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I.

PLATO'S THEORY OF EDUCATION.

PLATO'S theory of education is as many-sided as human life. It is a noble dream of what man might be were he to realize all that is in him ; to waste none of his powers ; and to be moved by nothing that does not make for perfection of character. It is a dream that in large part can only be realized, if at all, in some far-off age, and under conditions not contemplated by the dreamer.

It tells of what the world will be
When the years have passed away.

To call it a dream may seem to be pronouncing sentence of condemnation on it, but, as has been well said, " the dreams of a great intellect may be better worth our attention than the waking perceptions of ordinary men." The value of a theory is to be judged not so much by what it says as by what it suggests ; not by its capability of realization in immediate practice, but by its presentation of an ideal toward which men may slowly work. The theory itself I shall not attempt to criticise, but I shall go on at once to give Plato's answer to these three questions : (1) What is the aim of education ? (2) What is the nature of education ? (3) What are the means by which education may secure the end aimed at ?

(1) The aim of all education is to produce perfect citizens in a perfect state in this world, and to prepare men for advancing to a still higher degree of perfection in the life to come. Thus education is not only coextensive with human life here, but it is only the beginning of a process of development that can know no end. Education must aim at the production of the perfect *citizen*. Why Plato looked at the problem of education from this point of view it is not

V.

THE BARRIERS TO CHRISTIAN UNION.

CHRISTIAN Union has become one of the burning questions of the day. Unity is a grand ideal of the Church of Christ. The Church, built on the rock against which the gates of Hades will not prevail, is one church. The kingdom into whose gates the disciples are admitted, and whose king is Christ, is and can be but one kingdom (Matt. xvi. 18-20). Jesus Christ, the true vine, is the source of life and fruitfulness to all the branches. Without vital union and abiding communion with him there is no spiritual life; and all the branches are, through him, in organic union with one another (John xv. 1-8). The good shepherd promised his sheep that "they shall become one flock, one shepherd" (John x. 16). And accordingly our Saviour prayed for his disciples

"that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be 'perfected in one'" (John xvii. 21-23).

Our Saviour seldom employs the term church, *ἐκκλησία*, which is the New Testament equivalent for the *הַקָּהָל* of the Old Testament. He ordinarily employs the kingdom, flock, and vine, the familiar terms of the Old Testament prophets. These terms alike indicate in their Old Testament usage the unity of the people of God. They are one people, one congregation, one flock, one vine, one kingdom. The division of the Jewish nation was a divine judgment for sin. The reunion of Israel and Judah is an abiding hope of prophecy. The apostles hold forth this same ideal of the unity of Christ's Church. They do not so often use the term kingdom. There is a tendency to use the kingdom more with reference to the kingdom of glory that comes with the Second Advent, while they use the church more frequently instead of the kingdom of redemption. However, the Epistle to the Colossians represents that the heavenly Father "delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (i. 13); and the Epistle to the

Hebrews teaches that Christians have received "a kingdom that cannot be shaken" (Heb. xii. 27).

Peter applies the covenant at Horeb to Christians as an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession; and combines with it the figure of the spiritual house, the holy temple built up of living stones on Jesus Christ, the corner-stone (1 Peter ii. 4-9). He also speaks of the flock of God and the chief shepherd (1 Peter v. 2-4). The synonymous expressions people, royal priesthood, flock, and temple combine to represent the unity and spirituality of the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Apocalypse (xxi.) and the Epistle to the Hebrews (xii. 22, 23) agree in representing the body of Christians as the city of God, the New Jerusalem. This is also a conception of Old Testament prophecy.* The Epistle to the Hebrews uses the city of God in parallelism with "general assembly and church of the first-born" (xii. 22).

Saint Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, heaps up a number of representations. Those who were alienated from the *commonwealth* of Israel have been united to it by breaking down the partition wall. Both Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled in one *body* unto God. They are *fellow-citizens* of the saints, of the *household* of God, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom each several building fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 12-22). Here the conceptions of kingdom, household, and temple combine with that of body to represent in various ways and from different points of view the unity and spirituality, the holiness and the vital energy of the organized body of Christians. The favorite conception of the Apostle Paul is that the church is the body of Christ. "We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5). "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13). The heavenly Father put all things under the feet of Christ, "and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 22, 23; see also Col. i. 18). The apostle also represents the relation between Christ and his

* In Jer. iii. 14-18; Ezek. xl.-xlix.; Isaiah lx.

Church as a marriage relation. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious *church*, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25-27).

All of these conceptions of the apostles are synonymous, and set forth in various forms and from different points of view the unique relation of Christ and his disciples. They are the kingdom, he is the king; they are the city of which he is the light and glory; they are the temple, he is the corner-stone; they are the body, he is the head; they are the flock, he is the chief shepherd; they are the people, he has purchased them to himself; they are a family of which God is the Father and he is the elder brother; they are the wife, he is the husband. None of these terms in their biblical usage will allow us to think of more than *one organization*, or of any other principle of organization than the life and love of Jesus Christ.*

The Westminster Confession takes this view of the Church :

I. The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

II. The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

III. Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.

