

ORTHODOX THEOLOGY AND THE HYMNS OF CHARLES WESLEY.

The subject about which I am to talk this evening is still very much under researched. In terms of general Nicene orthodoxy, common to both east and west, there can be no doubt that both the Wesley brothers were devoted champions of orthodox christology and trinitarian doctrine, a matter that can be well exemplified from Charles' hymns. When we come to the question of their relationship to the developing theological tradition of the Orthodox East, we are on much less certain ground. The reverence of the brothers for the church of the first few centuries, a reverence that was perhaps even greater for their piety and discipleship than for their theological achievement per se, can certainly be well documented. They were certainly acquainted with the works of many of the earliest fathers including Ephrem Syrus and the Cappadocian fathers. How much, if anything, they knew of later Byzantine fathers such as Maximus the Confessor or St Symeon the New Theologian, with whose passionately lyrical hymnody the hymns of Charles have sometimes been compared, is uncertain. We do know that John had occasional contacts with Orthodox, most notably the mysterious Bishop Erasmus. Charles was not as given as John to indefatigable fossicking amongst obscure tracts; moreover, he lived a more settled life and never displayed the restless adaptability of mind of his brother. What is remarkable are the parallels that can be discerned between his hymnody, particularly his hymns on the Incarnation and some of the themes of the later fathers and the Byzantine liturgies. I am inclined to find in them an impressive testimony to the way in which the Holy Spirit maintains us in the central truths of the Gospel despite the sin of our divisions and the distortions that can arise when sections of the Church are separated from each other and no longer acquire through mutual reception a more fully integrated and balanced appreciation of the fullness of the Apostolic Tradition. I think that the late Fr. Staniloae would endorse such an understanding. In his ecclesiology, he argues that to the extent that other 'confessions' maintain elements of the true tradition, they also participate in the life of the one true church since Christ cannot have more than one body. Methodists, of course, have no such difficulties. We certainly 'claim and cherish our place within the Holy Catholic Church', but we do not claim to be the whole of it and have no difficulty in acknowledging that many sister churches have also maintained the fundamentals of the apostolic tradition.

Charles Wesley was the most prolific hymn writer in the history of the Western Church (I stress western because I'm not sure how his output compares with that of St Symeon). The classic Victorian collection of the hymns numbers about 6,000, published over a period of more than fifty years in a variety of separate collections. Today, the estimate is nearer 9,000 since other hymns, not known to the Victorian compilers, have been discovered in a variety of obscure sources. One very beautiful eucharistic hymn was discovered by the Methodist liturgist, Neil Dixon, and subsequently incorporated in the current official British Methodist hymnal, Hymns and Psalms.

Wesley's hymns are as impressive in their sheer range as they are in their number. He wrote for all the major Christian festivals and described all the stages of Christian experience. He wrote versifications of a very large proportion of the Bible. A series of hymns, published in 1767, outline and defend the doctrine of the Trinity. CW's hymns are both chastely orthodox and yet passionately experiential and lyrical, the latter quality distinguishing them from the staid products of Isaac Watts and the great Anglican hymn writers. They define the authentically Methodist typology of Christianity, simultaneously true to the Apostolic Tradition and yet an enrichment of it, a gift to the Universal Church. A feature common to Methodism and Orthodoxy is the liturgical way of doing theology. It is no accident that two of the

greatest liturgical theologians of recent years have been, respectively, a Methodist, Geoffrey Wainwright and an Orthodox, the late Fr. Alexander Schmemmann. It comes easily to Methodists and Orthodox to illustrate and defend their theological points by quotations from liturgical or hymnodic texts, the practice sometimes surprising Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Reformed, who have been known to express surprise that Methodists so often quote hymns, above all those of CW. The point is that both churches take seriously the ancient maxim, *lex orandi, lex credendi*. They sing their theology which is also their living and present experience of the Christian faith.

