



Love One Another

Notes of Two Addresses delivered by George Müller at a Conference of Christians at Clifton, October, 1863.

I.

My object in coming here was only to manifest the full sympathy I feel with the purpose of the meeting, without any intention of speaking; but being asked to do so I cannot refrain, for love's sake, from saying a few words.

One point has struck me particularly, as to the Headship of our adorable Lord Jesus. It is the will of that blessed One that His disciples should love one another, and be united together in heart and affection. If it is, then, the will of Him, without whom we must perish eternally, who poured out His soul unto death for our life, and stooped so low that we might share His throne, that we should love one another, and be united as His disciples, does it not become us in love and gratitude to obey?

What are the great hindrances to brotherly love and unity? Self-complacency, high-mindedness, pride, and thinking that we know more than others; but if, by God's grace, we are enabled to subdue these evil tendencies, and to love our fellow-believer, and be united to him, we shall see, perhaps, that if in one thing we have more grace or knowledge than he, yet in four or five, or ten points he has more than we. Who am I that I should despise my brother? What have I that I have not received? If I have more grace (though that is yet to be questioned), I received it from my Lord. If I have more knowledge (though that is yet questionable), am I indebted for it to my own mind? How does it come? It is by the grace of God that I know more than my fellow-believer.

If we are, then, what we are by the grace of God, so that every particle of power over sin, of heavenly-mindedness, of desire to act according to the Holy Scriptures, becomes ours, because it pleased God, in the riches of His grace, thus to bless us, who are we, that we should look down upon a brother, because there are degrees of ignorance or spiritual weakness, in a fellow disciple? Jesus is our head. It is His will that we should love one another. In gratitude to that blessed One, who laid down His life that I might be saved, let me obey; and if I find pride keeps me from it, let me seek grace to subdue it. "We who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." When we meet with a weak brother, as to grace or knowledge, our natural tendency is to say, "Oh, he is a weak one." The carnal mind says, "Put him aside." But the Word of the blessed Lord says, "Bear the infirmities of the weak." If I am strong, let me prove my strength by putting my shoulder to the burden. If I cannot bear with the weakness of my brother it is a plain proof that I am a weak one myself. Why have we received grace? That we may help on our weaker or less instructed brother - that in helping others we may bring glory to God.

I think it may not be unprofitable to refer to one thing in my experience. When I began, thirty-four years ago, as a young servant of Christ, to labour in this country in the Word, having just received certain blessed truths - as the coming of the Lord, etc. - my natural tendency was to look down upon those who did not see them. Thirty-four years have elapsed since then. By God's grace I hold as firmly as ever, and maintain as strongly, those blessed truths; but as to my deportment to other disciples, who do not agree with me in these points, there is a difference now. The mind of the young servant of Christ was to say, "Stand aloof!" - to esteem them as very little instructed. What was the result? Was it peace and joy in the Holy Ghost? Did I imitate Him who bore with the ignorance of His disciples? No; it was anything but imitation of Jesus, and the result was anything but peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. By the help of God I am now, and have been for more than twenty years, of a different mind, without sacrificing one particle of those truths which I received in the year 1829.

My aim now is, to bear with those who may be less instructed; and, in the measure in which I am able to follow the example of my adorable Lord, the result is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. I affectionately and earnestly entreat my dear fellow-believers, especially the young, to ponder this. Pray to be kept from a spirit of high-mindedness. What you have and are, you have and are by the grace of God, and that should lead you to deal tenderly with your fellow disciples.

It is often said, for the sake of peace and union, we should not be very particular as to certain parts of truth; keep them back, and treat them as matters of no moment. I humbly state that I entirely differ from this view; for I do not see that such union is of a real, lasting, or Scriptural character. If it be truth, it is dear to the heart of Jesus - we are instructed in it by the blessed Spirit - it is found in God's book; it is therefore of great value and must be esteemed worthy of being carefully and jealously guarded. We are therefore, not at liberty lightly to esteem, undervalue, keep in the background (much less to give up) the truth, even for the sake of union. We have to buy the truth at any cost, but we ought not to sell it at any price, not even for our liberty or life.

Yet, while we hold fast the truth, *all* the truth which we consider we have been instructed in from the Holy Scriptures, we must ever remember, that it is not the degree of knowledge to which believers have attained which should unite them, but the common spiritual life they have in Jesus that they are purchased by the blood of Jesus; members of the same family; going to the Father's house - soon to be all there: and by reason of the common life they have, brethren should dwell together in unity. It is the will of the Father, and of that blessed One who laid down His life for us, that we should love one another.

But it may be asked, *Is it possible*, that differing in this and that, brethren can be united together? They can. In the three orphan houses and six schools under my direction there are sixty teachers and other helpers. These are found belonging to the Church of England, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists of close communion and open communion, Wesleyans of the Conference and of the Free Church parties and of the so-called "Brethren." All these, though from different bodies of saints, are united together in this one object of labour for Christ. During the many years we have been thus engaged, I have never known a jar to take place because of such difference. This does not arise from a sort of latitudinarianism in myself, but because, while holding firmly my own convictions, I have not required uniformity in these labourers. In engaging my helpers, it is indispensable that they belong to the Head, that they hold fast the blessed Son of God. This settled, I never question as to what denomination they belong to. This is not brought forward boastingly, but to magnify the grace of God.