IV. This catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them (ch. xxv.).

The unity of Christ's Church is in Christ, the head, the king, and it can be found in no other person. It is centred at the throne of Christ, at the right hand of the Father in heaven; it cannot be in any place on earth. The kingdom is composed of all who are united to Christ, in all ages from the beginning of the world until the close of this dispensation. It embraces the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles and martyrs, the fathers and theologians, the saints and

* "Alle diese Begriffe sind so geartet dass sie die Vorstellung *mehrerer* Kirchen Christi schlechterdings ausschliessen" (Julius Müller, *Die evang. Union*, p. 28. Berlin, 1854).

heroes of the Church in all epochs ; from all lands multitudes innumerable gathered about the throne of God and the Lamb. The Scriptures give several glimpses of this Church of Christ (Rev. vii. 9 *seq.* ; xix. 6 *seq.* ; Heb. xii. 23). The Church of Jesus Christ is therefore chiefly in heaven, where he is. The Church on earth is but the vestibule, the outer court of the heavenly temple (Rev. xi. 2, *seq.*). If all Christians in the world could be assembled in one vast multitude, they would be a small company compared with the multitude about the heavenly throne. The Visible Church prior to the Reformation had merged the invisible Church on earth in itself. The Reformation revived the biblical doctrines of the universal priesthood of believers and immediate access to the throne of Christ by faith ; and thus made the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church one of the characteristic features of Protestantism. The Reformers did not teach that there were two Churches, but that the one Church was in great part invisible, and in some part visible here on earth, in accordance with the external conformity of Christians to the doctrines and institutions of Christ himself. This distinction between the visible and invisible Church has been denied in recent times by Rothe and others ; but it has been reaffirmed by Julius Müller,* Dorner, and other chief divines of the Protestant churches.

The historical Church has too often committed the sin of exaggerating its own importance over against the vastly greater, more extensive, and holier Church that is gathered about the throne of Christ composed of all those, wherever they may be, who are in vital union and communion with him. The Church in this world is visible in a considerable number of ecclesiastical organizations. It is sinful pride and arrogance for any one of them to claim the exclusive rights and privileges of the visible Church of Christ.† It is easy to see that no one of them can be identified with the Church on earth ; for no one of them embraces all true Christians, and no one of them is so pure that it contains none but Christians. Furthermore, if all the churches on earth could be combined in one ecclesiastical organization they could not be identified with the Church of Christ ; for they would still leave outside their pale multitudes of

* " Und gewiss, so lange die evangelische Kirche auf dem Grunde des göttlichen Wortes verharren wird, so lange wird es ihr formell und materiell unmöglich sein sich von der Idee der unsichtbaren Kirche loszusagen" (Müller, *Dogmatische Abhandlungen*. Bremen, 1870, p. 402).

† " Nur Sünde und zwar gehäufte Sünde kann die Eine Kirche in ihrer Erscheinung in eine Vielheit von Kirchen zerspalten, welche die positive Gemeinschaft mit einander aufgeben, und immer sind Kirchenspaltungen schwere Gerichte über die erscheinende Kirche" (Dorner, *Glaubenslehre*, II., pp. 913, 914).

real Christians ; that is, vast numbers of unbaptized children, who are the elect of God and belong to the Church of the redeemed ; and large numbers from among the heathen who have never had an opportunity of attaching themselves to any form of the visible Church. And, on the other hand, all the churches contain not a few hypocrites, who are not real Christians at all. The visible Church is, at the best, a poor and faint reflection of the ideal Church. The holy and undefiled bride of the Lamb is not on earth, but in heaven, where he is. The Church on earth is defiled with sin, error, and imperfection of every kind. It is the work of redemption, very largely, to cleanse the historical and visible forms of Christianity.

The ideal of the Church is visible unity, but the visible Church cannot entirely attain its ideal until its completion in Jesus Christ. Before the Second Advent the visible will correspond with the invisible only in part. It will grow nearer the goal, but will not altogether reach it.

Notwithstanding the external discord in the Church, there is vastly greater external unity than is generally supposed to be the case. The most essential things in the Christian religion, the real fundamentals, are the common property of all the ecclesiastical organizations of Christendom.

Archbishop Ussher well says :

“ Thus if at this day we should take a survey of the several professions of Christianity, that have any large spread in any part of the world, . . . and should put by the points wherein they did differ one from another, and gather into one body the rest of the Articles wherein they all did generally agree, we should find that in those propositions, which without all controversie are universally received in the whole Christian world, so much truth is contained, as being joyned with holy obedience, may be sufficient to bring a man unto everlasting salvation.” (Ussher's *A Brief Declaration of the Universalitie of the Church*. A Sermon before the King, 1624, p. 28.)

All Christians hold to the sacred Scriptures as the inspired word of God to guide the Church in religion, doctrine, and morals. The Apostles' Creed is the symbol of the universal Church. Christians of every name enter the visible Church by the sacrament of baptism and partake of the supper of the Lord, whatever may be their views of the meaning of these sacraments. They all engage in the worship of God on the Lord's day. They all use the Lord's Prayer as a guide to their devotions. Their worship has essentially the same substance, however varied may be its forms of expression. The Ten Commandments and Christ's law of love are the universal laws of Christian morals. Now, these are the great verities of the Christian religion. They are vastly more important than those other things

about which the churches of Christendom differ, and concerning which there is strife and discord. The calm and abiding concord of Christendom is vastly more profound than the noisy and superficial discord.