I said just now that the subject of this talk is under-researched. I have to be honest and say that I am not seriously research active in this field and there will certainly be nothing new in this talk to those of you who have any acquaintance with the work of those few scholars who have given attention to the matter. Foremost among them are Canon Donald Allchin, a great friend both to Orthodox and to Methodists, the Methodist free lance scholar, Brian Frost and a distinguished informal dialogue group originating from a recent joint initiative of St Valdimir's seminary in New York and some members of the United Methodist Church. Allchin edited an interesting Anglican-Orthodox-Methodist symposium, *We Belong to one Another*, published by Epworth in 1965 and including an essay by Brian Frost on the idea of fullness in the hymns of Charles Wesley. Frost followed up this essay in 1984 with a brief book entitled *Living in Tension between East and West*, in which he examined more generally the theological and spiritual affinities between the Methodist and Orthodox traditions. Finally, in 2002, S.T. Kimbrough, Jr. edited *Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality*, containing no less than six essays, by both Orthodox and Methodists, that major on Charles' hymnody. Kennerh Carveley makes a detailed comparison between the theological thought of St Maximus the Confessor on the renewal of all things and the writings of both John and Charles Wesley. ST Kimbrough examines the understanding of kenosis in the hymns of CW and St Ephraim on the Incarnation. Perhaps, surprisingly, there is no detailed study of the relationship between the lyrically passionate hymnody of St Symeon the New Theologian and that of Charles Wesley.

That St Symeon deserves serious study by both Orthodox and Methodist scholars within the context of the common ecumenical quest, there can be no doubt. Like Wesley, he is passionately lyrical. Like Wesley, he glories in an intimate relationship with his Creator, whom, again like Wesley, he calls friend, while not allowing this to diminish one whit his sense of awe at the divine immensity. Rather, both are awed at the prodigal love that allows the Almighty to transcend the immense gap between divine self-existence and sinful creature. There is the same wonder, why such love to me? Let us listen to them in turn. First Wesley,

Thy sovereign grace to all extends
Immense and unconfined;
From age to age it never ends:
It reaches all mankind.

Throughout the world its breadth is known,
Wide as infinity:
So wide it never passed by one,
Or it had passed by me.

My trespass was grown up to heaven:
But far above the skies,

In Christ abundantly forgiven,
I see thy mercies rise.

Now for Symeon.

What is your boundless mercy, Saviour?
How have you deigned to make me a member of your body,
Me the impure, the prodigal, the prostitute?

Or let us consider hymn no 22.

What is this new mystery, Master of the Universe,
That you have manifested in my regard the debauched and the impure?

In both hymns, Symeon goes on to talk of the amazing grace that clothes him in light and immortality, of the gentleness and patience of Christ, his language bearing resemblances to Wesley's extolling of 'thou patient God of love' and his recollection of recovery from past lapses and falls reminding us of Charles Wesley's.

Jesus thou hast to hoary hairs
My manners and my burdens borne,
Carried me through ten thousand snares,
And when I would to sin return,
With a high hand and outstretched arm
Redeemed me from the mortal harm.

It is interesting to note that both have a hymn largely based on the parable of the prodigal son, Symeon concentrating more on the experience of the reconciled prodigal, CW more on his inspired interpretation of the Good Samaritan as Christ himself. In Hymn 46, Symeon relates the prodigal's experience

I have travelled far, O lover of mankind.
I have lived in the desert,
Hiding from you, my sweet master.
I have been brought to this state by the night of life's cares,
Where I have suffered many bites and wounds,
Where I get up bearing many wounds in my soul
And I cry in my pain and my suffering of heart:
Have mercy on me and show pity on me, the transgressor!

Note, incidentally the use of the emotive word 'sweet', another parallel with CW of which big brother John disapproved, changing for example 'dear' to 'great at the beginning of the hymn, 'O for a thousand tongues to sing'

CW speaks lyrically of the saving intervention in the mortally wounded traveller's life.

Still thou journeyest where I am,
Still Thy compassions move;
Pity is with Thee the same,
And all Thy heart is love:

Stop to a poor sinner, stoop,
And let Thy healing grace abound,
Heal my bruises and bind up
My spirit's every wound.

Saviour of my soul draw nigh,
In mercy haste to me,
At the point of death I lie,
And cannot come to thee;
Now thy kind relief afford,
The wine and oil of grace pour in;
Good physician, speak the word,
And heal my soul from sin.

In both, there is the same intense devotion to Christ. One can compare hymn 39 of St Symeon, 'your beauty is extraordinary' with Charles Wesley's 'Join all the glorious names'. Symeon starts thus,

Your beauty is extraordinary
Your appearance is without comparison.
Your magnificence is inexpressible.
Your glory is beyond human language.
Your goodness and gentleness are constant, O Master Christ,
surpassing the thought of all earthly beings'

Wesley responds

Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love and power
That ever mortals knew,
That angels ever bore:
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set the Saviour forth.

