

C  
1108  
G.15

HD WIDENER  
  
HW JSXQ Q

1108.6.15

70-11-11-91



*The Gift of  
 Samuel Dana Gosmes,  
 of Cambridge.  
 (Class of 1850),  
 5 December, 1861.*

# EXCLUSIVISM.

BY

ALBERT BARNES.

---

EXTRACTED FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY REVIEW  
FOR MARCH AND JUNE, 1857.

---

PHILADELPHIA:  
HENRY B. ASHMEAD, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER,  
GEORGE STREET ABOVE ELEVENTH.  
1857.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

44.25

C 1108.6.15 1861, Dec. 5.

✓

Gift of  
Sam. Dana Hosmer,  
of  
Cambridge,  
(Class of 1850.)

## EXCLUSIVISM.

---

BESIDES the Roman Catholics, there are three denominations of Christians in this country that unite with them in excluding all others. They are the Episcopalians, the Baptists, and some portions of the asteroidal fragments of the Scotch Presbyterian church.

The Episcopalians *ignore* all other churches. Ecclesiastically they treat them as if they were not. They recognize them in no way *as* churches; they perform no act which can by any fair interpretation be construed as an implied recognition of them as churches. They admit the ministers of no other denominations into their pulpits, either by exchange, or by any form of courtesy, or in the prosecution of any agency pertaining to the cause of Christian benevolence. They hold no intercourse by "correspondence" with the ecclesiastical bodies of other denominations. They regularly, and on principle, re-ordain all who leave any other denomination and become ministers in the Episcopal church. They recognize no act of the ministers of any other denomination as a proper work of the ministry. The Lord's Supper as ad-

ministered by others they regard as unauthorized and invalid; and baptism as administered by a Presbyterian, a Congregationalist, a Baptist, or a Methodist minister, they regard as valid only because baptism administered by a *layman* is, in their estimation, valid. They dismiss, by certificate, none of their own members to other churches; they demand no certificate of membership from those who come into their churches from other communions; they attach no value, as indicating real church membership, to such a certificate if it is obtained and presented. The want of such a certificate is no bar to admission to their communion by the member of another church; it furnishes no increased facilities to the communion of the Episcopal church if it is presented. In their Liturgical service no prayer is offered for any other *denomination* of Christians, or any other *churches* than their own; and the only implication in the service that there may, by possibility, *be* any other Christians than those which are in the Episcopal churches is found in the very general petition which they offer for "all who profess and call themselves Christians;" and that prayer is only that they may "hold the faith in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." At the same time, while this is the treatment of all other churches by the entire Episcopal body; while they thus practically *ignore* all other churches, it is true, also, that a very large portion of the denomination, avowedly, and on principle, maintain that theirs *is* the only true church; that theirs is the only valid ministry; that theirs are the only true sacraments, and that all others are left to the "uncovenanted mercies of God."

The entire treatment of other denominations by Episcopalians is based on the implied belief that they have no valid ministry, and no valid sacraments; that they have cut themselves off from the true Apostolic Succession, and that there is no church organization to be recognized but their own. Neither Samuel Davies, nor President Edwards, nor Dr. Dwight could have been admitted to the deaconship in an Episcopal church without re-ordination, nor would a certificate of church membership from Dr. Griffin, Dr. Woods, or Dr. Alexander, have been to an Episcopalian any evidence whatever of membership in the true Church of Christ. Members will, indeed, be received by them gladly from other churches, but a *certificate* of membership is no credential, and furnishes no facilities for such an admission. Episcopalian ministers, indeed, act in concert with other ministers in the Bible Society, in the cause of temperance, and in promoting the interests of the Sunday-school Union, but it is never *as* ministers, and never in such a way that, by any fair interpretation, their co-operation can be construed as evidence that they recognize them as ministers of the Lord Jesus. They act with them as men; as the friends of learning and humanity; but never as ministers of the Gospel.

The Baptists also are exclusive. They exclude others from the communion, but not from the ministry. They recognize the ministers of other denominations as ministers of the Gospel. They allow them to preach in their pulpits; they exchange with them; they co-operate with them as ministers of the Gospel. They regard them, in all respects, *as ministers*, as on a level with them-

selves, but never *as Christians* as on the same level, for in their apprehension, they have never been baptized.

But while they recognize the ministers of other denominations as ministers, they never recognize the members of other churches as members. They admit none of them to their communion. The Presbyterian, the Episcopalian, or the Methodist minister that is asked by a Baptist brother to preach for him, will not be allowed to approach the table of communion, even though he had been asked to preach the communion sermon; nor in any proper way is such a minister of the Gospel recognized as a true *member* of the Church of Christ, unless he can show that he has been *immersed*. None of the members of other churches are recognized by the Baptist churches as true members of the Church of Christ, however sound they may be in the faith; however pure and holy in their walk; however zealous and eminent they may be in spreading the Gospel around the world. Of the dead, neither John Eliot, nor David Brainerd, nor Henry Martyn, could, if living, be permitted to sit down at the table of communion in a Baptist church; of the living, neither Dr. Duff, nor Dr. Goodell, nor Dr. Eli Smith would be allowed in a Baptist church, by partaking of the memorial of his dying love, to show their attachment to that Saviour to whom they have devoted their lives. They may, indeed, be Christians, and may be saved, but they will be saved without being baptized; they will go to heaven having spent their lives in practically disobeying a plain command of the Saviour—the command which requires his followers to be immersed.

The asteroidal fragments—though perhaps not all—



into which the one Scotch Church has been broken up, are also exclusive. They differ from the Episcopalians in not excluding the ministry; they coincide with the Baptists in excluding the members of the Church, though on different grounds. The Baptist excludes them because they have not been immersed; the Covenanter because they hold what he considers to be error. And yet he does not deny that they are Christians. He does honor to them as Christians in the other relations of life. He associates with them as such, and co-operates with them in all other places except at the communion table. There he excludes them. He holds them up to the world as having no title to the Christian name; he would shut them out from the most precious ordinance of the Gospel forever. A husband, who is a member of the church, may not hope that his wife will be permitted to sit down with him at the table of the Lord if she is an Episcopalian, a Methodist, or a Presbyterian, merely on the ground of the fact that she is a member of any one of those churches; and the Scotch minister, like his exclusive brother of the Baptist persuasion—whom he would also exclude from the communion—may not ask the brother of another denomination, whom he has asked to preach for him, to sit down with him in commemorating the Saviour's death.

United thus in the general doctrine and practice of exclusiveness in regard to other denominations, and as exclusive in regard to each other, there are, however, different grounds or reasons why it is done.

(a.) The Episcopalian does it because, in his view, the ministers of other denominations are not in the line of

the Apostolic succession, and have not been truly ordained to the work of the ministry. They are, therefore, in his apprehension, in no sense, ministers of the Gospel. They have no right to preach; to ordain others; to administer the sacraments:—no right *as* ministers to bury the dead of their own churches, or to perform the ceremony of marriage. Their ministrations differ in no sense from those of laymen, and all the functions which they perform in preaching, in performing the rite of baptism, in administering the Lord's Supper, or in visiting the sick or burying the dead, might as properly be performed by laymen. And as they are performing nothing which laymen might not as well perform, there is no promised benediction attending their ministrations which might not be expected from the ministrations of laymen. In their estimation it is indispensable to a valid ministry that it should be possible to make out a descent from the Apostles in an unbroken line, and equally necessary that all the power to perform any of the functions of the Christian ministry should come through the imposed hands of a prelate.

But more than this follows from their views of the ministry. With equal clearness it follows—and this is a doctrine on which all Episcopal churches practically act—that there is no other Church but the Episcopal Church; that there are no ordinances truly and properly administered except in that Church; that baptism in other communions, is but baptism by laymen; and that the Lord's Supper is elsewhere never administered by any right or authority. It follows, then, by a necessary consequence, that no other Church is to be recognized

as a Church; that the fact of being a member of any other Church does not furnish even *prima facie* evidence of being a member of the true Church of God; and that no certificate of such membership is to be received as furnishing even any presumptive evidence of such membership. With equal clearness it follows, and has been openly held by the more consistent portion of the Episcopal Church, though denied by others—not because it was not a consistent inference from this view, but because it infringed on the noble feelings of the heart—that all others than those baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church are left to the “uncovenanted mercies of God.” Such *may* indeed be the mercy and goodness of God beyond any promise, covenant, or pledge on his part, that they may be saved; but so *may* also the inhabitants of the Feejee Islands, though cannibals; so *may* the howling, torturing, scalping, bloody American savage. There is no pledge in the one case more than in the other; in either case, the only hope is that of mercy outside of any arrangement which God has made in his Church for the salvation of men.

But there is another consequence still that follows from this view. It is, not merely that the ministers of other churches have no right to perform the functions of the ministry, but that they are intruders and usurpers. What right have they to preach? What right have they to administer the sacraments? Who has authorized them to assume the functions of the most solemn office ever entrusted to mortal man? By what claim have they intruded themselves into the priesthood; by what right do they minister at the altar? By what right do they

admit others into the church of Christ? By what right do they lay unconsecrated hands on unconsecrated heads, and authorize others to go and preach the Gospel? What right had Korah and Dathan and Abiram and On, to burn incense before the Lord?

If these consequences are not practically admitted by all Episcopalians, it is owing to love, and not to logic; to the goodness of the heart, and not to the deductions of the understanding;—to the fact that their Christian feelings will not allow them to pursue their own speculative dogmas to the legitimate consequences to which they would lead.

(b.) The Baptists are exclusive because, in their estimation, no others but they who have been *immersed* have been baptized. From this they conclude, and so far as we can see, if this is a true position, consistently, that no others can be regarded as members of the Church of Christ; for we do not perceive how, with a New Testament before us, it could be admitted as a doctrine of the church that those who have never, in the scriptural sense, been baptized, can be recognized as members of the church.

It follows, therefore, from the view which the Baptist holds, that the members of other communions are in no way connected with the true Church of Christ, and have no right to be partakers of the Lord's Supper. It follows, that no other denominations are to be recognized as churches, and that all the ordinances of religion administered in other denominations are invalid and void. It follows, that in respect to baptism, and to all the benefits to be derived from baptism; to all the benefits to

be derived from the Lord's Supper, and to all the benefits to be derived from an organization into a church, all others are on the same level with the unbaptized and unchristian world around them, and are with them, left to the uncovenanted mercies of God. It follows, also, that none are to be *recognized* as church members, until they have submitted to the ceremony of immersion; that none are to be invited to their communion who have not been immersed; that no members of their churches are to be dismissed to other churches; and that a certificate of membership from another church would furnish no evidence of a membership in the true Church of Christ. Consistently with this, no ministers or members of other churches *are* invited to commune with a Baptist church; no persons are dismissed by them to unite with other churches; no persons are admitted to their communion on certificate from other churches, unless they first practically disown their former membership by being immersed at the hands of a Baptist minister. If there are any exceptions to these cases, they are manifestly a violation of the principles held by the Baptist denomination, and are utterly inconsistent with the main doctrine which they hold on the subject of the organization of the church of Christ.

