

Unity

Liz Robinson

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments” (Ps. 133:1,2).

IT IS DEEPLY saddening to think how, out of our community, splinter groups have been formed over the years by brothers and sisters who have felt that they can no longer break bread with others in their meeting, occasionally over something apparently trivial: old differences which cannot seem to be settled by commonsense consensus.

God hates *division*, doesn’t He? And how it must grieve Him to see His children, the jewels of His peculiar treasure, falling out, and turning their backs on their fellow-saints! That must be why the Lord Jesus Christ named *peace-makers* among the ranks of his blessed ones. Those who bring together warring parties; those who heal rifts, pouring oil on troubled waters; those whose presence in the ecclesia makes for *harmony*—such have a special place in the heart of the one who walks among the candlesticks and observes all we do.

Acts of love

Love is the answer—for if we truly love our brethren we cannot sustain a quarrel, compound a hurt, repeat a slander, or shun our fellow member for whom Christ died. Love for the Father should prevent us dealing with one another with anything else but love and compassion. We should always aspire to do good, not harm, especially to those of the household of faith. A gentle word, a touch on the arm, an attitude of unfeigned sympathy and receptiveness, those kindly acts of love—sacrifices with which God is well-pleased—if we have the power and resources to help and comfort one another, let us not shut up the bowels of our mercies.

The ointment

The selfless devotion of the woman with the ointment was commended in the Gospels as a memorial forever, and the house was filled with the sweet odour (Jno. 12:3).

Our efforts at unifying the ecclesia, be they ever so modest, are like that precious ointment

of Psalm 133, which not only anointed the head, but flowed down Aaron’s beard and all his garments to the hem of his skirts, bringing sweetness and fellowship and peace. Its rich compounds, redolent with myrrh, would have suffused the stones of the

breastplate, costly jewels representing the twelve tribes of the children of Israel—all of our names borne next to the heart of our faithful High Priest in the heavens above.

Boards of the tabernacle

So let us try to rejoice in our diversities, even as we stress our togetherness, never letting any differing opinions or personalities drive a wedge between any of us. Agree with your adversary quickly, bite your tongue before it does any damage, pour in oil and wine as the Good Samaritan did. Think how all the boards of the tabernacle were *coupled together* with silver sockets—the Hebrew word for “coupled” is the same as ‘has fellowship together’—and this is the “compact together” of Zion described in Psalm 122.

Coming together

So let us come together, in heart and mind, at every opportunity; pray together, laugh together, weep together, constantly reminding ourselves of what should be binding us together indissolubly. Let us reach out in pity to any who may have left the fold, or through human weakness do not attend the meetings as they should, those for whom the Bishop of our souls never fails to keep searching. We know we have to pray for the peace of Jerusalem; let us also petition the Father for unity within the Brotherhood, in our own meeting and in others. Be of the same mind one toward another, giving place to wrath. Let all that we do be done in love (1 Cor. 16:14, RV). Let us all be ‘singing from the same hymn sheet’ when our Master comes at the appointed time. Remember, he loves us *all*—every last, little, feeble member of his body; that there should be no schism in that body, but that the members should have the same care one for another (12:25). The Creator in His wisdom has tempered this body of ours together—and what God has joined, *let not man put asunder*.