

**CHRISTIAN UNION; ITS NECESSITY, THE  
GROUNDS ON WHICH IT MAY BE HOPED  
FOR, AND THE OBSTACLES TO  
ITS ATTAINMENT, CONSIDERED IN SIX  
SERMONS, ST. GERMAN'S CHAPEL,  
BLACKHEATH, DURING LENT, 1852**

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Christian Union; Its Necessity, the Grounds on Which It May Be Hoped for, and the Obstacles to Its Attainment, Considered in Six Sermons, St. German's Chapel, Blackheath, during Lent, 1852 by John Paul

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**JOHN PAUL**

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CHRISTIAN UNION;  
ITS NECESSITY,  
THE GROUNDS ON WHICH IT MAY BE HOPED FOR,  
AND THE  
OBSTACLES TO ITS ATTAINMENT,  
WITH A  
GENERAL REVIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH,  
CONSIDERED IN  
SIX SERMONS,  
PREACHED AT  
St. German's Chapel, Blackheath,  
DURING LENT, 1852,  
BY  
THE REV. JOHN PAUL, B. A.  
MINISTER OF THAT CHAPEL.



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LONDON:  
FRANCIS & JOHN RIVINGTON,  
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE.  
1852.

*100. v. 129.*

TO THE  
Congregation of St. German's Chapel, Blackheath,  
THESE SERMONS  
PREACHED IN ST. GERMAN'S CHAPEL,  
WITH THE DESIGN OF  
CALLING ATTENTION TO THE EVILS OF DISCORD,  
AND THE MEANS OF  
ATTAINING TO UNION AMONG CHRISTIANS,  
ARE INSCRIBED,  
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF AFFECTION  
AND ESTEEM,  
BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE MINISTER,

JOHN PAUL.

BURNT ASH, LEE,  
*Easter, 1862.*

O GOD, *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in, by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union, and concord: that as there is but one body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.*

THE NECESSITY OF  
CHRISTIAN UNION.

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SERMON I.

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*St. John, xvii. 20 21.*

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

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WE are once more permitted by our merciful and long-suffering God to enter upon the solemn season of Lent. We are again summoned to prepare our hearts, by deep repentance, earnest prayer, and the mortification of our earthly members, for the more close survey of those awe-inspiring and soul up-raising scenes, which the cross of Calvary, the grave of the rich, and the vanquished bonds of death, exhibit. Close and candid self-examination is now required of us. The habits of our souls are to be brought under review; a search into our own consciences is to be instituted; and “that not lightly and after the manner of dissemblers with God,” but so that we may prove our own selves; and “whereinsoever we shall perceive ourselves to have



offended either by will, word, or deed, there to bewail our sinfulness, and to confess ourselves to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life." The exercises of Lent take cognizance of the whole duty of man, and whatever, therefore, is calculated to promote our spiritual welfare, affords a fit subject for our public meditations at this season.

It has been our custom in past years to restrict our reflections, during Lent, to some one particular phase of the Christian life, and, regarding the divisions which vex the Church of Christ as a fruit of sin, we propose, with the Divine permission, now to enquire, whether it be possible to remedy our distracted condition, and to promote union among Christians. The advantage to be derived from submitting an enquiry of such magnitude to an individual assembly, may, perhaps, be open to question, but the knowledge that the prayers of two or three are not disregarded by our merciful Father, inspires confidence. Trusting to the promise, that if we ask we shall receive, if we seek we shall find, any diffidence as to the expediency of our design resolves itself into a want of faith. With these preliminary remarks we announce a series of discourses on Christian union in the following order:—*The necessity for union among Christians; The general grounds on which it might be attained; Principles, not degree, its basis; The Rule of Faith; The present condition of the various branches of the Catholic Church; and lastly, The Enemies of Peace.*

Brethren, on the threshold of this most important investigation, let us for a moment pause, and entreat the Holy Spirit to "pour into our hearts, that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace, and of all virtue, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before" our Lord and God; seeing that thus alone shall we be animated to "follow peace with all men."

Were the subject of Union among Christians proposed to a body of unbelievers, a calm and unprejudiced hearing could scarce be expected. Each one of the auditory would be predisposed to apply the epithets, visionary, utopian, impracticable. It would be said that the history of all ages teems with religious controversy; that the freedom of mind, necessary for energy, opposes an insurmountable barrier to its removal; that it would be as feasible to make all men of similar features, or of similar habits of body, as to render them unanimous in the reception of certain religious tenets; that such a result could only be achieved, by the universal enslavement of the intellect. With these, and other similar objections, the advocate of Union among Christians must expect to be met, if he addressed an assembly of unbelievers; nor is the fear to be slighted, that even a congregation of Christian men may be in some degree affected by the same doubts.

What ground of confidence then do we possess, sufficiently firm, to warrant our facing these difficulties?

what is the foundation, whereon our hopes may be built? We have one immoveable foundation, one certain ground of confidence, and one, moreover, which every Christian man must acknowledge to be firm as a rock: it is this; Our adorable Lord and Saviour prayed for the unity of his people. "I pray \* \* \* that they all may be one; as thou Father art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." Here is our bulwark of strength, our tower of hope. *What my Saviour prayed for, I dare pray for; what I dare pray for, I dare hope for.* As an opponent to this consolatory truth what becomes of the vaunted experience of all ages? Where shall the terms visionary, utopian, impracticable, find employment? Where is the impossibility of harmonizing the discordant tones of the human mind? "With God all things are possible." Is not the soul of man in His power? Is not its every inlet open to His influence? Are not its thoughts to be directed by His will? What then shall resist that will? What obstacles shall be insuperable to it? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Do you still adhere to your doubts? Christian man, will you distrust the sovereign power of God? Did we stay ourselves on an arm of flesh, then indeed might we despair of seeing that accomplished, which, to the wisest, appears a most difficult task; but "we walk by faith, not by sight;" we endure "as seeing Him who is invisible;" and can we raise our eyes to the throne of glory, where Jesus sitteth