By some mental process which we do not understand, it does not seem, in the estimation of the Baptists, to follow from this that the *ministers* of other denominations should not be recognized as ministers, and should not be allowed to preach in Baptist churches. It would seem to us to be a plain inference from the doctrine which they hold on the subject of baptism, that if the

want of *immersion* should exclude from the communion table, it should, *a fortiori*, exclude from the pulpit; if the want of being properly baptized proves that a man, however exemplary and holy in his life, is not a member of the true church, it would prove that a man could not be a minister of the Gospel. By what process of reasoning it is made apparent to them that an *unbaptized* man, though he may not commune, may *preach*; though he may not sit down in a humble way to commemorate his Saviour's death, may be an accredited minister to proclaim his death to a dying world; though in the company of Christians, he may not be received as a brother in the church, he may yet among God's ambassadors to a dying world be recognized as a fellow-laborer with the baptized, we have never been able to understand. To our apprehension, the doctrine which would exclude from a communion table, should exclude from the pulpit; the view which would make it improper to recognize one as a member of the church, should, much more, forbid our recognizing him as a minister of the Gospel. But our Baptist brethren have some way of explaining this, so as to make it consistent logic in their apprehension, which we have never been made acquainted with. But so it is. They have such a way, and whatever it may be, and however little it might commend itself to our duller understanding as consistent reasoning, it seems plain to them, and they act consistently with it. So far as we know, they do not hesitate, in any way, to recognize the ministers of the Gospel of other denominations, as entirely on a level with their own ministers. Such ministers are invited freely to preach in their pulpits—a thing

never done by Episcopalians ; their own ministers exchange freely with those of other denominations—a thing never done by Episcopalians ; at funerals, in social life, and in the great enterprises of Christian benevolence, other ministers are regarded and treated as altogether on a level with their own. In all these things the ministers of other denominations are fully recognized as ministers of the Gospel ; at the communion table never.

(c.) Among the different branches of the Scotch Church, the Associate Church, the Associate Reformed Church, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church or Covenanters, all of whom “maintain a state of strict isolation from other communions,”\* the ground of their exclusiveness is different from that of either the Episcopalians or the Baptists. So far as we understand the reason of this, it partly relates to the use of the Psalms of David, and partly to the idea that all other denominations are in error, and that a Christian church ought not in any way, to tolerate or countenance error. They, like the Baptists, do not refuse to recognize the ministry of other denominations ; but in common with the Baptists and Episcopalians, they deny all recognition of church membership, alike in regard to ministers and private members of the church. The members of other denominations may preach in their pulpits, but they may not commune in their churches ; and in one of the worst forms in which bigotry and intolerance can manifest itself, the followers of Knox place themselves before the world in the same category with Laud and Sharpe.

Here, then, we have, in this nineteenth century, and

\* Dr. Baird's Religion in America, p. 511.

in this Protestant land, a most remarkable fact. Here are three denominations of Christians, with no common bond of union, with no sympathy of doctrine, with no recognition of each other, as exclusive in regard to each other as they are in regard to other denominations, which deliberately, and on principle, arrogate to themselves whatever there is of sanctity and of influence in being in possession of a true ministry or of valid sacraments, and which as deliberately leave each other, and all others, to the "uncovenanted mercies of God." With the one, all other ministers of the Gospel in the land are intruders into the holy office. They are regarded as assuming to themselves a name and a position to which they have no other claim than any layman would have. Their ministrations can never be recognized, except through the charity which may recognize the act of a layman. By them, and by each of the other denominations now referred to, all the *members* of other communions are regarded as destitute of any valid sacraments, and are left, so far as any church organization is concerned, to the uncovenanted mercies of God. Whatever influence they themselves may have before the world, arising from personal character, from education, from wealth, or from numbers, this influence is practically exerted to impress the public mind with the belief that the ministers of other denominations are usurping a name and a position to which they have no claim, and that the members of all other denominations, though they *may* be saved, have no "covenanted" promise of salvation, and are, in this respect, on the same level as the world around them, or as the dwellers in heathen lands.



It may be important, therefore, to inquire what pretension or claim each of these denominations may have respectively to judge for the rest of mankind, and to assume a position so exclusive and so arrogant in its bearings.

The Episcopalians in this country, in a population of more than twenty millions, had, in 1855, one hundred and five thousand three hundred and fifty communicants. They had one thousand seven hundred and fourteen clergymen, and thirty-eight bishops. According to the doctrine now referred to, these constitute all the ministers of Christianity in the land. These bishops, clergymen, and communicants, furnish all the authorized Christian influence in the land. These ministers administer all the valid sacraments; these bishops ordain all who are authorized to preach the Gospel; these churches constitute all the representatives that Christ has, according to his own appointment, in the United States of America. The whole responsibility entrusted to the "Church" as such, in this land, rests on them, and all that there is to keep these twenty millions from being totally in the condition of the nations of the earth where Christ has no church, is to be found embodied in these thirty-eight bishops, seventeen hundred clergymen, and one hundred and five thousand three hundred and fifty communicants.

No one who loves the cause of religion, or who desires its influence in the land, or who is acquainted with the history and influence of the Episcopal Church, can desire to disparage its ministry, or to withhold from that Church a tribute of commendation. The world owes

much to the influence of the Episcopal Church in other lands and in our own—for some of the most holy men that have been redeemed on earth have ministered at its altars, and not a few of the purest spirits now before the throne, ransomed from earth, have been prepared for everlasting glory in the communion of that Church. And we wish, in regard to the living, to make no comparison between the ministers and members of that Church and those of other denominations. While we do not admit that in respect to learning, to zeal, to consistent piety, to intellectual and moral power, the clergy of that Church have a position above those of other denominations, we are by no means disposed to affirm that they are inferior to them; and in respect to actual piety, to true love for the cause of religion, to practical holy living, we are not unwilling to admit the same thing in regard to the members of that Church. No views which we entertain of truth, compel us to doubt or deny what we here cheerfully admit; nor have we any such attachment to our own denomination, or such envy or jealousy of any other, as to make us wish to doubt or deny it. As a part of the one great Catholic Church—for there is but one—we rejoice in all that the Episcopal Church has done for the cause of religion in the world, and we would not desire, in any degree, to abate or lessen the influence of that denomination.

But while we admit all this, we cannot but ask, what *special* claim to learning, to ability, to zeal, to holiness, the “bishops and other clergy” of the Protestant Episcopal Church have; or what ground, in these or in other respects, they have for assuming that *they* are the only

ministers of Christ in the land;—that a blessing on the redeemed people of God is promised only as it descends through their hands, and that but for their labors there would be no true ministration of the word and sacraments in the land? If we should suppose that that Church should become extinct, what is there of special eminence in the preaching, the labors, the zeal, the consistent life of that body of clergymen which would make it certain that by their withdrawal the nation would be left in absolute darkness in respect to the ministrations of religion, and that henceforward salvation could be hoped for by the people of the land only on the ground that there may be “uncovenanted mercy” with God, which may possibly descend on men where there is no true Church of Christ?

The Baptist denomination has, in respect to numbers, a higher pretension to the claim of being the only true Church in the land. That denomination claims eight hundred and eight thousand seven hundred and fifty-four communicants; and it is supposed by the Baptists that not less than four millions five hundred thousand souls, or not far from a fifth part of the entire population of the United States, are under Baptist influence, and connected with the Baptist denomination.

2 We have no desire to depreciate the character or the influence of the Baptist denomination. We are under no temptations, and have no wish to undervalue their zeal, their ability, their learning, and their piety. But the question now is, What claim have the Baptists to the position which they assume, that they are the only true Church in the land; that none are entitled to the privi-

leges of the Church of Christ except those who are connected with their denomination? On what ground is it that they practically and constantly assert, that, though other men may preach, no others may celebrate the Redeemer's death but those who have been baptized at their hands? As a denomination they are but of yesterday. We go but a little way back in history till we come to a point when, if their theory is correct, there *was* no true Church on the earth. There is as little in their origin to be proud of as there is in the origin of *any* organization, civil or ecclesiastical, that has from a humble beginning worked its way up into respectability. It *has* reached a respectable, an honorable, and an influential position in the world, and it is to be among the permanent arrangements for securing the spread of the Gospel on the earth. But it has not as a foundation for its exclusiveness even the poor pretension of the Episcopalian, that it can trace its history back to the Apostolic times; for there *were* times—and those not far remote in the history of the world—when the Baptist denomination was *not*. For more than three-fourths of the history of the Church on the earth, Christianity has made its way somehow among the nations,—converting sinners, overthrowing idolatry, diffusing knowledge, establishing colleges and schools, comforting the afflicted and sustaining the dying—*without* the Baptist idea that men must be immersed, and that the blessings of the covenant descend *only* on those whose children are not baptized. It is difficult, indeed, to see that these ideas, superadded to the ancient notions of Christianity, have in fact contributed anything to promote the essential pro-

gress of the Church on earth, in respect to the conversion of sinners, or to the holiness and intelligence of believers; nor can any one show *how* these additions to what had been for ages understood to be the essential doctrines of Christianity have originated any new motives in spreading religion, or furnished any new power in overcoming the opposition of the human heart to the Gospel of Christ. Nor can we see in what way the influence of these superadded ideas, whatever respectability the Baptist denomination has in regard to numbers, to learning, or to piety, has contributed to place the denomination on so exalted an elevation that it can look down on all others that bear the Christian name, and give them a right to exclude them from all claim to a place in the Church of Christ. And yet, this denomination, on no other ground than this new conception in regard to baptism, feels itself authorized to judge of the relation of three-fourths of the people of this land to Christianity; to withhold fellowship from all other professed Christians, however pure, zealous, or consistent in their lives; and practically to take the position before the world that none of those who, for fifteen hundred years from the time of the Saviour professed his name, and who in times of peace and of conflict—by personal sacrifices and by severe toil—in prisons, and on racks, and in the fires of martyrdom—showed the power of religion, and spread it through the world, had any claim of membership in the Christian Church; and that if they had lived in these times, the most holy and zealous of them could not have been admitted to the communion table of the obscurest Baptist society of this land. And, as com-

pared with other Churches on the score of talent, learning, zeal, piety—*have* the Baptist churches any such eminence as to authorize them to ignore all others, and to assume that the members of the other Churches can have no right to sit down at the table of the Lord ?

We honor the Scotch churches. We honor them for their orthodoxy ; their order ; their zeal for the truth ; their love of learning ; their attachment to the principles of the Reformation ; their Presbyterianism ; their love of liberty ; their hatred of oppression, slavery, and wrong. We have in remembrance what the Church of Scotland has done in the cause of the Reformation ; we remember the noble spirit which it has evinced in times of persecution. We believe that the members of that Church, in all its branches, are so imbued with the love of truth, and of that glorious Gospel for which their fathers suffered, that they would still be among the foremost to show their love for the Saviour amidst the flames of persecution. But what special eminence have the fragments of that Church in this land, that they should practically proclaim theirs to be the only true Church, and should exclude the members of all others from the table of the Lord ? What claim have they on the score of numbers, of learning, of talent, of zeal, that they should *ignore* the existence of all other Churches, and assume the practical position that theirs is the only true Church of Christ ? The Associate Synod of North America has under its control twenty-one thousand communicants ; the Associate Reformed Church numbers forty thousand communicants ; the Reformed Presbyterian Church—or Covenanters—numbers about fourteen thousand communi-

cants.\* These comprise the branches of the Scotch Church in this country, who "maintain a state of strict isolation from other communions;"† these in respect to church membership, assume the province of judging in regard to the claims to a standing in the Christian Church for all professing Christians in the land; these seventy-five thousand members of the Church, practically assume the position, that no others are entitled to the privilege of sitting down at the table of the Lord; that no others are to be recognized as followers of Christ; that no other Churches are to be regarded as Churches by any public act of recognition.