The imagery of the two poets differs enormously as is natural considering the enormous difference between the culture of tenth century Byzantium and that of eighteenth century England, but there is no mistaking the common devotion to the unsearchable riches of Christ. Both men are lost in that wonder; love and praise of which CW speaks in one of his very greatest hymns.

Parallels can be found not just between Charles Wesley and individual Orthodox theologians and hymn writers but also between CW's hymns and the Orthodox liturgy. This is especially true of the hymns on the Incarnation to which I now turn since it is in them that the parallels are particularly striking. In both there is a sense of the sheer wonder and paradox of the Incarnation. Let us begin with Wesley, who talks of

Our God contracted to a span
Incomprehensibly made man

And goes on to assert the mind bending, unimaginable wonder of this

Unsearchable the love
That has the Saviour brought:
The grace is far above
Or man or angel's thought:
Suffice for us that God we know
Our God is manifest below.

Compare this with the liturgy for vespers on Christmas Day

'A marvellous new wonder has this day come to pass.
Nature is made new and God becomes man.
That which he was he has remained;
And that which he was not He has taken upon Himself
While suffering neither confusion nor division.

How shall I tell this great mystery?
He who is without flesh becomes incarnate:
The Word puts on a body;
The invisible is seen:
He whom no hand can touch is handled:
And he who has no beginning begins to be.
The Son of God becomes the Son of man:
Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for evermore.

Reading or hearing this will bring to Methodist minds such Wesley lines as

Emptied of His majesty,
Of his dazzling glories shorn,
Beings source begins to be,
And God Himself is born.

In both traditions the paradox of the divine self-emptying as the supreme revelation of the divine nature and love is affirmed. In a well-known hymn, not specifically one of the hymns on the Incarnation, Wesley asserts what the mealy mouthed translators of the AV could not bring themselves to do, the stark Pauline statement in Philippians, that Christ

Emptied Himself of all but love.

Also in his hymns on the Cross, Wesley makes the same emphasis, as for example in this final verse of 'God of unexampled grace'

Never love nor sorrow was
Like that my Saviour showed:
See Him stretched on yonder Cross
And crushed beneath our load!
Now discern the Deity,
Now his heavenly birth declare!
Faith cries out: 'Tis He 'tis He
My God, that suffers there!

The Orthodox liturgy has a similar emphasis, ‘He whom no hand can touch is handled...he who stretched out the heaven is like a curtain is stretched upon the Cross’, though is not perhaps quite the same emphasis upon the revelatory nature of this discernment as there is in Charles Wesley.

Charles Wesley emphasises both the paradox and its salvific significance. Thus, eg.

Our God ever blest
With the oxen doth rest.
Is nursed by His creature and hangs at her breast.

He follows this with the three liner

These infant hands
Shall burst our bands
And work out our salvation’.

All this is contemplated in rapturous amazement

Stand amazed ye heavens at this!
See the Lord of earth and skies,
Humbled to the dust He is
And in a manger lies.

Another emphasis of Charles Wesley’s, which closely parallels the thought of St Maximus the Confessor, is of God’s delight in the incarnation. St Maximus the Confessor tells us that God loved his creation so much that he passionately willed his own embodiment within it. This stress is paralleled by Charles Wesley’s in the most well known of all his hymns on the Incarnation, ‘Hark, the herald angels sing’, in the climax of the second verse,

Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus our Immanuel.

This sense of God’s good pleasure in dealing with all His creatures, including even his sinful and disobedient human creatures, suffuses much of Charles W’s hymnody. We meet it again in the Covenant hymn,

And if thou art well pleased to hear,
Come down and meet us now’.

In this hymn, the good pleasure of the Father in his divine Son is extended to all those who are to become sons and daughters by adoption in the Son.. The Incarnation itself points us towards this truth, aptly summed up in these lines

Glory be to God on high,
And peace on earth descend:
God comes down, He bows the sky
And shows himself our friend.

The third line refers to Psalm 144, v. 5 with its prayer, 'Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountains and they shall smoke'. It is an OT expectation of God coming in great power and visible majesty, so different from the actual, but infinitely more amazing act of the Incarnation in which the Godhead is paradoxically both veiled and yet more fully than ever revealed. The most amazing aspect of this is that God chooses to show himself our friend', an assertion that can be justified biblically from Jesus' own statement to the disciples, 'I call you servants no longer. I call you friends because I have shared with you everything that I have heard from my Father'. In a recent symposium on Wesley's hymns, we find this reflection, 'Friends are partners, they share love, they share joy and tears. This is a picture of God with possibilities that most of us have hardly begun to explore'.