The Christian Church has never altogether lost sight of its ideal, but it has endeavored to realize it in mistaken ways, and has thus erected barriers in the way of Christian Union and has occasioned the development of a number of variations.

I. DIVINE RIGHT OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

The first great barrier to Christian Union is the theory of *submission to a central ecclesiastical authority claiming divine right of government*.

This is the great sin of the Roman Catholic Church, which makes the Pope at Rome, when speaking *ex cathedra*, the centre of unity and seat of absolute authority to decide all questions of religion, doctrine, and morals. The way to union according to this theory is to dissolve all other Christian churches. All Christians must receive confirmation from Roman Catholic bishops, and so enter the communion of the Roman Catholic Church, and then submit with unflinching allegiance to the authority of the Pope and his bishops. Such a union requires, on the one side, the forfeiture of the right of private judgment and the violation of the liberty of conscience; and on the other side the severance of the union and communion of the believer with his enthroned Saviour and the re-establishment of union and communion through the mediation of the priests, bishops, and Pope. It makes the visible Church in a single one of its historical forms the only means of access to the invisible Church and the presence of the Lord of glory.

Richard Baxter well said :

“ This cheating noise and name of *Unity* hath been the great divider of the Christian world. And under pretence of suppressing heresie and schism, and bringing a blessed peace and harmonie amongst all Christians, the churches have been set all together by the ears, condemning and unchurching one another, and millions have been murdered in the flames, inquisition, and other kinds of death, and those are martyrs with the one part, who are burnt as hereticks by the other; and more millions have been murdered by wars. And *hatred* and *confusion* is become the mark and temperament of those who have most loudly cried up *Unity* and *Concord, Order* and *Peace*” (*Cure of Church Divisions*, 1670, p. 276).

Under such circumstances we ought not to be surprised that the Westminster Confession should give expression to the opinion of the Protestant world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

“ There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin and son

of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God" (xv. 6).

The Westminster divines do not here affirm that any particular pope is Antichrist, or that the Roman Catholic Church is Antichristian. Protestant divines have always recognized that the Church of Rome was a true Church, one of the many branches of Christendom. They have ever recognized the validity of her baptism and her ordination. They unite with her in veneration of the noble army of martyrs—pious monks, bishops, archbishops, and popes—that have adorned the history of the Western Church. These are our heritage as well as theirs. The Reformation broke the Western Church into several national Churches. The legitimate heirs of the ancient and mediæval Church are the national Churches of England, Scotland, Holland, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany, no less than the Roman Catholic Church which remained unreformed in the southern countries of Europe.

The Papacy as a hierarchical despotism claiming infallibility and usurping the throne of Jesus Christ is the Antichrist of the Reformers. Whether it be the Antichrist of the Scriptures or not, it is the closest historical approximation to the Antichrist of prophecy that has yet appeared in the world. The Papacy is Antichristian, the great curse of the Christian Church. The Papal system was one of the reasons for the separation of Greek and Roman Christianity into two antagonistic ecclesiastical organizations. It was the great barrier to the reformation of the Latin Church, and when the Protestant Reformation came the authority of the Pope was given to the side of error and sin, and the Reformers were persecuted unto death. As the supremacy of the Pope severed Greek from Roman Christianity, so it made a rupture between the Christianity of the North of Europe and the Christianity of the South of Europe. In more recent times the same baneful influence forced the separation of the Jansenists and the old Catholics. Thus this theory historically has proved to be the mother of discord in Christendom. It is the chief barrier to Christian Union. Until this barrier has been broken down the union of Christendom is impossible. The destruction of Popery is indispensable to the unity of the Church.*

But the Papacy is not the only form of ecclesiastical authority that has produced discord. On the continent of Europe Protestant

* "Neither indeed is there any hope, that ever we shall see a generall peace, for matters of religion, settled in the Christian world, as long as this supercilious Master shall bee suffered to keepe this rule in God's house: however much soever hee bee magnified by his owne disciples, and made the onely foundation upon which the unite of the Catholick Church dependeth." (Ussher's *Brief Declaration*, p. 14.)

princes were set up as little popes to lord it over Christ's Church ; and in England kings and queens usurped ecclesiastical supremacy ; and the ills of the seventeenth century in the Thirty Years' War on the continent, and the civil wars of Great Britain, were largely owing to this cause.

The result of the conflict in Great Britain was the establishment of three rival theories of Church government, each claiming divine right—the Episcopal government in England and Ireland, the Presbyterian government in Scotland, and the Congregational government which was virtually established in New England. Each of these governments was alike intolerant and exclusive. Each of them alike rent the robe of Christ's Church. This should not surprise us, for any ecclesiastical government that usurps divine authority is tyrannical and schismatic from the very nature of the case. It is in itself an usurpation of the crown rights of Jesus Christ.