Thus these three denominations stand alike apart from each other, and from all the other churches of the land. No one of the three recognizes either of the others; no one of them recognizes any other church as having any claim to be regarded as part of the true Church of Christ. Widely separated from each other, and each disowning the other, they unite in *unchurching* all others, and in a practical proclamation that all the other professed Christians of the land are left to the uncovenanted mercies of God. Each also in a state of direct and avowed antagonism to the Roman communion; each manifesting great zeal against the "mother of harlots," and "the man of sin;" and each regarding the organization of that communion as one of the master works of Satan upon earth, yet all unite *with* that communion in one of its most offensive features, in claiming to be the only true church, and in denying to every other church all claim to be regarded as a part of the redeemed body of Christ.

\* Dr. Baird, Religion in America, pp. 509-514.

† Dr. Baird.

Can this be Christianity? Will this meet the approbation of Him who died to redeem the whole Church to himself? Is this the true and genuine spirit of Protestantism? Is the Episcopal sect the whole Church of Christ on earth? Is the Baptist sect? Do the fragments into which the Scottish church has been broken up constitute all that has any proper claim to church membership on earth? Is it a proper fruit of Christianity thus to array sect against sect, and to teach fragments of the one great redeemed church to ignore and reject each other and all others? Is it the true teaching of the New Testament that one small fragment of the whole church is to take the position before the world that others *may*, indeed, be saved, but that *if* they are, they are saved like the heathen, without a valid ministry, and without valid sacraments; without an organization that is to be recognized as a church; without a promise or a pledge of the divine favor—saved through the uncovenanted mercies of God?

We cannot believe that this is Christianity; and we rejoice that, with the views which we entertain on the subject of Christianity, we are not required to defend such a position before an unbelieving world. We know not how we could meet the objection of the sceptic and the scoffer in regard to a religion like this, or urge him to embrace a system which would lead to such consequences as its legitimate fruits. We believe that the objection of the infidel to such a religion would be a well-founded objection; and we doubt not that there are many who stand aloof from Christianity, not so much because there are sects or denominations of Christians,



as because one sect thus denounces all others, and holds up all others as having no claim to the honor of the Christian name. We believe, too, that there is a way in which denominationalism may so exist among Christians that no objection shall be felt to Christianity on that account on the part of unbelievers, and that the fact that there are sects and denominations in the church need constitute no obstruction to the progress of the Gospel in the world. And, believing, as we do, that the form in which the doctrine of sects is held in these denominations, and the spirit which is manifested by them towards each other and towards all others, is an obstruction to the progress of the Gospel—is, in fact, one of the most serious of all the obstacles which exist when we attempt to commend religion to the world; and, believing that the Gospel can never triumph on the earth until more just notions shall prevail among Protestants on this subject, we deem it of the utmost importance that the true doctrine on the subject of denominationalism should be understood. There is, we believe, a method in which all proper love of a denomination may be manifested by each Christian sect, in connection with a charity which shall embrace all others as on the same level with themselves as a part of the common redeemed church; or, that, though different denominations may exist, the Christian church may be so united in spirit and in charity that it shall be seen by the world to be *one*, and that the sceptic and the scoffer, whatever other objections they may have to Christianity, shall see none on this account, and shall be unable and indisposed to urge *this* as an argument against the Church of Christ.

We believe that the exclusive spirit to which we have adverted, is entirely foreign from the nature of the Gospel; is founded in narrow views of the Church of Christ; is wholly unnecessary in the manifestation of all true zeal in the cause of religion; is an obstacle to the progress of Christianity in the world which cannot be overcome; and that it furnishes an objection to the sceptic and the caviller which it is impossible to meet while those views prevail. We believe that it is not *necessary* for the Episcopalian, the Baptist, or the Covenanter, to maintain these views in order to their showing all proper allegiance to the Church of Christ; or to their evincing all proper love for their own denomination, and maintaining their own preferences in regard to religion. We believe that there is a proper love for a denomination which will be subordinate to a true love for the whole redeemed Church; and that a proper view of the unity of the Church is not inconsistent with the recognition of the ministry and membership of other denominations. We believe, too, that each of the Christian denominations where the essentials of truth are held, have a right to *claim* of all others who hold essential truth, a recognition of their being a part of the true Church of Christ, and that a grievous wrong is done to them, as well as to the cause of religion in general, by any denomination that sets up an exclusive demand to be recognized as the true Church on earth. And we believe that the time will come when this will be admitted by all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; that as a part of the preparation for the millennial reign of the Redeemer on earth, this exclusive spirit will die away; that each of the de-

nominations of Protestants will be brought to recognize all others as parts of the one great redeemed Church; and that the condition of the Church in the Millennium will be substantially this—that *there will be entire freedom in embracing such a form of doctrine, and such a mode of church organization, as shall seem to each individual believer to be in accordance with the requirements of the word of God, and at the same time a recognition of all others who "hold the head" as parts of the true Church of Christ.* And believing that it was on this principle that the Church was organized by our Redeemer, and that this is the state to which the Church will ultimately come, we conceive that we shall be rendering good service to the cause of truth, if we can show that these are the principles to be recognized in the Church; that these are, in fact, the essential ideas which enter into the true notion of the *unity* of the Church of Christ.

The essential points are these: I. That the existence of denominations in the Church is not inconsistent with the proper notion of the unity of the Church. II. That in becoming connected with one or another of these denominations there should be entire *freedom* on the part of an individual minister or member of the Church—each one acting as shall be in accordance with his own interpretation of the New Testament, and the dictates of his own conscience. III. That there should be, in each denomination, an acknowledgment of this right in others, and consequently a recognition of the ministry, the membership, and the ordinances of all other denominations that hold the essential truths of the Gospel.

I. The first principle, in our view of the proper notion of the unity of the Church, is, that the existence of *denominations* is not inconsistent with the proper notion of that unity, or that it is not a violation of the principles of the New Testament. If it were, then there *must* be exclusiveness, and each denomination or sect which holds such a view, must and should exclude all others from any claim to the Christian name. It may be well, therefore, to state what we regard as the true doctrine on this subject; to consider what has been the origin of sects and denominations, and how they stand in relation to the one great redeemed Church.

All who hold to the *jure divino* doctrine of church government and order, must of course be exclusive. The Roman Catholic holds this doctrine in regard to his denomination; and it follows, of course, that he must *exclude* all other denominations, and all other individuals, except those under the control of the Papacy, from any claim to, or connection with, the true Church; for to do otherwise would be to abandon the essential doctrine of his creed, that the Papacy is of divine appointment. As far as the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, or the Congregationalist holds to the *jure divino* doctrine in regard to his own denomination, too, in this respect, he accords with the Roman Catholic, and must, if consistent, be exclusive also; for it cannot be supposed that modes of government that differ as widely as the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Independent, are *all* of divine origin, and have *all* been prescribed as the constituted form of government in the Church. We do not see how it is possible to avoid *exclusiveness* if the doctrine of the

*jure divino* prescription of the mode of church government be held; and we must look to some other ground than this for the recognition of other denominations than our own. The Roman Catholic denomination has never recognized any other denomination as having any claim to the Christian name; and with the views which many Episcopalians and Presbyterians have, we do not see how they can consistently recognize any other. If any one mode of church organization has been *prescribed* in the New Testament, we do not see how there can be any other that is to be recognized as entitled to the name of a *Church*. If one pattern for the tabernacle was prescribed in the mount, we do not see how another, formed on a different model, could have been recognized as the true tabernacle. If the people of the United States have prescribed a *republican* form of government as essential to the admission of a new State into the Union, we do not see how a State under a monarchical mode of government could be properly recognized as one of those States.

There is, however, no such prescribed form of Church organization in the New Testament. There is no one form so clearly specified as to give to any one class of Christians a right to exclude others from a claim to be recognized as a part of the true Church of Christ. This, to our minds, is perfectly clear; and we do not see how it can be doubted by any one who looks candidly and impartially at the subject. Nothing is more certain than that, in respect to this point, it has never been possible to *prove* that any one form, either of baptism or Church government, has been so prescribed in the New Testament.

as to exclude all others. Men equally learned, equally pious, equally eminent in talent, and equally useful, have embraced different views on the subject of the organization of the Church, and the modes and forms of worship. In their particular organization, for reasons which may be hereafter stated, they may have served the cause of religion more usefully and more acceptably than *they* would have done in another form of organization, or in the use of other forms of worship, but not more usefully or more acceptably than other men, equally learned and equally pious, have in the mode which seemed to *them* to be in accordance with the requirements and the spirit of the Bible.

If the Saviour had designed that the constitution of the Church should be exclusively Episcopal, and had had the views on that subject which Episcopalians themselves have, it would have been so specified that it could not be possible to misapprehend his meaning—for Episcopalians now have no doubt as to what *they* regard as the true constitution of the Church, and are never misunderstood. If it had been his intention that it should be exclusively Presbyterian or Congregational, the specification would have been made with equal precision. These modes of government are not alike, nor can one be easily mistaken for the other; and a specification of any *one* of them would have so excluded the others, that there could have been no danger of misapprehension on the subject. It would be impossible so to interpret the constitution of England as to suppose that it prescribed a Republican form of government; it would have been impossible so to interpret the constitution of Venice as to make it sustain a monar-

chical form of administration; it would be equally impossible so to interpret the Constitution of the United States as to justify the establishment of a monarchy. The simple truth is, that the people of England *meant* that their government should be monarchical, and that idea has been unmistakably incorporated in their unwritten constitution; that the people of Venice *meant* that their government should be an oligarchy, and that idea was unmistakably impressed on their constitution; that the people of this country *meant* that the government should be republican, and that idea has been so incorporated in the Constitution that it is impossible to misapprehend it. And thus it would have been in the Christian Church if its Head and Founder had *intended* that it should be exclusively Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent. But that idea is *not* so expressed. It is *not*, in this respect, an idea as clear, explicit, and exclusive in regard to either of these forms of administration, as the idea of a monarchy is in the English constitution, the idea of an oligarchy in the constitution of Venice, or the idea of a republic in the constitution of the United States. There *is* no such specification in the New Testament that the Church is to be organized on any one of these plans, or after any one of these models, as there is in the constitution of the United States that the government shall be republican; and all attempts to prove that the New Testament *is* thus explicit, have been, and must always be, an absolute failure.

Two principles seem, so far as we can understand the matter, to have guided the divine mind in the directions in

130  
1  
2  
the New Testament respecting the establishment and organization of the Christian church. One was, that the *essentials* of religion, or the things which are indispensable to salvation, should be clearly defined:—that they should be the same in regard to all ages of the world, all countries, all periods of life, all classes and conditions of men, and all the forms of society, whether barbarous or civilized. The other was, that in things which are *not* essential, there should be *liberty*:—that the church should adapt itself in its development to different states of society, to the tastes and the intellectual habits of individuals, to the modes of civil government which may prevail, and to the voluntary preferences of men. The former of these was necessary, because the matter pertained to essential right; because there are truths which are vital to the salvation of men; because these truths in no wise depend on the peculiarities of any age or condition of life, on any conventional arrangement or locality of situation, on any form of civil government, or on any grade of education, talent or civilization in those who embrace them. They are founded on the nature of things. They are not susceptible of change. They are unchangeable so long as the nature of the things to which they relate remains unchanged. The great truths pertaining to God and his law; to the work, the person, and the doctrines of the Redeemer; to the plan of salvation, and to its claims on mankind; to the obligations of truth, of justice and of humanity, are not susceptible of change. The law of God is always and equally binding on all men. Every man is, and must be, bound to love and obey God. Every sinner must be saved in the



same way. There can be but one form of truth in respect to the condition of man under the apostacy; to the way by which the heart of man is renewed; to the doctrine of justification; to the method in which a sinner may become righteous before God. In all lands, and among all conditions of people where the Gospel is preached, the same essential truth must be presented on these subjects, and it must be vital in the existence of a *church*, that these truths should be embraced.