St Ephrem complements many of these emphases that we see in Charles Wesley. Thus, he sings

The Lofty one became like a little child, yet hidden in Him was
A treasure of wisdom that suffices for all.
He was lofty but he sucked Mary's milk,
And from His blessings all creation sucks

He continues

If anyone seeks your heavenly nature,
Behold it is in heaven in the great womb
Of Divinity. And if anyone seeks
Your revealed body, behold it rests and looks out
From the small womb of Mary.

The cosmic emphasis is also paralleled in Wesley. Brother John, sometimes a bit of a bully where little brother Charles' hymns were concerned, altered 'Hark how all the welkin rings' to 'Hark, the herald angels sing', thereby limiting the cosmic scope of the original, transcending earth and heaven. Charles, however, in another and equally great though less well known hymn, wrote,

When Thou in Thy flesh didst appear,
All nature acknowledged Thy Birth,
Arose the acceptable year,
And heaven was opened on earth.

One of the strongest emphases of the Wesleyan tradition is upon the present nature of salvation. Though salvation will only reach its consummation in the age to come, in the new heaven and the new earth, it is already, in a very real way anticipated in the present life of the faithful, especially when they meet in fellowship and, supremely, at the eucharist. The following verses illustrate the link between the Incarnation and the fullness of salvation

Stupendous height of heavenly love
Of pitying tenderness divine:
It brought the Saviour from above,
It caused the springing day to shine:
The sun of righteousness to appear
And gild our gloomy hemisphere.

Answer thy mercy's whole design,
My God incarnated for me:
My spirit make Thy radiant shrine,
My light and full salvation be:
And through the shades of death unknown
Conduct me to Thy dazzling throne.

Orthodoxy also emphasises the eschatological nature of worship, and in particular the eucharist. St Maximus the Confessor talks of the way in which in the Eucharist, 'we make the memorial of the things to come'. Charles Wesley's Hymns for the Lord's Supper contain a whole section, entitled, 'The Sacrament a Pledge of Heaven'. We may instance just a few verses, such as

Come, let us join with one accord
Who share the supper of the Lord,
Our Lord and master's praise to sing:
Nourished on earth with living bread,
We now are at his table fed,
But wait to see our heavenly King:
To see the great invisible
Without a sacramental veil,
With all His robes of glory on,
In rapturous joy and love and praise
Him to behold with open face,
High on his everlasting throne. (93)

Or

O what a soul-transporting feast
Doth this communion yield!
Remembering her Thy passion past,
We with Thy love are filled.

Hymn 96 in this selection is especially instructive

Happy the souls to Jesus joined,
And saved by grace alone:
Walking in all Thy ways we find
Our heaven on earth begun.

Notice especially that last line. According to Charles Wesley, the 'heaven of heavens is love'. Throughout the hymnody of Charles Wesley there is a recurring emphasis on the way in which the life of heaven is already anticipated in the life of believers and the Church. Thus, we have such verses as

Come then, ye sinners, to your Lord,
In Christ to paradise restored:
His proffered benefits embrace,
The plenitude of gospel grace:

There is the very strong sense of the closeness of the Church on earth and the Church above in this hymn, the third verse of which reads

Thee in thy glorious realm they praise,
And bow before thy throne,
We in the kingdom of thy grace:
The kingdoms are but one.

One feels that this is almost a verbal icon of what is pictographically represented for Orthodox by the icons of the saints clustering closely around them as they celebrate the liturgy. The very vibrancy of Charles Wesley's hymns represents the same sort of intense eschatological awareness that was part of the worship of the early Church. Even in its most extreme suffering the Church can rejoice because it is sure of its Saviour and the heaven that awaits it. The hymn, 'Rejoice ever more with angels above', confesses, 'Thou, Lord our relief in trouble has been and goes on to these words in the third verse

All fullness of peace, all fullness of joy,
And spiritual bliss that never shall cloy:
To us it is given In Jesus to know
A kingdom of heaven, a heaven below'.

Jesus is here, as Orthodox would say, the autobasileia, the kingdom in himself.