It is often said that things are stated on the platform which there is no possibility of carrying out in practical life. I maintain there must be a possibility of this loving one another, because it is commanded by God; and especially may the beloved brethren in Christ, who have gathered together these saints before me, be assured that there is a possibility of doing everything that is according to the will of God. It must be possible to do that which God has commanded. And let us not think that it is an extraordinary and high degree of attainment for Christians to walk together in love. The least instructed saints should be found willing to love, though they may not agree on every point. "Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule." On many things we are agreed, and walking thus together, holding in our hearts the headship of Jesus, it is certain we shall make progress; "and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you,"

Don't say of anything, "I shall never understand this." It is entirely a mistake. As to the things of God, despair of nothing. Never make the basis of union an agreement about particular points of truth. If my brethren differ from me, I must not say, "It is a matter of no moment;" neither should I say, "I shall never know this or that truth," which may not as yet have been revealed to me. Let there be more prayer, more study of the Word, more humility, more acting out what we already know; thus shall we be more united together, not only in love, but in one mind and in one judgment. There will be no difference in heaven. There all are of one mind. Let us aim at the heavenly condition. More patience, more faith, will bring us further on in blessing. May God grant it to this assembly for the sake of Jesus!

The two great objects of our salvation are - first, primarily and especially, that God may be glorified and secondly, at the same time, that His children may be conformed to the image of His dear Son, in order to ensure their eternal happiness. They could not possibly be happy even in heaven unless they were thus conformed. The work begins here, and will be completed when we are with the Lord; not till then shall we be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ.

This is the blessed, glorious prospect of all who are believers in the Lord Jesus - that there is a day coming when, their will being swallowed up in the will of God, and having no will of their own, God will only have to present His blessed will to them, and instantly, in their inmost souls, they will respond. For this have we been apprehended by God in Christ Jesus. It is not only true that we shall be perfectly free from pain, sickness, and this corruptible body, and have a glorified body; but also that the day is coming when we shall be perfectly like Jesus in holiness, when we shall have no mind of our own, when the will of God will only need to be presented to us and at once we shall act accordingly.

God is the Author of salvation, and this salvation is to be obtained entirely in the way of grace. Men cannot, in the least degree, help God in obtaining it. Salvation is entirely from God, bestowed in the way of grace through Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, whom He wounded, bruised, and punished in our room and stead. Jesus, having given Himself to be our substitute, was punished for us. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." And all that is required of us is to accept or believe in Him to accept the salvation which He gives us freely. If, therefore, anyone feeling himself a sinner, asks, "How shall I get this precious salvation?" the Word of God replies, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (that is, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ), "and thou shalt be saved." We must give no other answer than the Apostle Paul gave to the Philippian jailor.

I would say to my dear fellow-sinner, Trust in - depend on - receive what Jesus has procured for thee; if thou wilt leave thine own merits and goodness, and trust entirely in Christ, this very moment thou shalt receive forgiveness of sins. The faith in Jesus which obtains forgiveness, brings thee nigh to God, removes the enmity which existed between thee and God, and gives peace to thy soul. The primary object of salvation-the glory of God - is accomplished in every sinner thus saved.

Then as to the saved one. Being apprehended of God in Christ Jesus, thou wilt ultimately be conformed to the image of Christ, and be perfectly happy and holy. Especially will this holiness be shown in the perfection of thy love. God is love, and thou wilt be made perfect in love. This leads to a word of practical application as to our present meeting. While we are not yet in heaven, we are not yet conformed to the image of God's dear Son - we are not perfect in love now. But this perfect love is to be aimed at and sought after. We are assembled now in order that our hearts may be drawn together in love.

Though not yet perfect in love, we are to aim after that for which we have been apprehended of God in Christ Jesus. We ought to love one another in spite of the weaknesses and infirmities we see in one another. My brethren have their infirmities, I have my infirmities; God knows them all, and He only can estimate which are the greater. That is not a question for us. Believing in Jesus, we have one common life; the precious blood of Jesus has purchased us; we are the children of God by faith as assuredly as we trust in Him for salvation. As children, then, of the same Father, as brothers and sisters of the same heavenly family, notwithstanding our weaknesses, we ought to love one another, and bear with each other's infirmities. With any who live in sin, or who, though professing to be disciples of Christ, renounce the foundations of our most holy faith, there can be no fellowship. Loyalty to our Lord will compel us to stand aloof from such, painful though it be. But all true disciples we are bound, in loyalty to our Head, to love as such, and to bear with their infirmities and weaknesses.

If I see a little more clearly concerning this or that part of God's truth than my brother does, is that any reason why I should stand aloof from him? If I have been better instructed, I am to use this knowledge, not

to exalt myself, not to praise myself, but for my fellow-disciple, and to instruct him in a kind and loving way. And if that brother will not receive my instruction, still I am not to stand aloof from him, but to pray for him, and still to bear with my brother for the sake of Him who bears with my infirmities. Am I myself fully instructed? No! There is a day coming when I shall know even as I am known. But that day is not yet. If I have a little more knowledge than my fellow-disciple, still I know only in part, and I am what I am by the grace of God; and that very superiority of knowledge is given (if I have it, - I may be mistaken in supposing I have more) that I may use it for the benefit of my less-instructed and weaker brother. If I have strength, let me prove it by putting my shoulder beneath the burden.

The strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak, and if I am unable to do that, it is a plain proof that I am a weak one myself, and have no ground to complain of the weaknesses of my brethren. All, to a greater or less degree, are weak as yet, uninstructed as yet; none have room for boasting. We are all debtors to the grace of God, and should, therefore, praise more abundantly, and walk more humbly, and seek more fully to bear one another's burdens. But a little while, and the blessed Jesus will come again, that where He is we may be also. In the meantime, let us love one another. Love is of God. God is love; and he who loves most is most like God. All the members of the heavenly family should remember the precious blood that bought them and love one another whilst on the way to their Father's house.



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