But it is not thus in respect to the other class of things specified. There is a class of subjects in respect to which there should be *liberty* in the church, and in respect to which there may be *variety* of opinion in the church. That class of subjects, not being essential to salvation, pertains to the best mode of ecclesiastical organization; to the forms of worship in which the essential truths of religion shall be expressed and embodied; and to the different methods in which the same great truths shall be brought to bear on the understandings and the consciences of men. In respect to these the best interests of the church demand that there should be *liberty*; the best interests of truth itself will be secured if the whole arrangement is so left that there may be variety:—"in things essential, unity; in things not essential, liberty; in all things, charity." There may have been measures wisely adapted to the promotion of religion in the times when Christianity was first promulgated, which could not be regarded as of binding and permanent obligation on the church, and which would not be wise now; there may be forms of worship adapted to promote the edification of one class to whom the Gospel

is addressed, and to secure the best influence of truth on that class, which would be less wisely adapted to another class than some other forms would be; there may be an organization of the church that shall be better fitted to one age, or the prevailing notions of government in one land, than some other form could be; there may be minds that would best accomplish the purposes of an organization in a church under the Episcopal mode of government than they could under a Presbyterian organization, and there may be those which would better accomplish the ends of an organization in the church under a Congregational or an Independent form than either.

These facts, we think, lay a foundation for different denominations in the church, and have been, and are to be, the guide in the formation of such denominations, and in their mutual recognition of each other.

To express more fully our views, and to show what we regard as the true position on this subject, we will suggest somewhat more particularly what we consider to be the points on which there may be *variety*, consistently with the proper notion of essential *unity* in the Church:— what is the proper notion of *liberty*, and within what limits there should be *charity* and *mutual recognition*.

(a.) First, then, in respect to forms of government. We apprehend that this subject is left in the church, precisely as it is in civil matters. It is impossible now, whatever may once have been thought on the subject, for any man to demonstrate that any one form of civil government has been prescribed by divine authority, or that all governments in the world are, by divine direction, to be either monarchical, republican, or aristocratic, or that

any one of them will be more acceptable to God, than either of the others. The great principle is laid down in the Bible, that there should be civil government; that subjection to an existing government, unless it becomes so oppressive as to justify revolution, is a duty, and that its laws should be obeyed. But it is impossible to make out a prescribed civil constitution from the Bible; impossible to prove that any one form of administration was furnished for all people and all lands. And the reason why this subject was left in this manner is plain. The *idea* at the basis of all the injunctions on the subject of government in the Scriptures, undoubtedly is, that, while government of some kind is essential to the prosperity of a country, and while obedience to the laws is necessary to the good of the whole, it is desirable in respect to the form of government under which they shall live, or the mode of administering the laws, that men should be free; that is, there would be more advantage in freedom, than in a prescribed form of administration. There are countries and states of society undoubtedly where a monarchy may be the form of administration best adapted to secure the proper ends of government; and there are times and lands where these ends would be best secured under a republican or representative administration.

Precisely thus it is in regard to government in the church. It is clear to our apprehension that it cannot be demonstrated to the satisfaction of any person who is strictly impartial and unprejudiced, that *any* one form of administration has been prescribed. Neither the Presbyterian, nor the Episcopalian, nor the Independent, has

been able to demonstrate that the mode of government which *he* prefers has been prescribed in the Church; and however each may satisfy himself on the subject, he can satisfy neither of the others, nor can he satisfy the world at large. The things which are to be regarded as in this respect essential in the forms of administration in the Church, as in the State, are the following: 1. That there *should be* government and not anarchy:—a rule of *law*, and not an administration of *will*. 2. That there should be *freedom* (*a*) in the choice of a government; and (*b*) under the government:—that is, that men shall be free to choose such a mode of government, provided it be consistent with the great ends of government, as they shall prefer, and that under that government there shall be a just and equal administration of laws. 3. That there may be *variety* in the form of government, or an adaptation to a particular age, to a particular country, or to the degrees of civilization that may prevail. If these things are secured, then all is secured that is desirable in the establishment of government in Church or State; and precisely in this way we apprehend, is the subject left in the Bible. But if this be so, then it is clear that there can be no ground of *exclusivism*, provided the essential things in the organization of the church shall be found:—or in other words, neither Baptist, nor Episcopalian, nor Covenanter can properly exclude others from the claim to be recognized as a church. To justify such exclusivism, it is absolutely necessary to be able to prove that one form, and one only, is prescribed in the Scriptures; a work which never has been done, and which never can be done, any more than that it can be demon-

strated by a monarchist, a republican, or an oligarchist, that his own form of civil administration is prescribed in the Bible as the only one under which civil government may be lawfully administered among men.

(b.) In like manner, the modes of devotion, and the measures employed in promoting religion in the world, are left in a great degree, to the discretion of the church. The general precept is given that, "all things should be done decently and in order," and there are also general principles laid down to guide us in our devotions. Mohammed, with great ignorance of the nature of men, undertook to specify how often, and precisely at what hours of the day, prayer should be offered; and the consequence is a formal, and hollow, and hypocritical prostration of his followers all over the Mussulman world at certain hours of the day: the form without the spirit of devotion. The Saviour secured the true ends of worship in a better way, and with a profounder knowledge of the nature of man. Secret prayer is, indeed, to be offered:—but how often it is to be offered; in what places and with what forms; in what posture of the body, and whether mentally or audibly; of what length, and for what objects, all these are left to the individual himself. The *idea* is, that true piety will best regulate all these things, and that where there is real love to God all the proper ends of secret prayer will be secured.—Family prayer is to be offered. But at what time of the day; whether with written forms or with no prescribed form; whether standing or kneeling, all these are left to families themselves to be regulated by their own convenience. The *idea* here is, that there should be freedom, and that in-

telligent Christian freedom will secure all that is needful.—Preaching is one of the main ordinances of the Gospel, and is essential to the propagation of religion in the world. But whether there shall be preaching once or twice or oftener, on the Lord's day; whether only on the Lord's day; whether it shall be with a text or without one; whether it shall be in a house, a grove, or by the road-side; whether it shall be from written notes or extempore; whether the sermon shall be long or short, all these are left to the discretion of the church, to be regulated in the way that shall be found to be most for its edification. Thus, too, in reference to Psalmody; thus, also, in respect to *measures* for promoting religion. All "measures" may not be equally wise; and the same may not be adapted to all circumstances, and all times. An "inquiry meeting" may be a wise measure for promoting religion, and it is neither prescribed nor forbidden; an "anxious seat" is neither prescribed nor forbidden, and whether it may or may not be used is manifestly left to the discretion of the church. The essential idea in reference to all this is *propriety* and *freedom*; and all such things are left, and should be left, to the sound discretion of the church. There is one class of Christians that will be more edified by the use of forms of prayer than by extempore prayers; there is one class that will be profited by "measures" that would be offensive or useless to others; there may be arrangements fitted to one condition of society, or one class of people, that would be highly inappropriate at any other period, or in reference to another class of persons, and all these, within the general direction, that "all things

should be done decently and in order," or that the proprieties of religious service shall not be violated, are left to the sound discretion of the church.

(c.) The same thing, we think, is true in regard even to the *doctrines* of religion. We believe, indeed, that there are doctrines essential to salvation, and that those which *are* essential to salvation should be held, in order that any professed Church should be recognized as a true Church. We do not, we cannot ask, that any Church should be recognized as a true Church where those essential doctrines are not embraced. There must be a limit on this subject; for there is *something* in which true religion is distinguished from false—*something* which is essential to the Christian scheme. But what those essential truths are, and in what denominations they are in fact to be found, is not material to the purpose now before us. In the denominations of Churches to which we have reference in this Article, there will be no difference of opinion among themselves as to the question, whether the essential doctrines of religion are held by each of the others, even when they are most exclusive; for the *same* essential doctrines of Christianity are held in each of those denominations. The ground of exclusivism in either of those denominations, is not the alleged fact that the others have abjured the essential truths of Christianity.

The two things that are material on this point in respect to the organization of the Church, are (a,) that the *essential* doctrines of religion should be embraced and held; and (b,) that in respect to those which are not essential, there should be liberty. Christianity is a sys-

tem, and it is not difficult to make out what is essential to the system; and it is remarkable that in reference to those doctrines which enter essentially into the system, there should be so substantial an agreement among the different denominations of Christians. The great body of the Protestant world is united on this point; and within the limits of the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Methodist, the Lutheran, the Moravian, the Congregational denominations, there would be no question that the essential doctrines of Christianity are found, and that they can all be embraced as a part of the great family of the redeemed.

But is it to be expected that there shall be absolute uniformity in the modes of faith? Are the doctrines of religion so clearly marked and determined in the Bible that there is no room for an honest difference of opinion? Is it better, if there is a difference of opinion in the doctrines of religion, to attempt to unite all Christians into one great body, with those jarring elements within, or that the Church should be divided into different bodies, each holding essential truths, and each endeavoring to propagate its peculiar opinions in its own way? Is the division into sects and denominations, on the basis of difference in doctrine, contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and a thing to be deprecated in reference to the spread of religion in the world? Is it to be hoped or expected that all men will be Calvinists; and if it is not, is it best to unite, under one great organization, those who differ on the doctrines of religion, or is it best that those who think alike should organize themselves into different communities? The Roman Catholics have attempted to



unite all Christians under one great head, making subjection to the Papacy a test of union with the Church, yet admitting within that one organization all the diversities of opinion which are to be found in the Protestant world. The Episcopalians profess to believe that "schism"—meaning by that, separation from *their* Church—is the chief of all sins—forgetting that their own denomination is based on a great *schism* from the Papacy, through which they professedly derive all their power of ordination, and all the evidence that they are *in* the apostolic line. Infidels and skeptics, covetous of an opportunity of attacking the Church, and willing to make capital for themselves out of the divisions of Protestants, have made the separation into sects an argument that a religion that develops itself in such modes of division, and under such forms of contention, cannot be from God. Those who seek an excuse for not making any profession of religion, often take refuge in the fact that divisions exist in the Church, and allege that until Christians shall themselves agree as to what is to be believed, they cannot with propriety be urged or expected to connect themselves with a Church in which there is no union and no common faith or charity.