Calybute Downing, one of the Westminster divines, well said

" that it is very safe, and savours of a prudent and peaceable spirit, not easily to conclude many things in government, *jure divino* ; for as fundamentals in point of believe are few, and fully revealed, and soberly to be held without any supplementive additionals ; and the admitting of more is the cause of all the mischievous miseries in the church in point of doctrine ; so it sets us at a distance from peace, at defiance amongst ourselues ; and disableth all accomodation, to fetch downe a government *jure divino* ; yea, produces many hard charges, prejudicating the truth of God ; and gives ground plausibly to arrest and attaint religion, for suspicion of disturbance or incroachment, by such forestalling the civill state, and rendring the businesse of reformation in the future impossible" (*Considerations toward a peaceable reformation in matters ecclesiasticall, submitted to the judicious reader.* London, 1641, p. 4).

A scientific study of the sacred Scriptures and the first Christian century has shown that none of these forms of government is of divine right ; they all alike are of human origin, and have arisen from historic circumstances and sincere efforts to adapt the teachings of Scripture to these circumstances. It is noteworthy that there is agreement with reference to a single officer—the pastor of the congregation. All Christian churches have pastors, and they cannot do their work without them. Here is the basis for union. It is agreed that he should be a man called of God to his work, and endowed with the gifts and graces that are needed for the exercise of his ministry. It is also agreed that he should be ordained either by the imposition of hands or some suitable ceremony. This presbyter-bishop of the New Testament is found in all ages of the Church and in all lands. Herein is the true historical succession of the ministry, in the unbroken chain of these ordained presbyters. Herein is the world-wide government which is carried on through them. This is the

one form of Church government that bears the marks of catholicity, that is *semper ubique et ab omnibus*.

It matters little comparatively how the royal government of Jesus Christ and his power of the keys is communicated to them, whether directly from the divine Master or mediately through the ordination of a presbytery or of a bishop, an archbishop or a pope, so long as the Lord Jesus Christ, the one king and head of the Church, actually carries on his government through them. We apprehend that the long-suffering Saviour will not deprive his people of the benefits of his reign even if their leaders should make some mistakes in the form of government. This point of agreement in church government should be insisted upon by the churches, whatever they may think of the importance of the other officers in the Church. If all the churches of Christendom would recognize the validity of the ordination of the ministry of the other churches, one of the chief barriers to the concord of Christendom would be removed. They might deem this ordination as irregular and even disorderly, as not conformed to their own doctrine of church government. They might contend vigorously for the superior excellence of their own orders, if they would concede this one point to their fellow-Christians and fellow-ministers, the validity of whose ministry is attested by the Holy Ghost and its fruitfulness in good works.

Apart from this single church officer there is no agreement whatever. The deacon in the prelatical churches is a young man in preparation for the priesthood in a lower order of ministry. In the Reformed churches he is a layman having charge of the poor and of financial affairs. Among the Congregational churches he is a representative of the people and an adviser of the pastor. The deacons of the New Testament have little resemblance with any of these modern deacons.

The Reformed churches have elders who are associated with the pastor in a congregational presbytery which has the government of the congregation. There are elders in the New Testament who constitute a presbytery, but the majority of the elders of the Reformed churches at the present time have little resemblance to them. There was considerable difference of opinion in the Westminster Assembly with regard to this office. Stephen Marshall said in the course of the debate: "If I conceived every one should be called to subscribe to it or exercise no ministry, I should be loath to give my vote."*

The Westminster divines preferred to call them "other church-governors," and said, "which officers reformed churches commonly

* MS. Minutes Westminster Assembly, II., p. 248.

called elders ;" but the American Presbyterian Form of Government calls them " ruling elders," " properly representatives of the people," and say : " This office has been understood, by a great part of the Protestant Reformed churches, to be designated in the Holy Scriptures by the title of governments."

The Protestant churches of America have been obliged to introduce the lay element into their congregational government and to give it representation in the higher ecclesiastical courts ; and these laymen with their different names have very similar work to that of the Presbyterian elders. The name is less important than the thing. The Presbyterian system seems to us to be the nearest to the New Testament representation and the most efficient and best organized method of lay representation. It might be best to abandon the name *ruling* elder, which is of questionable origin and propriety, and use some other name that is not associated with historical conflicts. We should be willing to do this if it would advance the cause of Christian Union. It seems to us there would be little difficulty in adjusting the mode of government of the congregations so as to satisfy all reasonable demands.

The chief difficulties arise when we ascend to the Presbyteries, Conventions, Conferences, Associations, and the other general bodies, and ask the question as to their authority. All agree that their authority should be moral and spiritual, but it is in dispute whether it should be legal and imperative as of higher jurisdiction. It has been found necessary in American civil government to protect the liberties of the people in communities and towns, and also in the States, and to limit the jurisdiction of the superior bodies. This matter has been too much neglected in ecclesiastical government. Here is the way to solve not a few of our ecclesiastical controversies. Authority should decrease in extension and increase in intension as we ascend. The congregation with its pastor have certain rights and liberties which should be regarded as sacred, upon which the higher ecclesiastical bodies ought not to encroach. The authority of the higher bodies should be limited, and absolute authority denied. A constitution is a great blessing to any church, for it defines the obligations of the minister and the people, and guarantees them liberty in all else. So the presbytery should have certain rights of control over its own churches into which the synod should not intrude. The synod's power should suffer still greater limitation. The power of the General Assembly ought to be confined to very few matters, and those of general interest, such as the Constitution of the Church and its general work.

