

From Christ, as the head and spring of union, there proceedeth unto all particular churches a bond of union, which is his Holy Spirit, acting itself in them by faith and love, in and by the ways and means and for the ends of his appointment.

This is the kingly, royal, beautiful union of the church: Christ, as the only head of influence and rule, bringing it into a relation unto himself as his body, communicating of his Spirit unto it, governing it by the law of his word, enabling it unto all the duties of faith, love, and holiness.

For unto the completing of this union on the part of the church, these things are required:—(1.) Faith in him, or holding him as the head, in the sincere belief of all things concerning his person, office, and doctrine in the gospel, with whatever belongs thereunto; (2.) Love unto him and all that is his; (3.) That especial holiness whose foundation is repentance and effectual vocation; (4.) The observance of his commands as unto all duties of divine worship. These things are essentially requisite unto this union on the part of the church. The reality and power of them is the internal form of the church, and the profession of them is its external form.

2. There concurrcth hereunto an *union among themselves*, I mean all particular churches throughout the world, in whom the church catholic doth act its power and duty. And the relation that is between these churches is that which is termed “*relatio æquiparentiæ*,” wherein neither of the “*relata*” is the first foundation of it, but they are equal. It doth not arise from the subordination of one unto another, they being all equal as unto what concerns their essence and power. And the bond hereof is that especial love which Christ requireth among all his disciples, acting itself unto all the ends of the edification of the whole body.

Take in the whole, and the union of churches consists in their relation unto God as their Father, and unto Christ as their only immediate head of influence and rule, with a participation of the same Spirit in the same faith and doctrine of truth, the same kind of holiness, the same duties of divine worship, especially the same mysteries of baptism and the supper, the observance of the same rules or commands of Christ in all church-order, with mutual love, effectual unto all the ends of their being and constitution, or the edification of the church catholic.

There may be failures in them or some of them, as unto sundry of these things; there may be differences among them about them, arising from the infirmities, ignorance, and prejudices of them of whom they do consist, the best knowing here but in part; but whilst the substance of them is preserved, the union of all churches, and so of the catholic church, is preserved.

This is that blessed oneness which the Lord Christ prayed for so