It is important, then, to inquire what is the true ground to be taken on this subject; and to ask whether the division into denominations is at variance essentially with the true spirit of Christianity, and is inconsistent with the proper notion of the unity of the Church. On this point, and in reply to the questions just proposed, we submit the following remarks:—

1. While the essential doctrines of Christianity are

plain, and are easily defined, those on which the various Christian denominations differ, pertain to the loftiest subjects which can come before the human mind. They belong to a philosophy on which there has as yet been no unity of opinion among men, and not a few of them seem to lie beyond the range of the human intellect in any of its developments in this world. There has been as yet, for example, no way discovered of explaining the consistency between the freedom of the will and the doctrine of divine decrees; and men, as they make one or the other of these doctrines the stand-point in their observation, will form different theories about the nature of religion, and just in that proportion there will be a tendency to the formation of different organizations in the Church; and yet there is in this fact no insuperable reason why both should not maintain the essential truths in regard to the plan of salvation and the duty of men. On these high subjects, where perhaps even angels may differ, where Milton makes his fallen angels enter into a profound and yet unsatisfactory discussion—finding no end—

In wandering mazes lost—

it is not to be expected that men, with their limited views, should come to a perfect understanding, or should be able to relieve these doctrines of all perplexity; and it may be better—it is better—that those who entertain different views on these subjects should be organized into different denominations, than to attempt to compress them into one. The interests of religion—the true interests of charity, confidence, and love, will be better promoted by such a separation than by a forced

and unnatural union—a separation that shall in fact produce more real *union* than could exist if they were forced into a single organization.

2. Men look at objects from different points of view. In contemplating a landscape, though the same objects—houses, trees, hills and streams—are observed, yet the whole scene—the picture—takes its character, as is well known, from the point of view—the “stand-point”—of the observer. Even though the same objects come under the eye, yet the whole is so changed by the different combinations—the different lights and shadows—the different apparent position of the objects—that unless our own position in looking at a painting be the same as that of the artist, we seem to be looking at different objects, and the whole may be as much varied as though we were looking at a wholly different scene. The same thing occurs in moral objects. One man from his stand-point looks only at God. He makes his throne the central point in his observation, and he brings prominently and almost exclusively into view the divine nature, plans, purposes, agency—and he becomes a Calvinist. Another, in his contemplation, looks more directly on man—on his moral agency—his free will—his responsibility; and, fearful that all will be resolved into fatalism, he becomes an Arminian. With one, the divine honor, the divine purposes, the divine glory, becomes the direct and main object of contemplation; with the other, the doctrine of free agency and responsibility fills the whole field of vision. Both are honest; both hold parts of the great system of truth, and both may be good men, yet here, in their theological views, they part

asunder, and a foundation is laid for a difference of denomination.

3. There is a diversity in the mental constitution of men ; in their modes of thinking ; in their habits of reasoning ; in their power of observation ; in the congeniality of their mental structure with certain forms of belief. Whatever John Wesley might have been under any circumstances, it is certain that Jonathan Edwards could have been nothing but a Calvinist. His mind was so constituted that when he looked at God and his government, he at once saw the Calvinistic system to be true. And there are many such minds. In their regeneration they are born Calvinists—and they can never be any thing else. They make God the centre of the whole system of truth ; they look upon him as a Being of eternal purposes and plans ; and all their “experience” in their conversion is such, that all the hope which they cherish is traced to the eternal purposes and the sovereign mercy of God. To their apprehension nothing is more certain than that if God had *not* interposed in their case ; if he had not formed an eternal plan embracing their salvation, they would have perished forever. Such men can never have a conception of God except as acting according to an eternal plan ; and such men will be Calvinists, and their theology will be as fixed as the everlasting hills. Whatever may be true of *Jesuits*, in their power of adapting themselves to new forms of belief, *Jansenists* are susceptible of no such moulding by outward circumstances ; and they will be found true to the principles which they embrace when they first look at the subject of religion, and in accordance with which they were born into the kingdom of God.

There will be, therefore, as long as the world stands, a class of men of whom Pascal, Calvin, John Knox, and Jonathan Edwards, were the types. They will be inflexible in their faith—perhaps stern, fixed, rigid in their character—and no power of earth or hell will be able to turn them from their opinions. They *might* have been infidels—but even their infidelity would have assumed a Calvinistic form, for it would somehow have been based on the doctrine of eternal purposes—of a fixed and settled order of things. There has been always, also, a large class of men of whom Arminius was the type. These latter would have found their prototypes among the Epicureans, as the other class would have found theirs among the followers of Zeno; in men of modern times, the types of such men were found among the Jesuits in the Roman communion, and the Wesleys among Protestants. By their habit of mind; by their modes of looking at objects; by all their “experience,” they become Arminians—and nothing can change them.

Now we think that it is better that those who look at the objects of religious belief from the same points of view, and those who from their education, their temperament, their mental structure, are led to the same doctrinal views, should be organized into distinct bodies or denominations, than to attempt to collect them into one body. There *must* be some kind of division in the Church. It is impossible that all the members of the Church on earth should be collected into one body; should be under one specific mode of government; or should be assembled for council or for worship in one place; and it is equally impracticable that there should

be one delegated body that should watch over the universal Church, and direct its affairs. Either, therefore, geographically—by cities, towns, neighborhoods, or by the affinities of language, nation, or complexion; or by differences of culture, education, refinement; or by the affinities created by preferences in modes of worship or differences of doctrinal views, there *must* be a breaking up of the universal church into smaller bodies; bodies that can be assembled for worship, or represented for government and counsel. A geographical separation, or a mapping out of the whole Church into so many blocks and squares constituting so many separate Churches, is impossible; a division by national customs and by language, where it can be avoided, is undesirable; a difference founded on the distinction of condition, culture, or education, would be foreign to the spirit of Christianity; but a division founded on the different views which men, from the circumstances above stated, take of government and doctrine, is that which is most natural, and which will best secure the ends of an organization into a Church. The *advantages* secured by this, and which are in our view a full vindication of the propriety of thus dividing the Church into distinct denominations, and, perhaps, a full equivalent for all the incidental evils that grow out of it, are such as the following:—

(a.) It promotes internal harmony. It lays a foundation for mutual confidence and affection in a Church. It prevents internal strife and collision, by uniting in one compact communion those who come constantly together for worship and fellowship, while, at the same time, it is not, as we shall see, inconsistent with a recog-

dition of other Churches, or with love for those who, in different communions, are also united, according to their own preferences, on the principle of affinity of doctrine, or affinity of views in the government of the Church.

(b.) The different denominations thus exercise a happy and desirable scrutiny over each other. This is not by any direct interference; not by an attempt at control; not by denunciation, or by one portion regarding the other as left to the uncovenanted mercies of God; but it is by the wholesome restraint which exists when we are conscious that we are observed by others. Every man is under a happy stimulus to virtue who is conscious that he is observed by his virtuous neighbors and friends; every family derives an important advantage, though it is secret and silent, from the fact that it is one of a group of virtuous families, each having its own distinct organization, and each pursuing its own interest; and in like manner, each Church in regard to its own spirituality and purity, derives an important advantage from the fact that it is one of a group of churches, each and all, in their own way, striving to promote the cause of religion in the world.

(c.) An important benefit arises from the existence of such denominations in the fact that great and important truths are ultimately stricken out and established, which, so far as appears, could be reached in no other way. Truth makes its way in the world by means of discussion and conflict—by the collision of different minds, as fire is elicited by the collision of flint and steel. Many of the most important truths and prin-

ciples now in the possession of the Church, are the results of long, and warm, and perhaps angry discussion; as the principles that enter into our views of liberty are the results of ages of conflict. We are, therefore, no enemies to controversy. We believe that while a Christian spirit should be manifested, and while there should be Christian charity and candor, controversy is one of the most important means for promoting the cause of truth, and consequently of promoting pure religion. It sharpens the intellect; it, of necessity, puts the mind on its guard and makes it cautious, knowing that there may be a keen-eyed opponent who will examine the positions which are laid down; it calls up all the power of *invention* in seeking arguments to maintain the position assumed; it thus, on the one side and on the other, ultimately *exhausts* the subject, and enables mankind to determine what *is* truth. And though in the controversy itself it may be true, and is commonly true, that neither of the antagonists are convinced of error, and that both retire from the field claiming the victory, yet those of subsequent times will look at the subject more candidly and carefully than the contestants did. The collision—the struggle—has exhausted all that *can* be said on both sides of the question, and when the dust and smoke of the conflict has passed away, and when the original combatants are no more, men will look at these arguments as they are. They will gather up the results of the conflict. They will incorporate the new truth thus stricken out into the permanent creed of the Church, and the Church will thus be placed on a higher elevation. Thus it was in the early Church—in the



Arian controversy; in the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius; in the disputes respecting the Ebionites, and the Paulicians. None of the original combatants may have been changed in his belief; but the results of the whole have gone into the permanent faith of the Church, and by every such struggle the Church is preparing to place itself ultimately on a higher elevation.

In this connection, also, a few other remarks may be made, showing more distinctly how denominations of Christians are formed, and what purpose they are designed to accomplish in the progress and diffusion of religion in the world.

(1.) There is a remarkable *affinity* between certain doctrines of religion and certain forms of ecclesiastical government. We know not exactly on what philosophical principles to explain it, but it is a fact that, in general, the Calvinistic faith has developed itself in connection with a Presbyterian form of government, and that an Arminian faith has shown a decided affinity for the Episcopal mode of church government. Thus the Church at Geneva, the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Churches in this country, and the Congregational Churches, have been Calvinistic. Not an instance, perhaps, has occurred where a Presbyterian body has been Arminian in its faith; and we always, perhaps unconsciously to ourselves, regard a Presbyterian as, of course, a Calvinist in doctrine. In like manner it is true, in general, that it has not been easy to connect Calvinism with any other mode of Church government than that which is decidedly Presbyterian. The Methodist Churches in this country and in England are Armi-

nian, and maintain an Episcopal form of government; and though the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England are, to our apprehension, strongly Calvinistic, and express all that moderate Calvinists deem essential, yet it is well known that it has never been possible to maintain the ascendancy of the Calvinistic doctrine in the Church of England, or in the Episcopal Churches in this country. By far the largest portion of Episcopal ministers and members of the Episcopal Church everywhere are decided Arminians in doctrine; and wherever Episcopacy propagates itself, it propagates, as a matter of course, the doctrines of Arminius. Thus, too, when in the Church of England the Puritan doctrines began to prevail, having a strong tendency to Calvinism, if not in fact being identical with Calvinism, there was at the same time a strong tendency to the Presbyterian form of government. The Puritans that came to New England, though trained in the Episcopal Church; though their ministers had been ordained in the Episcopal Church, and though most of their number had been members of the Episcopal Church, all at once, when they landed on our shores, and when their doctrines had a full opportunity of development, became Presbyterians; and thus, too, history informs us that, when Calvinism had secured the ascendancy in the Parliament of England in the days of Charles I., the bishops were excluded from the House of Lords, and Presbyterianism and Independency controlled the nation. The restoration of the lax and dissolute Charles II. was at the same time the restoration of Episcopacy and Arminianism; and to this day there has not been Calvinism enough in England to

disturb essentially the Episcopal mode of administration. Calvinism, indeed, to some extent, lives in the Episcopal Church, but it is not there an element of sufficient power to disturb the Episcopal mode of government; but it would not be possible to make the whole Episcopal Church conform in doctrine to the obvious meaning of the Thirty-nine articles, and still retain the Episcopal form of government. In like manner, it would not be possible to infuse into the Presbyterian Church the doctrine of Arminius, and still retain the Presbyterian mode of government. They who hold those doctrines seek other forms of church organization than the Presbyterian, and those doctrines everywhere develop themselves in connection with other forms. We will not now undertake to show how this is to be accounted for. We advert to it only as a remarkable fact in the history of the formation of denominations in the church, and we anticipate that what "has been, the same is that which shall be," and that this union of Calvinism with the Presbyterian mode of church government, and of Arminianism with the Prelatical mode of government, will be found to prevail everywhere. As an historical fact it seems, at least, as if Calvinism was the friend of freedom in government, and as if Arminianism had some sort of affinity with the assumption and exercise of arbitrary power. Kings on their thrones have dreaded Calvinism more than they have Arminianism. Knox was a greater terror to Mary, than Laud was to Charles I.