The Congregational churches, with whom the Baptists agree, stand

over against the Presbyterian and Episcopal forms of government as represented by the several Presbyterian, Reformed, Lutheran, and Methodist bodies, that hold to the Presbyterian form of government, and the Episcopal Church, which maintains the Episcopal form of government. As regards agreement between the three forms, every effort was put forth for union and concord in the seventeenth century. The long debates in the Westminster Assembly show this. The words of the leading divines on both sides bear witness to it.

Thomas Hill, the Presbyterian, says on the one side :

“ There is no such difference, for aught I know, between the sober Independent and moderate Presbyterian, but if things were wisely managed, both might be reconciled ; and by the happy union of them both together, the Church of England might be a glorious church, and that without persecuting, banishing, or any such thing, which some mouths are too full of. I confess it is most desirable that *confusion* (that many people fear by Independency) might be prevented ; and it is likewise desirable that the *severity* that some others fear, by the rigour of Presbytery might be hindred ; therefore let us labour for a prudent Love, and study to advance an happy accomodation (*An olive branch of peace and accomodation. Lord Mayor's Sermon, 1645. Printed 1648, p. 38.*)

So on the other side Jeremiah Burroughs, the Congregationalist, says :

“ Why should we not think it possible for us to go along close together in love and peace, though in some things our judgements and practices be apparently different one from another ? I will give you who are scholars a sentence to write upon your study doores, as needfull an one in these times as any ; it is this : *opinionum varietas, et opiniantium unitas non sunt ἀσυστάτα*—Variety of opinions and unity of those that hold them, may stand together. There hath been much ado to get us to agree ; we laboured to get our opinions into one, but they will not come together. It may be in our endeavours for agreement we have begun at the wrong end. Let us try what we can do at the other end ; it may be we shall have better success there. Let us labour to joyne our hearts to engage our affections one to another : if we cannot be of one mind that we may agree, let us agree that we may be of one mind ” (*Irenicum to the Lovers of Truth and Peace. London, 1646, p. 255.*)

And so the Presbyterian ministers of the Provincial Assembly of London adopted the paper entitled *Fus divinum ministerii evangelici*, and issued it signed by the moderator, assessor, and scribes of the Assembly, in 1653, saying in the Preface :

“ A fifth sort are our reverend brethren of *New and Old England* of the Congregational way, who hold our churches to be true churches, and our ministers true ministers, though they differ from us in some lesser things. We have been necessitated to fall upon some things, wherein they and we disagree, and have represented the reasons of our dissent. But yet we here profess that this disagreement shall not hinder us from any Christian accord with them in affection. That we can willingly write upon our study doors that motto which Mr. Jer Burroughes (who a little before his death did ambitiously endeavour after union amongst brethren, as some of us can testifie) persuades all scholars unto, *opinionum varietas, et opiniantium unitas non sunt ἀσυστάτα*. And that we shall be willing to entertain any sincere motion (as we have also formerly declared in our printed vindication) that shall farther a happy accomodation between us.

"The last sort are the moderate, godly episcopal men, that hold ordination by Presbyters to be lawful and valid; that a Bishop and a Presbyter are one and the same order of ministry, that are orthodox in doctrinal truths and yet hold that the government of the Church by a perpetual Moderatour is most agreeable to Scripture pattern. Though herein we differ from them, yet we are farre from thinking that this difference should hinder a happy union between them and us. Nay, we crave leave to profess to the world that it will never (as we humbly conceive) be well with *England* till there be an union endeavoured and effected between all those that are orthodox in doctrine though differing among themselves in some circumstances about Church government."

Richard Baxter led in a great movement for union in the organization of the Worcester Association, in 1653. Similar organizations were made in other counties, such as Westmoreland, Cumberland, Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Essex. As Baxter says:

"The main body of our Association were men that thought the Episcopal, Presbyterians, and Independents had each of them some good in which they excelled the other two parties, and each of them some mistakes; and that to select out of all three the best part, and leave the worst, was the most desirable (and ancient) form of government" (*Church Concord, Preface*. London, 1691).

So again in 1661-62 every effort was put forth for union between the Presbyterian and Episcopal parties. The Presbyterians were willing to accept the plan of Archbishop Ussher to reduce the Episcopate to the form of synodical government. They were willing to use the Book of Common Prayer with the exception of a very few passages and with the omission of a very few ceremonies. As Baxter said:

"Oh, how little would it have cost your churchmen in 1660 and 1661 to have prevented the calamitous and dangerous divisions of this land, and our common dangers thereby, and the hurt that many hundred thousand souls have received by it! And how little would it cost them *yet to prevent the continuance of it!*" (*Penitent Confession, 1691, Preface*.)

