

One may well ask, it seems to me, whether Maurice's opposition to parties in the church doesn't succeed in opposing dogmatism only by running serious risk of indifferentism—or, at any rate, of a misguided egalitarianism, i.e., treating any party as being as bad as any other.

Surely, parties are not equally but unequally bad or good, depending on the relative adequacy of their principles. Of course, party-spirit, as distinct from "catholic spirit," is always bad and never good, as is sectarianism, as distinct from churchmanship. But it lies in the nature of the case that the principles of one party may very well be at least relatively more or less adequate than those of another, with the result that one party may be at least relatively better or worse.

There are no doubt good reasons for not joining a church party. But it also seems true that effectiveness depends upon cooperating with others toward realizing the same ends, or the same principles. And what does such cooperation require if not forming a party?

In any case, the only thing that can be rightly said to be "the divine way of deliverance from all sects and parties" (Vidler) is what John Wesley means by "catholic spirit."

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