(2.) Sects or denominations are often formed in the church, as the expression or embodiment of some one idea—perhaps some single thought—that is in ad-

vance of the age in which they rise, and which is to become ultimately a permanent truth in the church. It is their mission to work out that idea; to give it prominence in the world; to secure its establishment as one of the permanent truths that are to enter into the ultimate form which the church shall assume: and when that one idea becomes established, the necessity of the denomination ceases, and it dies away. It would probably be found, as a matter of fact, that each sect in religion, like the sects in philosophy, had some one great idea that characterized it, and that gave birth and form to the denomination; and it would probably be found that most of the sects whose existence is now known only by the records of history, had some peculiar mission of this kind to perform in the world. Luther had a mission in the world; Calvin had a mission; John Wesley had a mission; William Penn had a mission. There was a prominent idea in the Reformation; so there was in the foundation of Methodism; so there was in the labors of Fox and Penn. The establishment of one principle or thought in religion may have been worth all the toils and sacrifices of the denomination in securing it; and having secured it, the denomination may have been suffered to die out, to be revived no more. It was worth all the sacrifices and trials of the Bohemian brethren to work out the one great idea respecting Christian missions, and to give that idea the prominence in this age, which it has received through their labors: and having worked out the thought, it may be that that peculiar denomination has little more to do on the earth, and that the execution of the grand conception will be left to the church at large.

(3.) Two things may therefore be expected to occur in the progress of events :

(a.) One is, that denominations may wholly die out, or wholly cease to be : that their existence may be known only as historical facts, and their very form cease upon the earth. So it has been with a large part of the sects of philosophers. They struck out some one great conception—established it—and then passed away. The great thought became one of the permanent truths which were to stand out prominently, or to enter into new combinations, and to influence future times. So ecclesiastical history has recorded the names of numerous denominations whose wrecks are strewed along the path of history ; whose very form has vanished. The idea—the thought that characterized the denomination—the great truth which it arose to establish, has become one of the admitted and peculiar truths of religion, and in new combinations, has gone as an element into religion as it now exists on the earth ; but the *denomination* has died away to be needed no more, and to be revived no more. The world is thus strewed with the ruins of sects that once played their part, as the shores of the ocean are strewed with the remains of vessels wrecked in the storm ; or as sea ports are filled with the hulks of vessels that once were engaged in naval strife ; or as the old world is filled with the ruins of cities that once flourished, but which, in the changes of commerce and of empire, have passed away. Those vessels and those cities have performed their work, and have perished. And thus it is with many of the sects and denominations in the church. They performed their work ; and they have perished to be revived no more.

(b.) Another remark that may be made is, that when a sect has performed its work, it is impossible again so to infuse life into it, and so to adjust it, that it shall meet the wants of another age. We doubt whether it would be possible to infuse again into the Moravian Church the same missionary spirit which animated it when its first missionaries went to Greenland; and the indications are, that the denomination, having performed its work, and having been the means of infusing a large missionary spirit into the church at large, is destined to pass away. We see indications, we think, that it would be impossible to infuse again into the Quaker denomination, the spirit which animated that body in the times of Fox, Barclay, and Penn. It had a work to perform; and it has done it well. It was to furnish a strong and powerful testimony, in advance of all other denominations, and at a time when those subjects were little understood, in favor of the rights of conscience, the evils of war, and the guilt of slavery: and having done this work, the denomination seems destined now to pass away. Its power, even on these subjects, has waned, and it may be that God, having no further use for the denomination in these respects, will suffer it quietly to die. It is now held together more perhaps by pecuniary than by moral and spiritual ties; it is divided on great questions; it seems to be ready to crumble into fragments; and were it not for the *property* tie, it is probable that its entire dissolution would not be a very distant event. It is also most probably impossible to infuse the spirit of evangelical piety into the Armenian, the Nestorian, the Greek, the Coptic and the Roman communions. They had their day and their place, and they

have accomplished, as organizations, their work on earth. It is, indeed, a great experiment which the missionary world is making, to see whether in and under those forms the spirit of ancient Christianity cannot be revived; but we are not for ourselves sanguine of success. We apprehend that as the members of those communions are converted, they will seek, as is now the fact in the Armenian communities, organizations under new forms, and that new denominations will spring up in those lands where the old organizations have acted their part, and have become dead. The seven churches of Asia Minor died out, and Christianity is to be reestablished there anew, not by reanimating the old forms of devotion, but by a new organization on their ruins, adapted to this age of the world. John and Charles Wesley attempted to infuse the life of evangelical piety into the established Church of England. They failed wholly. The attempt resulted in the establishment of a distinct denomination, wholly contrary to their intention, in Great Britain, and in a similar organization in this land. It would be impossible to blend Methodism and Episcopacy in either country.

In like manner we apprehend that it will be found to be impossible to infuse the Spirit of evangelical piety permanently or generally into the Episcopal Church. The attempt to do it in our own land has led to the alienated feelings of the high and the low church, constituting two distinct bodies in that communion; and the same result has been the consequence of the attempt in England. An eminent minister of that denomination\*

\* Rev. Baptiste Noel.

felt the difficulty of doing this to be so great, that he separated wholly from the church of his family and his fathers, and, alike by his own act, and by his published opinions, has declared such a blending of the two—such a resuscitating of the early spirit of piety in that denomination—such an infusion of the principles of evangelical piety into the forms of that denomination, to be, in his apprehension, impossible. We believe that it is so; and that the result aimed at by the evangelical party in this country and in England, will never be accomplished. We believe that the only way of securing the prevalence of the evangelical spirit, is to be by an entire separation from what has become a religion of forms.

The reasons for this opinion, in regard to the Episcopal Church, we think are obvious, as evangelical religion has never shown any affinity for an established liturgy and for prescribed forms of devotion. Evangelical religion is too free; it is too much the work of the heart; it is too much the deep feeling of the soul welling up its spontaneous expressions, and demanding an utterance which cannot be obtained in the prescriptions of forms. History has shown, as in the Greek Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Nestorian Church, the Armenian Church, that the liturgies of prescribed worship are not favorable to the cultivation of evangelical sentiments, but that the tendency always is to a cold and lifeless formalism.

(c.) The forms of worship in the Episcopal Church, even if forms could be ever well adapted to such a purpose, are not fitted to the expression and cultivation of



evangelical piety. They came, in a good measure, out of the Roman Catholic communion. They were not originally more than half adjusted to Protestantism. They belong materially to the Roman views of religion. The utterance of the Protestant evangelical sentiment in devotion is constantly arrested and crossed by the utterance of some sentiment that had its origin in another system, and that was designed to embody the ideas of another system. The friend of a pure evangelical piety; the believer in the entire depravity of all persons before they are renewed by the Holy Ghost; the believer in the absolute necessity of regeneration—doctrines which lie at the foundation of all evangelical religion—must encounter constantly in the services of the Episcopal liturgy the influence of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration—undoubtedly in its boldest and most offensive and dangerous form, the doctrine of the Episcopal Prayer Book. In like manner, in reference to the acts of an officiating ministry, and the administration of the sacraments, he encounters everywhere in that book the doctrine of an *opus operatum* in the sacraments. This, too, he encounters in all the ideas of sacred places, and sacred vestments; the peculiar holiness of the church and chancel; and the sacredness of the burial place. These things cannot be adjusted to the spiritual developments of evangelical religion. They belong to other things than Protestantism; and while they remain as a part of the services of a Protestant Church, they will chill the ardor and cramp the efforts of those who attempt to blend these forms of devotion with the freedom of the evangelical spirit.

We are not surprised, therefore, at the trouble which is experienced on this subject by Episcopalians themselves. We are not surprised at the demands made from time to time by portions of their own body for a revision of the Liturgy. We were not surprised at the memorial prepared for the last Triennial Convention of the Episcopal Church, asking for such a modification in the Prayer Book, as to adapt it better to the "masses" of the people—to make it more popular in the community—to adapt it more to what is the free working of religion in other denominations. And yet are we not surprised at the result. We believe that what is asked cannot be done; that such a revision and adjustment of the Liturgy cannot take place without an entire change in the structure of the Prayer Book, and without an entire change in the position which the Episcopal Church holds in respect to other denominations. Let Episcopalians remove the Roman Catholic views essentially pervading the Liturgy on the subjects of ordination, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the burial of the dead; let them remove altogether the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; let them become associated and affiliated with the Church of Christ as it actually exists on earth—found in other denominations as really as in their own; let them lay aside their exclusiveness—their claims to being the only church on earth; let them recognize the ministry and the sacraments of other denominations, and then their church *may* be adapted to the "masses" of men—but not *till* then.

In the conclusion of our remarks, therefore, and as expressing the sum of all that we have said, we would

observe that there are two things which are essential to proper notions of the union of the church; two things which are indispensable in overcoming the exclusive spirit which now prevails in the branches of the church to which we have referred; two things which we have a right to insist on and demand, and which we do insist on and demand, in reference to each and every denomination; two things to which the whole church must ultimately come. They are these: first, that it shall be understood that there is to be entire *freedom* in the church in forming denominations, and in individual Christians attaching themselves to such existing denominations as they may prefer, without any disparagement, or implying any suspicion in regard to their good standing in the Church of Christ; and second, that there shall be a mutual recognition in the different evangelical denominations of each other—a recognition of the membership, of the ministry, and of the validity of the sacraments as administered by each other.

I. Perfect freedom among Christians in forming denominations according to their preferences, or their views in regard to worship and doctrine; and in attaching themselves to such denominations as they may choose. The idea is, that to form a new denomination is not to be branded as “schism” or treated as such, and that it shall be understood that it is *not prima facie* evidence, or any evidence at all, that a man is not a Christian because he is attached to a denomination that differs from our own. It is not to prejudice his Christian standing in our own estimation; for being thus attached to a different denomination he is not to be held up to denunciation; he is not to

be esteemed as a schismatic or a heretic; he is not on that account to be excluded from our sympathy, our confidence, our Christian love. In the one universal church, divided into different branches, he is to be permitted to worship God according to his own views of duty without suspicion or molestation, and he is to be permitted to seek a union with the branch of the church where he can be most edified and most useful. It is to be no ground of suspicion in regard to his piety that from the views which *he* entertains of truth and order, he *prefers* the Episcopalian, or the Presbyterian, or the Baptist, or the Methodist Churches, as that which better represents his views than any other, and as that in which he can, most to his own satisfaction, worship God and prepare for heaven. And there is to be no attempt to proselyte him, or to separate him from such a chosen and preferred communion, on the ground that he is now a schismatic or a heretic, or that he perils his salvation, and is left to the "uncovenanted mercies of God."