The Union was prevented in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries partly by political considerations, but chiefly by the theory that there could be no unity except by a submission to one strict form of church government. And so the three forms that were evolved from the religious conflicts of Great Britain have maintained themselves, strengthened their position, and have become unconquerable. What reasonable man can for a moment suppose that Presbyterianism will lose its hold upon Scotland and the North of Ireland, and give way to Episcopacy or Congregationalism, or that it will make any serious encroachments upon England or New England? There is no probability that the Church of England will ever succeed in imposing prelatical Episcopacy upon all the people of England, or will gain the supremacy over the Congregationalism of New England. Congregationalism will never gain much ground from

Presbyterianism in the Middle and Southern States of America. In the Western States the three forms are upon more equal terms. Now that conquest is out of the question, and the reunion of Christendom is impracticable by a strict adherence to any of these forms, it is manifest that there can be no union without mutual recognition, concession, and assimilation. Each form has certain advantages in it and also some disadvantages. That would be the most excellent form of government which would combine the good features and avoid the defects of all.

There has been assimilation in recent times, especially in America. The Congregational churches give more authority to their associations than is known in England. The Presbyterian and Episcopal churches give less authority to their supreme courts than is common in Great Britain. But the difference is still so great that consolidation is out of the question at present. But there is a possibility of union by Federation. It seems to me that there are no sufficient reasons why the Episcopal General Convention, the Congregational General Council, the Baptist General Council, the Methodist Episcopal General Conference, the Presbyterian General Assemblies, and the Reformed General Synods should not all alike send representatives to a General Council of the Church of Christ of America, such a Council having only moral and spiritual authority. It seems to me that there are possibilities of union and co-operation in the general work of the Christian Church in America and in heathen lands that are incalculable in the good that might be produced. There are grand possibilities in the removal of barriers, stumbling-blocks, causes of friction and strife, and in the furtherance of peace, concord, and Christian love.

But what shall we do with the historical episcopate? We answer that the historical episcopate is an ambiguous term. There are many kinds of episcopates in Christian history. Some bishops claim the authority to rule the Church by divine right, some bishops derive their authority from archbishops, and some bishops receive their authority from the Pope. There are also bishops who are superintendents chosen by presbyters, and who have no other authority than that imparted to them by those who have chosen them. There are also presbyterial bishops who exercise all the rights and fulfil all the duties of the Christian ministry. The great difference of opinion that prevails in the Church of Christ on the subject of the historical episcopate is in the matter of order and real seat of authority. Christendom might unite with an ascending series of superintending bishops that would culminate in a universal bishop, provided the pyramid would be willing to rest firmly on its base, the solid order

of the presbyter bishops of the New Testament and of all history and all churches. But the pyramid will never stand on its apex nor hang suspended in the air supported by any of its upper stages.

We confess to a warm sympathy with those members of the Protestant Episcopal Church who desire to remove the terms Protestant Episcopal from the name of their Church, on the ground that these terms are schismatical. All such terms are from the very nature of the case schismatical. They represent that the churches that bear them are parties or branches of the Church, and not the true and pure Church of Christ.

John Durie recommended as one of the paths to peace and unity "to abolish the names of parties, as Presbyterial, Prelatical, Congregational, etc., and to be called Reformed Christians of England, Scotland, France, and Germany" (*Plain Way of Peace and Concord*, p. 5. London, 1660).

But the names really correspond with the facts; they express the truth. The evil of schism is in the churches. It will not cure the evil to abolish the names. When the evil of schism has been cured, then the schism and the names will disappear likewise. In the mean while it is far better that the names should remain and express the true state of the case to all earnest souls. They may perhaps sting the conscience and goad the will to earnest action in behalf of peace and unity.

"Why, sirs, have not Independents, Presbyterians, Episcopall, etc., one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one Creed, one Scripture, one hope of everlasting life? Are our disagreements so great that we may not live together in love, and close in fraternall union and amity? Are we not of one Religion? Do we differ in fundamentals or substantials? Will not conscience worry us? Will not posterity curse us, if by our divisions we betray the gospel into the hands of the enemies? And if by our mutuall envyings and jealousies and perverse zeal for our severall conceits, we should keep open the breach for all heresies and wickednesse to enter, and make a prey of our poor people's souls: Brethren, you see other bonds are loosed, Satan will make his advantage of these daies of licentiousnesse; let us straiten the bond of Christian unity and love, and help each other against the powers of hell, and joyn our forces against our common enemy" (*Christian Concord, or the Agreement of the Associated Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire, with Richard Baxter's Explication and Defence of it, and his Exhortation to Unity*, p. 96. London, 1653).

II. SUBSCRIPTION TO ELABORATE CREEDS.

Another great barrier to the reunion of Christendom is *subscription to elaborate Creeds*. This is the great sin of the Lutheran and Reformed churches. Every one of these creeds has separated subscribers from non-subscribers and occasioned the organization of dissenting churches. Lutherans, Calvinists, and Arminians, and sections of the same, have been separated into different ecclesiastical

organizations. These doctrinal divisions have done more than anything else to weaken Protestantism and stay its progress in Europe. These controversies that centre about the creeds of the seventeenth century still continue, but they are not so violent as they used to be. Each of the varieties of Protestantism has won its right to exist and to be recognized in the common family. The differences cannot be solved by conquest, but only by some higher knowledge and better adjustment of the problems through an advance in theological conception and definition. The question now forces itself upon earnest men whether these differences justify ecclesiastical separation, and whether they may not be left to battle their own way to success or defeat without the help of ecclesiastical fences and traditional prejudices.