Returning for a moment to the hymns on the Incarnation, I want to draw attention to the most distinctively Wesleyan emphasis of all in them, the experimental appropriation by the believer, exemplified in these final lines from the hymn 'Glory be to God on high',

Knees and hearts to Him we bow:
Of our flesh and of our bone,
Jesus is our brother now,
And God is all our own.

Traditional Orthodoxy has, of course, always emphasised the divinely initiated interchange at the incarnation. Athanasius wrote that God became human in order that we might become divine, in the sense of being sanctified by grace and participating in the divine energies. Wesley daringly and doxologically builds on this tradition. Down to the third line, he has full biblical authority, our Lord being of course, according to St Paul, 'the first born of many brethren'. No one, however, has been quite as bold, though arguably totally consistent with the divine action in kenosis, in developing the Tradition to say that God is 'now all our own'. Wesley's boldness in making this assertion is, however, balanced by his humbly penitential acknowledgement of God's astounding grace to sinners in these lines,

'He deigns in flesh to appear,
Widest extremes to join,
To bring our vileness near
And make us all divine,
For we the life of God shall know
For God is manifest below.

The parallels between Charles Wesley and Orthodoxy are most obvious in the hymns on the Incarnation, but, as I have already shown in a few cases, they are far from confined to them. One theme that would repay examination is Charles Wesley's use of the concept of the image of God, a relative rarity in western theological thought doubtless because of the relative pessimism of western theology concerning human nature. Charles Wesley and John are insistent that, however obscured the image may be in the unrepentant sinner, it is nevertheless restored in the believer who is eagerly to await the promise of Christian holiness, involving the ultimate restoration of the image in full. Hymn no 7 of the classic 1780 collection reminds sinners of their original and real vocation

You, whom he ordained to be
Transcripts of the deity

The hymns for believers seeking full redemption are replete with references to the divine image. Thus we have the plea 'Let us to perfect love restored, Thy image here retrieve, and in the presence of the Lord, the life of angels live'. That the restoration of the divine image is the gracious work of the entire Trinity is stressed in these lines,

Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
In council join again,
To restore thine image lost
By frail, apostate man:
O might I thy form express,
Through faith begotten from above,
Stamped with real holiness,
And filled with perfect love.

A hymn with especial ecclesiological and even ecumenical resonance is 'Let us join-'tis God commands, which would have been sung at the envisaged service of reconciliation had the abortive Anglican-Methodist Unity scheme of the 1960's actually come to fruition. It ends with this verse

Hence may all our actions flow.
Love the proof that Christ we know:
Mutual love the token be,
Lord that we belong to Thee:
Love Thine image, love impart!
Stamp it on our face and heart!
Only love to us be given!
Lord, we ask no other heaven.

Perhaps the most fruitful aspect, for future Orthodox-Methodist dialogue, of Charles Wesley's hymns may be his doctrine of theosis. Both John and Charles strongly believed in the call to Christian perfection. They did not believe, in classical Protestant mode, that one always had to remain simul justus et peccator; rather they constantly exhorted the Methodist people to 'press on to full salvation'. Both believed, of course, that full salvation could be the gift of God alone, but they approached it in slightly different ways. John was always severely practical and much more 'western' in his way of theological thinking. He was always anxious to guard against any possible misunderstanding and at times almost tied himself in knots explaining that perfection was not inconsistent with some remaining sinful tempers albeit

always excluding any known and conscious going against God's law. For John, the emphasis was moral and in terms of the imitation of Christ; for Charles, while the imitation of Christ was important, it was, above all, a matter of participation in the divine energies, in the fullness of which his hymns, as Brian Frost has amply shown, so often speak. For Charles, it is a matter of being plunged into the fullness of the divine love and grace. This can be well illustrated from the hymn, 'Being of beings, God of love' with such lines as

'The sole return Thy love requires
Is that we ask for more' and

For more we ask; we open then
Our hearts to embrace Thy will;
Turn and revive us, Lord, again,
With all thy fullness fill'.

And its climax in which CW postulates a life for ever enclosed within the trinitarian embrace

Come, Holy Ghost, the Saviour's love
Shed in our hearts abroad:
So shall we ever live and move,
And be with Christ in God.