If the view which has been taken in this article is correct, then the position which we now lay down, follows of course. This is "the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free." This is essential to just notions of Christian freedom, and to right apprehensions of the church. This Christian liberty must embrace all those cases in which it could be admitted that salvation would be possible if the individual were in another connection; that is, where it is admitted that he holds no error that perils salvation, and where his private character is such as to furnish evidence of true piety. In other words, other things being equal, his salvation is not to be made

to depend, and his being recognized as a Christian is not to be made to depend, on his being connected with any one of these denominations. In any one of them he is to be in good faith recognized as a Christian brother; in any one of them it is to be admitted that he may acceptably worship God and prepare for heaven; in any one of them it is to be conceded that he is a member of the true Church of Christ. There is to be no *presumption* against his Christian character, and his hope of heaven, from the fact that he *chooses* to belong to any one of these denominations, rather than to any other of them. He is to be regarded as being as much entitled to the Christian name in any one of these denominations as he would be in any other, and being connected with any one of these denominations, he is to be considered as having as much right to be regarded and treated as a Christian, as he would have if connected with any other. Whether immersed or not immersed; whether the sacraments are or are not administered by one on whom prelatical hands have been laid; whether he ministers in a "church" or a "meeting-house," a barn, or a school-house, or, like the Saviour, by the way side; whether he wears a surplice, or is clad in simple vestments, or is clothed, like John, in camel's hair, his membership in the church, if he is a private Christian, is to be recognized as true and real membership; his ministrations, if he is a minister of the gospel, are to be recognized as ministrations rendered valid by being in accordance with the arrangements and the purposes of the Redeemer.

II. The second thing that we demand and claim, as

following from our argument; as essential to the proper unity of the church, and as lying at the basis of all negotiations in regard to the union of the different denominations—a *sine qua non* in any attempt to promote such union—is, that in the evangelical denominations there shall be a recognition of the ministry, membership, and sacraments of each other.

We claim this on these grounds :

(a.) As a *right* based on the fact that no one form of church organization can be proved to be prescribed in the New Testament as essential to the idea of a church; that no one mode of baptism has been specified as the only mode; that it is impossible to demonstrate that any prelatical ministry is in a direct and uncontaminated line from the Apostles; that no creed now embraced as that which expresses the peculiar views of any one of the existing denominations can be demonstrated to be that within which alone lie the hopes and offers of salvation; and that no one can adduce any authority from the Bible to *exclude* any others who give evidence that they are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and are true believers in Christ, from any or all of the privileges and the acts of recognition due to those who are redeemed, and are the heirs of heaven. We claim and demand this on the broad ground, that whoever gives evidence that he is accepted of the Father, as reconciled through the Son, is a member of the one true Catholic Church, and should be in every way recognized as such in the great family of the Christian brotherhood. He that excludes one whom Christ has not excluded; he who shuts out one whom Christ has not shut out; he who in

word or act holds up one whom Christ has received and recognized as entitled to the crown of glory, as a schismatic or a heretic, an alien or an outcast, offers a direct affront to Christ himself, and, so far as the act goes, renounces the Saviour also. "He that despiseth you [*rejecteth* you, comp. 1 Thess. iv. 8, or *excludeth* you  $\delta \alpha\delta\epsilon\sigma\tau\omega\nu \epsilon\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ ] despiseth [*rejecteth* or *excludeth* me  $\epsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon} \alpha\delta\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota$ ] and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Luke x. 16. "He therefore that despiseth [*Marg.* *rejecteth*,  $\delta \alpha\delta\epsilon\sigma\tau\omega\nu$ ] despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." 1 Thess. iv. 8. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?" Rom. xiv. 10. "He that judgeth his brother, judgeth the law. There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgeth another?" James iv. 11, 12. From such passages of Scripture as these, we think that it is a clear principle that all true Christians have a *right* to a recognition by all others as being of the same great family as themselves; as being heirs with them of the same salvation; as on a level in respect to all the honors and privileges connected with the Christian name—as the individual citizens of any one State of this Union have a right, in any State of the Union, to be recognized and treated as citizens of the Republic.

Each and all have a right to make their selection of the modes of devotion in which they shall worship God, perform their religious duties in the world, and prepare for heaven: and this is the same as saying that others who claim this right also for themselves, shall not set up an *exclusive* claim, or withhold from others the pro-

per recognition of their membership in the Church of Christ.

(b.) We claim this because it accords with the spirit of Christianity; because it is only in this way that the true spirit of that system can be developed. The Church is *one*: not in the sense that it is *one* Episcopal Church, or *one* Presbyterian Church, or *one* Baptist Church: it is one in the sense that there is on the earth one great body of believers in Jesus Christ, who have been redeemed by his blood, and who will ultimately be received into heaven. All who have been thus redeemed, and who will thus, through his blood, be received into heaven, are true members of the Church, and together they constitute the total Church of Christ on earth. As such, each one should be recognized as a brother in Christ, as an heir of heaven, and as entitled to all the sympathy, confidence, and affection of a true friend of the Redeemer. It is remarkable how slow were even the first true members of the Church of Christ—the sincere personal friends of the Saviour—to see and recognize the principle. Even John—the gentle, the pure, the charitable, the *loving* John—once came to the Saviour in the true spirit of modern exclusivism—perhaps the first instance of the manifestation of that spirit in the church—and said to him, “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, *and he followeth not us*: and we rebuked him because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us, is on our part. For whoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, *because ye be-*



*long to Christ*, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." Mark ix. 38—41. Here, in this language of the Saviour, is the true spirit of Christianity; here, in the language of John, is the true spirit of the exclusive Baptist, Episcopalian, Covenanter. That those men actually cast out devils was not questioned even by the excluding apostle, but the ground of offence—the reason for a rebuke and for exclusion—was, that they were not directly associated with him and the other apostles. That there are true friends of the Saviour in other denominations now, as well as in the Baptist, the Episcopal, and the Covenanter Churches; that the ministers of other denominations are as learned, as pious, as faithful, as laborious, and as successful as those in the Episcopal Church; that Presbyterians and Methodists are as sincere and devoted in their attachment to the Saviour, and as earnestly seek the salvation of souls and the conversion of the world, as the members of the Baptist Churches, and that there is in the other branches of the church as real attachment for truth, and as real a manifestation of the spirit of the Master, as there is in the excluding fragments of the Scotch Church, would not be denied even by those who are themselves most rigid and exclusive in their treatment of other denominations. The ground of offence—the real difficulty—the cause of exclusion—is precisely that taken by John, that those excluded friends of the Saviour "*follow not with them.*" The doctrine of the Saviour is, that although they are *not* immediately connected with us in an organization, yet if they show by their lives and conduct that they are with us, and not with the world, they

are to be recognized *as* true followers of the Saviour ; *as* members of his Church. The conduct of the disciples who were thus rebuked by the Saviour, was in spirit precisely that of the Episcopalian, the Baptist, and the Covenanter, who excludes from his fellowship those who do not "follow with them" though, in every other respect, they may give the fullest evidence that they are *as* true followers of the Saviour as they are themselves.

(c.) We claim this as a right, because if these principles were recognized and acted on, it would tend to promote Christianity in the world. The great hindrance to the spread of Christianity, so far as relates to the matter now under consideration, is not the existence of denominations ; it is the manner in which they regard and treat each other. It would be no real objection to Christianity, even in this age of the world, that there were different sects and denominations in the church, if each recognized the others as on a level with themselves in regard to the Christian name. The objection—the difficulty—is, that they exclude and denounce each other ; that one portion refuses to recognize another portion as any part of the true church ; that one portion, claiming peculiar sanctity, or relying on a pretended exclusive authority derived from the apostles, represents another as "left to the uncovenanted mercies of God ;" that one portion, on the ground of an external rite, excludes all others from a public recognition as having any claim to the title of Christians ; and that another, on the ground that they only are in possession of the truth, exclude all others from any right to the communion. Can it be wondered at that the tendency of this

is to make infidels? Can this, a skeptical world asks, be a religion from heaven? Can this be a religion which the common Father of the human race would introduce into the world? Can this be the religion which a Saviour of the human race—a Redeemer of mankind—would care to establish? *Would* the Father of all; *would* the Redeemer of a world enter into any arrangement at so much expense, in order to make an exclusive Episcopal Church, or an exclusive Baptist Church, or an exclusive body of Covenanters? Can it be supposed that this would be the design and end of a religion which had its origin in the love of mankind, and which was designed to bless the earth? The feelings which suggest such questions may not indeed be always expressed. They may lie silent in the mind. But they are there. They constitute a secret reason with many why they do not embrace the Christian religion in any form, or at least they serve to quiet the conscience when the claims of Christianity are pressed upon the attention. They constitute an important part of the sum total of the opposition which is made to religion in the world, and of the sum total of the support on which the infidelity of the world relies. So far, therefore, as the influence of each of the exclusive denominations goes in sustaining exclusiveness, so far are they responsible for the existence of infidelity on the earth; so far they furnish an argument or an apology for the sceptic, which it is difficult, if not impossible, to meet.

For reasons such as these, therefore, we claim and demand of each of the excluding denominations, that

they shall recognize the ministry, the membership, and the ordinances of the others. We insist on this as a *right*, not as a matter of condescension and concession. We claim that the Episcopalian shall, by proper acts, recognize the ministers of other denominations as ministers of the Gospel, and the ordinances dispensed by them as valid ordinances. We claim and demand of the Baptists that they shall not merely recognize the ministry of other denominations, but their membership also; that while, if they prefer it, they continue the practice of immersion in baptism as a part of their Christian liberty, they shall concede the same liberty to others; and while they expect that *their* acts of baptism shall be recognized by others as valid, they shall not offer an affront to the Christian world by re-baptizing all who enter their communion, or by excluding from their communion all who have not been subjected to the rite of immersion. We claim and demand, too, of the Covenanters—the spiritual descendants of John Knox—that they shall not ignore or exclude the great body of the Christian Church, as unworthy of a place at *their* table of communion; as unfit to sit down with them to commemorate the dying love of the Redeemer. Of each and all these denominations of Protestant Christians we claim and demand that they shall not offer this public affront to the Christian world, that all others but themselves are to be classed, so far as their act can go, and so far as they can have any influence with aliens and apostates; Saracens and sceptics; Brahminists and Buddhists—shut out from any *covenanted* mercy, and any *promise* of heaven.

In respect to Episcopalians, in addition to the *general* reasons offered in this article, and applicable to all, we claim and demand this for the following reasons:

(1.) There is no special claim from the numbers, piety, or position of the Episcopal Church to justify it in taking exclusive ground. Its history goes back no farther than other Protestant denominations. In all its original aspects it is on no higher level than the Lutheran Church, and the Reformed Churches of France and Switzerland, for they all detached themselves at about the same time from the Roman Catholic communion. The ordination of the first ministers in the Episcopal Church, like the ordination of the ministry in those denominations, was by the Roman Catholic priesthood, and Episcopal ministers have no claim to a closer relation to the Apostles than the other ministers of the Reformation. In point of *time*, also, Episcopalians were not the first in the field in the Reformation; in point of piety, ability, zeal, learning, they had no eminence in the Reformation above other ministers of the Gospel. Then, as now, a noble part of the great Reformed body—a portion of the one redeemed and emancipated church, greatly but not specially or exclusively honored by the Saviour, the Episcopal denomination has a claim to high honor in the work of maintaining truth, and diffusing religion in the world; but at no time has it ever been able to place itself in such an eminence in piety, learning, or zeal as to lay the foundation of a claim of being exclusively *the* Church, or to justify it in using those terms which it has been so much accustomed to employ in speaking of other denominations.