“It is not the part of wise Divines, so to swell and increase the number of Fundamentall points, that all Christians, as well learned, as unlearned, should be wholly uncertaine, and ignorant, what, and of what kind those be which are adjudged properly to belong to the Foundation of Religion, & Catholike Faith. But if we should let the matter run on so long, till all the controverted Problemes betwixt Protestants bee counted Fundamentall, long since they have grown to too numerous, hereafter they may grow to an almost numberlesse multitude. For this solemne course and practice is observed of many, that what they themselves have added to any Fundamentall axiom, as over weight, and what they beleve to be a consequence of the same, this they presently require of all, to be counted in the number of Fundamentalls. If we grant to any particular Churches, or to their Doctors, this power of creating and multiplying Fundamentalls ; all hope is past of the certainty of the Catholike Faith, all hope is gone of the Brotherly communion of the Catholike Church” (Bishop Davenant, *An Exhortation to the restoring of Brotherly Communion betwixt the Protestant Churches*, pp. 121, 122. London, 1641).

The differences between the Lutherans, Calvinists, and Arminians have nothing to do with the essentials of Protestantism. All alike hold that the Word of God is the only infallible rule of faith and practice ; that men are justified by faith in Jesus Christ and not by works of righteousness or ceremonies ; that good works are the fruits of justifying faith and give assurance of acceptance with God ; and, above all, that salvation is of the divine grace through Jesus Christ, the only mediator and redeemer. These are the great verities of Protestantism, and they are vastly more important than those peculiar doctrines that distinguish the Lutheran, Calvinistic, and Arminian systems. After many efforts, renewed from time to time from the Reformation until the present century, the Reformed and Lutheran Churches have combined in the Evangelical Church of Prussia and other German States. This reunion has proved a great success, and has been fruitful for good. There is no sufficient reason why the Lutheran and Reformed churches should not unite in America. This will be accomplished when they are prepared to

recognize that the few points of difference between them are debatable and tolerable, rising like mountain peaks above the great ranges of doctrine in which there is entire concord.

The Reformed Church was broken up into two great parties calling themselves Calvinists and Arminians. Holland was the centre of this unhappy conflict, but it extended over entire Europe and distracted all the national Churches of the Reformed faith. The Articles of the Synod of Dort were adopted to exclude Arminians from orthodoxy, but they have never given satisfaction to the intermediate party, which has now become the most numerous of all. Arminianism was really a reaction from the supralapsarian Calvinism. It would have been simple justice to cut them both off at the same time. But it is one of the singularities of religious history that narrow views of sacred things and extreme rigidity of doctrine succeed in maintaining their errors within the orthodox fold, while errors of a more generous type are often cast out. Calvinism cannot be identified with the Five Points of the Synod of Dort. The conflict with Arminianism developed a conflict between the scholastic type of Calvinism and the milder Calvinism of the school of Saumur of France, the Federalists of Holland, and the evangelical Puritanism of Calamy, Baxter, and their associates in Great Britain. These strifes were renewed in America in the eighteenth century, and resulted in the separation of the so-called old school and new school. Really and historically the one was as old as the other.

The two parties united in happy union in our great American Presbyterian Church and made it broader, more catholic, and fruitful. But this reunion ought to be the beginning and not the end of the reunion of Presbyterian churches. There are no such doctrinal differences in the other branches of Presbyterianism as to justify separation. The Southern Presbyterian Church as a body seems to represent the scholastic type of Calvinism, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church the semi-Arminianism of the milder type of Calvinism. There is a natural tendency of the sterner Calvinists to affiliate with the former and of the milder Calvinists to prefer the latter. Any scheme of Reunion that would prove successful and give satisfaction to all parties should embrace both these Churches. It seems clear that the revision of the Westminster Confession by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was due in part to a misapprehension of its historic sense and in part to a narrow interpretation of the terms of subscription, the blame for which rests as much upon the intolerant Presbytery that threw them off at the beginning of their history as upon those who were compelled to beat their own way and maintain their position in the midst of not a few difficulties. When they tell

us that they can adopt the Westminster Confession as it is, with the addition of the Declaratory Act of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, they virtually take the position that they can subscribe to the Westminster standards as they are, in the sense of the American adopting act and of the regular terms of subscription. We do not hesitate to say that there are no legitimate doctrinal barriers in the way of the reunion of the entire Presbyterian family in America on the Westminster standards, pure and simple. It ill becomes those who insist upon strict subscription and an interpretation of the standards in accordance with the terms of the scholastic Calvinism, to neglect the historical study of the Confessions as they are now doing, and have been doing throughout the century. The historical interpretation of our Standards makes it clear that all parties alike need the full benefit of the generous terms of subscription that our fathers framed so wisely and so well.