Orthodox have sometimes accused the Western Church of neglecting the Holy Spirit. This charge cannot be levelled against Charles who wrote many hymns about the Holy Spirit and frequently invoked him in yet others as our last example demonstrates. One hymn that is redolent of the spirit of eastern worship and devotion to the Spirit is 'Father of Everlasting Grace'. Orthodox may feel that having quite correctly talked of the gift sent by the Father 'in honour of Thy Son', it then wobbles dangerously near to filioquism. However the lines that follow, are, I think, well in accord with an Orthodox understanding of theosis.

Send us the Spirit of Thy Son,
To make the depths of godhead known,
To make us share the life divine:
Send Him the sprinkled blood to apply,
Send Him our souls to sanctify,
And show and seal us ever Thine.'

One hymn that unites the themes of Holy Spirit, theosis and the restoration of the divine image is 'Since the Son has made me free'. I follow the distinguished example of Prof. Wainwright and my late father in deploring the omission of this quintessentially Wesleyan hymn from the Hymns and Psalms. Its last two verses run as follows.

Heavenly Adam, Life divine,
Change my nature into Thine;
Move and spread throughout my soul,
Actuate and fill the whole:
Be it I no longer now,
Living in the flesh, but Thou.

Holy Ghost, no more delay:

Come, and in Thy temple stay:
Now thine inward witness bear,
Strong and permanent and clear;
Spring of life, Thyself impart,
Rise eternal in my heart.

A final point for comparison is the strong ecclesial consciousness of the early Methodist societies, so brilliantly captures and encapsulated in CW's hymns. The nineteenth century Wesleyan scholar, James Rigg insisted that Methodism was at least as much a revival primitive church life as it was of apostolic doctrine. John Wesley insisted that there was no holiness but social holiness, a dictum that is paralleled by the Orthodox one that we may fall and sin alone but we are never saved alone. The sense of sobornost that suffuses Orthodoxy has its Methodist counterpart. The Church triumphant is very close to the Church militant as can be seen in the great hymn

Come, let us join our friends above
That have obtained the prize,
And on the eagle wings of love
To joys celestial rise:
Let all the saints terrestrial sing,
With those to glory gone:
For all the servants of the King,
In earth and heaven are one

The sense of deep mutual interdependence on the Christian pilgrimage is well illustrated in the perennially popular 'All praise to our redeeming Lord'. It is the Lord who reconciles and 'bids us seek each other's face'. Christians on the common pilgrimage 'build each other up'. Verse 3 of the hymn involves a delightful ambiguity.

The gift that He on one bestows
We all delight to prove:
The grace through every vessel flows,
In purest streams of love.

Does this refer to a common experience, caught as it were from the infectious example of a first to have it or does it refer to a special charism not given to others but which yet edifies the rest of the local church? Perhaps it does not matter, perhaps it is both. What is important is the eschatological joy that suffuses the whole people of God.

We all partake the joy of one,
The common peace we feel,
A peace to sensual minds unknown,
A joy unspeakable.

I explored this particular theme in the paper I gave to the Fellowship's 1995 Congress in Chester, *Church and Praise in the hymnody of the Wesleys*. It is closely linked with that reverence for the Church of the first three centuries that the Wesleys had. Charles Wesley evokes the parallels between the apostolic Church and the Methodism of his days in such hymns as

‘Come and let us sweetly join,
Christ to praise in hymns divine’

with its second verse,

Strive we in affection strive,
Let the purer flame revive,
Such as in the martyrs glowed,
Dying champions for their God:
We, like them, may live and love; Called we are their joys to prove,
Saved like them from future wrath,
Partners of like precious faith’.

Finally, it is instructive to note in how many hymns Charles Wesley talks of unity. Distressed by division and discord of any sort, CW could sing

‘Giver of peace and unity,
Send down thy mild pacific dove:
We then shall all in one agree,
And breathe the spirit of they love.

O let us take a softer mould,
Blended and gathered into thee:
Under one shepherd make one fold,
Where all is love and harmony!

Regard thine own eternal prayer,
And send a peaceful answer down;
To us thy Father’s name declare:
Unite and perfect us in one.

So shall the world believe and know
That God hath sent thee from above,
When thou art seen in us below,
And every soul display thy love’.

That prayer is a good note on which to end this talk, to a society so long devoted to unity and, in particular, to the mutual edification of the eastern and western churches.

David Carter.

This unpublished paper which, for that reason does not appear in my bibliography, was given to the sisters and guests of Turvey Abbey at a short conference held there in the autumn of 2004 shortly after Caroline and I moved to Bristol. We attended this conference together.