express "the things most surely believed" among a company of people who have already experienced and expressed their oneness of fellowship in Jesus Christ. It is true that as such these Confessions tend to serve also as tests of theological orthodoxy and can become a means of exclusion from the fellowship. But I believe that historically this purpose has been incidental and in a sense accidental and not of the essence of Confessions as Baptists have understood them.

The second purpose is educational. This, of course, was the purpose of, say, the Apostles' Creed which was a baptismal Confession and formed the basis of instruction given to catechumens in preparation for baptism. Such Confessions are of undoubted value for instruction in the Christian faith. I have often felt that in our

Baptist communion we are rather haphazard in our systematic teaching of the faith to our young people, despite all the admirable material available to us for this purpose.

In the light of these things I want now to make several observations on the demand on the part of some among us for a definitive doctrinal statement as the basis of the Baptist Union.

The first relates to the Union's Declaration of Principle and is this: The Declaration of Principle is not a Creed and can be described as a Confession only in a very limited sense. It is in fact what it purports to be and was never intended to be a determinative Statement of Faith. Put quite simply it is the agreed basis on which the constituent members of the Union are able unitedly to carry out the stated purposes of the Union. These purposes, or "objects" as they are called, are clearly set out in Section IV of the Constitution. In so far as the Declaration can be described as a Statement of Faith, it expresses certain fundamental issues about which we are agreed. It is not an exhaustive doctrinal statement and was never intended to be. If we are to criticise it, then let us do so for what it is—a Declaration of Principle—and not for what we think it ought to be.

The second observation is this: If you are demanding a credal or confessional doctrinal basis for the Union, before you go any further, make a very careful study of your Baptist history and try to learn both from the wisdom and the mistakes of the past. In particular acquaint yourself with two things—first the process by which the Declaration of Principle came into being and the reasons for its assuming its present form, and secondly the distressing story of the events which preceded and followed the Down Grade Controversy which left not only C. H. Spurgeon a saddened and broken man. Before we find history repeating itself with dire results for our Christian witness and, I believe, for the well-being of the Gospel, let us be fully aware of our responsibilities and of all the repercussions which will follow.

The third observation is an application of something I have said already. Let me put it in the form of a question: If you insist that the Declaration of Principle be replaced by a specific Doctrinal Statement what is the intention you have in mind? Is it to be a Statement which expresses what this company of people within the Union believe? Or is it to be a Statement which *some* would require *all* to believe? To put it another way, Is what you have in mind a Confessional Statement which would *unite* you with your fellow-Baptists or is it a test of orthodoxy which would inevitably *divide*? My own judgment is that, whereas there may be historical justifi-

cation for the first of these, any attempt to enforce the second would lead only to rupture and division and the shattering of the Baptist Union as we know it today. The Baptist Union, of course, is not sacrosanct; but let us at least be fully aware of the outcome of such action.

The fourth observation is this: Liberty of conscience is part of our priceless heritage which, as I have already said, we have demanded for others and which we have a right to expect for ourselves. We tamper with liberty of conscience only at our great peril. These words from a recent book are relevant here:

“Happiness does not lie in a security gained by anchoring the mind in fixed formulations . . . faith cannot be secured by a policy of suppressing the onward drive of human questioning. To move faith from questioning is to place it outside the sphere of truth and thus destroy it.”
(Charles Davies, *A Question of Conscience*).

It so happens that these words were written by a man brought up in the Roman Catholic religion; they might equally well have been written by a score of our Baptist forefathers whom we honour and cherish as stalwarts of the faith. They state a truth which, I trust, no man will be allowed to take away from us.

My fifth observation is this: There are some among us who are suspicious of the orthodoxy of their brethren and there are others among us who are resentful that their standing in Christ is thus impugned. Suspicion and resentment are poor pillars on which to build the Church of Christ, or, for that matter, the ministry of His Gospel. There is a third party which takes a middle line in all such controversy and is sorely tempted to cry, “A plague on both your houses”; but such a judgment would only make confusion worse confounded. I would plead that we make our own the caption which used to appear under the title-head of the old *Christian World*: “In things essential, unity; in things doubtful, liberty; in all things, charity”. It is just here that such a heavy responsibility rests on the ministers. Division in the ministry means division throughout the whole fellowship; trust and confidence in the ministry makes for an enlivening of the whole.

These days in which we live are far too critical for the members of Christ's Church, for you and me, to begin maligning one another or severing bonds which for so long have bound us together in the fellowship of the Gosepl. For God's sake, for Christ's sake and for the sake of those multitudes in our land who know Him not, let us give ourselves to the work to which we have been called, the work of making known His glorious evangel, that the ends of the earth may know the salvation of God. In this common task we shall find our unity and marvel that He has seen fit to call even us to be ministers of His Gospel.