(2.) In demanding that the Episcopal Church shall recognize the ministry, the membership, and the sacraments of other denominations, we are asking merely that it shall act in accordance with the earliest position of the Episcopal Church itself. These exclusive claims are a late growth in that body, and are in no manner necessary to the true notion of the church as understood by the early English Reformers. In the best and purest days of Episcopacy, the ministry of other branches of the great Protestant body was freely recognized as being in all respects on a level with those who had been ordained by the imposition of the hands of a prelate. It was no part of the views entertained by the Episcopal Church in England at the time of the Reformation, that the ministers of other denominations were to be excluded, or that their right to minister in holy things was to be denied: and Episcopacy has gained nothing in piety, in influence, or in power by the exclusive spirit which has sprung up in modern times. It is well known that the ministers of foreign churches were recognized in England by Cranmer and by those associated with him; that they were recognized, also, even in the times of Elizabeth, and that the *exclusive* doctrine which now prevails in the Episcopal Church had no pervading or prevailing influence in England till the time of Charles the Second. Thus, Mr. Hallam says,\* “It had not been unusual from the very beginning of our Reformation, to admit ministers ordained in foreign Protestant Churches to benefices in England. *No re-ordination had ever been practised with respect to those who had received the im-*

\* Constitutional History of England, pp 424, 425.

*position of hands in a regular church* ; and hence it appears that the Church of England, whatever tenets might latterly have been brought in controversy, did not consider the ordination of [by] Presbyters invalid. Though such ordinations as had taken place during the late trouble, [the times of Charles I. and the Protectorate of Cromwell,] and by virtue of which a great part of the actual clergy now in possession, were evidently irregular, on the supposition that the English Episcopal Church was then actually in existence ; yet if the argument from such great convenience, as men call necessity, were to prevail, it was surely worth while for men to suffer them to pass without question for the present, enacting provisions, if such were required, for the future. But this did not fall in with the passion and policy of the bishops, [in the time of Charles II.] who found a pretext for their worldly motives of action in the supposed divine right and necessity of Episcopal succession ; a theory naturally more agreeable to arrogant and dogmatical ecclesiastics than that of Cranmer, who saw no intrinsic difference between bishops and priests ; or of Hooker, who thought ecclesiastical superiorities, like civil, subject to variation ; or of Stillingfleet, who had lately pointed out the impossibility of ascertaining, beyond doubtful conjecture, the real constitution of the Apostolical Church, from the scanty, inconclusive testimonies that either Scripture or antiquity furnish." All that we could ask of the Episcopal Church would be to go back to the principles of Cranmer, Hooker, and Stillingfleet : the principles which recognized a true ordination and ministry in Bucer and Œcolampadius.

(3.) We urge this claim in reference to the Episcopal Church, because the exclusive spirit is not necessary to any proper views of the ministry in that church or elsewhere. It was not so adjudged in the early periods of the Reformation in England; it is not *now* so judged even by the established church in England, for by the Articles of Union, the Presbyterian Church is recognized as a true church—one of the articles of the union of England and Scotland (A. D. 1707) being, “that the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches of England and Scotland shall be forever established as essential and fundamental parts of the union.”\*

The early history of the Episcopal Church in England, as we have seen, is opposed to the exclusive spirit; the present public position of that church in England, as recognizing the Scotch Presbyterian Church as a true church, is opposed to this exclusive spirit; all proper notions of the ministry is opposed to it; all the *argument* that there is in the case is opposed to it. Nothing in history can be more hopeless than the effort to make out the actual spiritual descent of Bishop White or Hobart as Prelatical Bishops in a direct uncontaminated line from the college of the Apostles, or from any one of the Apostles; and nothing that assumes to be a grave matter is more ridiculous or contemptible, than the attempt, with a grave face, to exhibit such a demonstration. There is not a pecuniary claim of the smallest possible value, or a claim of any other kind, that could be defended on that ground before a court of quarter sessions:—not a title to an heir-loom, or to a

\* Hallam's Constitutional History, p. 674.



right of common, or to an acre of land, that could be maintained for a moment on such an argument, and no sensible man would for a moment regard *any* pretended right as of the slightest value, that did not rest on a better foundation. It is a most marvelous thing that sensible men persist in asserting their belief in any such ascertainable pedigree, or in its worth, even if it could be ascertained. Where, in all the New Testament, is there the slightest hint that the validity of the ministry depends on the fact of such an ascertained descent; or that a ministry is invalid where such a pedigree can *not* be made out? If the New Testament *had* asserted this, the assertion would now strip all Episcopalians, as well as all others, of any right to administer the ordinances of religion, and at once degrade the whole of them to the condition of laymen.

(4.) We urge this claim and this demand on the Episcopal Church, because it is an act of mere justice to the ministers of other denominations. By whatever influence the exclusive ministers of the Episcopal Church may have in the community, by just so much they are doing a public wrong to other men as learned, as able, as zealous, as useful and as pious as themselves; men who by all the evidence that *can* be furnished by character and by success, that they are called to the work of the ministry, are furnishing that evidence to as great a degree certainly as the most favored and the most gifted of the Episcopal clergy; men, too, who, as ministers of the Saviour, will occupy as elevated a position before the throne of the Redeemer as they themselves will. They, by their doctrine of exclusiveness, are holding up

before the world all other ministers of the Gospel, however learned, successful, or devoted to the cause of their master, as intruders into an office to which they have no claim ; as deceivers—asserting a right to which they are in no way entitled ; as injuring true believers by administering ordinances which have no validity ; as Korahs and Dathans ministering strange fire before the Lord ; as exposing both themselves and their flocks to the vengeance of heaven by unhallowed and unauthorized ministrations. Thus, by a fair construction of his public acts, every Episcopal minister in the land must be held to regard the ministers of all other denominations ; thus he expresses a public wish that they should be regarded by their own flocks and by the world at large. There is a large class of ministers in the Episcopal Church who, we trust, cannot in their hearts so judge of the ministers of other churches ; and we find it difficult to account for the fact that good men, such as they are, can consent to occupy a position which makes proper, if not inevitable, such a construction in regard to the views which they entertain of the ministers of the Lord Jesus in other denominations. They are “low-churchmen.” They profess to regard substance more than forms ; to consider the doctrines of the church as of more importance than any modes of devotion ; to believe that there is one “Catholic Church,” and that the members of that church are *all* who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, and who have true faith in the Redeemer. Some of them go even farther than this. They *would* recognize the ministers of other denominations if their “canons” did not forbid it. But how is it that they can consent

to live and minister under such canons; that by their own acts they proclaim every day that those canons are right, and that the ministers of all other denominations are intruders!

(5.) We have one other consideration to suggest to the ministers and members of the exclusive Episcopal Church. They are troubled that their church is not "popular" with the masses; that it does not commend itself to the public mind. They have, we understand, appointed a committee to inquire into the cause of this, and to ascertain how the "church" may be made more "popular," or may commend itself anew to the community at large. There was occasion for the appointment of such a committee. The apprehensions of the Episcopal Church are well-founded on this subject. Episcopacy, out of the cities, is *not* popular, and does *not* commend itself to the masses of the community. We can suggest to our Episcopal friends in their trouble one reason why this is so, and why it must be so. It is found in this spirit of exclusiveness. It is because they stand aloof from all the rest of the Christian world; and because it is not in accordance with the spirit and genius of the American people, that one small denomination shall thus proclaim by their acts that all the authorized ministrations of religion are with them, and that all others are left to the "uncovenanted mercies of God." Let that committee begin where it should begin, and seek to bring back the Episcopal Church to what it was when Bucer and Ecolampadius—when Calvin and Knox—were regarded as true ministers of religion—to the views of Cranmer, or even Hooker and Stillingfleet,

and *one* reason why the "church" is not adapted to the masses, would cease forever. *Till* that is done; till the Episcopal Church ceases by its public acts to pour contempt on all other ministers and churches in the land, it will occupy the position which it does now—respectable; but among the least of the tribes of Israel.

And for similar reasons we claim and demand of the Baptist Churches that they shall recognize the members of other churches, *as* members of the Church of Christ. We do not ask this as a boon, we claim it as a right. We do not come and present a humble petition that this *may* be so; we insist that, in all good faith, it *shall* be so. We claim it on the ground that all the members of the redeemed church are equal before God, and are equal in their rights on the earth; on the ground that other Christians are not inferior in the evidence of piety, in zeal, in learning, in usefulness, and in the proofs of the Master's favor; on the ground that Baptists have no claim from their origin or their history to pre-eminence or exclusivism; on the ground that they can never so demonstrate from the Bible that immersion is the *only* mode of baptism that will be acceptable to God, as to be a satisfactory argument to *any* candid and reasonable man outside of their own communion; on the ground that they can never demonstrate from Scripture that Christians have a right to give to *any* ordinance of religion—any mere rite or ceremony—and especially any mode of performing a rite or ceremony—such a prominence as to override all other distinctions, and to constitute the peculiar rule of judging of other men; on

the ground that they can never demonstrate that the question about the qualification for membership in the Christian Church depends on the quantity of water that shall be used in baptism. We care not how much water any body of Christians may use, though they should insist that for themselves they prefer to be laved in the Atlantic ocean to being immersed in the Jordan; or prefer being immersed in the Jordan to being washed in "Onion river;" or should prefer being washed in Onion river to being immersed in a baptistry in Sansom street or in Spruce street.\* Let them enjoy this privilege, if they deem it a privilege; but let them not exalt this to a position to which Christ has not exalted it, or make that a test of character and of a title to heaven, when Christ has made repentance and faith in himself the only ground of being recognized as his followers all over the world.

And our Scotch brethren! Followers of John Knox, of Andrew Marvel, and of Richard Cameron! Descendants of the men who prayed, and toiled, and fought, and bled for Christian freedom—for the great principles of the Protestant Reformation—for the rights of conscience—for the privilege of worshipping God freely! How often have their earnest prayers for Christian freedom and for the enjoyment of the rights of conscience, been heard on the hills and in the glens of Scotland;

\* The celebrated Lemuel Haines was riding with a Baptist brother, when they came to a certain river. "See," said the Baptist brother, "brother Haines, here is water. What doth hinder you from going down into the Jordan?" "Brother," replied Mr. Haines, "that is not the Jordan, it is Onion river."

among its wild barren rocks and mountains—their selves pursued by fire and sword *because* they demanded liberty of conscience. How often have they stood up boldly and bravely before the world—defying Kings, and Popes, and Councils—that they might be recognized *as* true Christians! And why should the sons of such men come to these shores—the land where all enjoy that for which their fathers prayed, and struggled, and bled, to set up now an exclusive claim to membership in the Church of Christ; excluding from all recognition as church members, thousands—millions—who hold the same faith, and who maintain substantially the same form of worship, and who would lay down their lives in attestation of their love for the same truth? We cannot but honor them. We regard them as, in most important senses, models of Christian men in their love of truth, and in the defence of the cause of liberty and humanity. But why, O why, should they shut out the great body of the Protestant Christian world, as in their view, so far as Christian communion is concerned, on the same level with the Mother of harlots; why should they stand before the world practically proclaiming that Presbyterians of other names, and Methodists, and Baptists, and Episcopalians—all—all, whatever may be their character, their zeal, or their success in saving souls—are to be held up to the gaze of mankind as having no right to sit down at the table which commemorates the dying love of a Saviour?