The largest ecclesiastical body in the United States is the Methodist Episcopal Church, which is distinguished by its Arminian type of doctrine. It is fortunate that the Presbyterian churches do not bear the name of Calvin, and that the Methodist Episcopal Church does not bear the name of Arminius. Indeed, the types of doctrine in these churches do not agree altogether with the names of these two great Protestant divines. The doctrinal system of the Westminster symbols is not the scholastic type of Calvinism of the Swiss or Dutch divines. It is not the type of the French school of Saumur or of the Federalists of Holland. It is the distinct Puritan type of Calvinism. And so the doctrinal system of the Methodist Episcopal Church as presented in its revised edition of the XXXIX Articles and the Teachings of John Wesley is not the Arminianism of Holland, but is a semi-Arminianism of the English type. There is more of English Puritanism in the Methodist Episcopal Church in its practical religious life than there is of Arminianism in its creed. The English Puritanism that is common to these two great branches of the Church of Christ is much more important than the doctrinal variations. In my judgment these differences do not justify separation.

“The evangelical Arminianism of Methodism has very close and vital affinities with the Puritan evangelical type of Calvinism; and it is for the interest of the Christian cause to emphasize this fact. So, at least, thought one of the ablest and most sagacious Calvinistic theologians our country has produced. I refer to the late Henry Boynton Smith. In a letter written in January, 1871, and addressed to a distinguished Methodist clergyman, he says:

“‘What is it that keeps Methodists and Presbyterians apart? Is it anything *essential* —to the church, or even to its *well-being*? For one, I do *not* think that it is. Your so-called “Arminianism” being of *grace*, and not of *nature*, is in harmony with our sym-

bols. It is a wide outlook which looks to an *ecclesiastical* union of Methodists and *Presbyterians*, but I am convinced that it is vital for both, and for Protestantism and for Christianity *vs.* Romanism in this country ; and that it is desirable *per se*.

“ I am also persuaded that our differences are merely intellectual (metaphysical), and not moral or spiritual ; in short, formal and not material. As to *polity*, too, so far as the Scriptures go, there is no essential difference between us. Your “ bishops ” I do not object to, but rather like, and our “ elders ” I think you would like, on due acquaintance. As to Christian work, where you are strong we are weak ; but your local preachers and class-leaders, are they really anything more than our “ elders ”—lay elders—under another name ? ” (PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, July, 1883, p. 563.)

With this opinion I entirely concur. I do not underrate the importance of the points of difference. I should not be willing to yield any single position of historic Calvinism or to depart from any part of the Puritan type of doctrine. But I see no reason why Calvinism could not maintain itself in the same ecclesiastical organization with Arminianism. We see that it does, in fact, vindicate its right to live and grow in the Protestant Episcopal Church and in Congregational churches.

I have such confidence in the principles of Calvinism that I believe they would have a better chance of overcoming Arminianism in a free and chivalrous contest in the same ecclesiastical organization than they now have when shut off by themselves and carefully excluded from the largest body of Christians in America. We doubt whether it is practicable or advisable at the present time to consolidate the Presbyterian and the Methodist families, but there might be a Federation and an Alliance for union and co-operation in the general work of the Church of Christ.

The doctrinal differences are not so great as some imagine. No one will suspect Bishop Davenant of any unfaithfulness to Calvinistic principles. He represented the Church of England at the Synod of Dort and concurred in its decisions ; and yet he treats of the matters in dispute in the following generous way :

“ It appeared lately in the conference of *Lipsigh* that there is an agreement in all these Points. If there be any other things remaining they are rather controversies about words than about matter ; rather discords about subtle speculations than fundamentall articles. Such are those which are disputed betwixt Schoolmen, of the Signification of the very words, namely, *Predestination* and *Reprobation* ; of the Imaginary order of Priority, and Posteriority betwixt the Eternal Acts of Predestinating and Fore-knowing of the unsearchable manner of Divine working about all humane actions, whether good or bad, of the necessitie, or contingency of all things, which from Eternity were predestinated, or fore-knowne of God. In such perplexed controversies it cannot bee, but contradictions must arise often-times betwixt Disputants : yet brotherly Concord may be made up and maintained betwixt the churches themselves, as anciently it was preserved betwixt the *African* and *Latine* churches, their Doctors in the meantime being of different opinions in the weighty Question of Baptizing of Hereticks. To close up all in a word : those churches (falsely so called) may be forsaken, which possesse not the Foundation of the Apostles preaching : But true Churches ought not to be deserted

and pluckt asunder from others for the errors of particular Doctors, because the Faith of Churches leanes not upon the names or writings of single Persons (*in l. c.*, p. 151, 152).

The theological systems of the three great branches of Protestantism have been elaborated by *a priori* logic and by deduction from premises that are not sufficiently accurate and comprehensive. They have all of them departed a long distance from the Scriptures and the Creeds of the Reformation. It has been found necessary in recent times to distinguish between the theology of the Bible and the theology of the schools, between the doctrines of the Confessions of Faith and the doctrines of the theologians. There are now three distinct theological disciplines that have to do with Christian doctrine—Biblical Theology, Symbolics, and Dogmatics. These do not by any means correspond. Protestantism has fallen into a grave error in its doctrinal development. It has substituted Protestant scholasticism for mediæval scholasticism, and Protestant Tradition for Roman Catholic Tradition. It is necessary to overcome this error of the Protestant divines. As Davenant says :

“ I conceive it no great difference whether we place unwritten traditions in joint commission with the holy Scriptures, or whether we enforce our controversies on all churches to be knowne and beleevd, under the same necessity of salvation, with the solid and manifest doctrine of the Gospel ” (*in l. c.*, p. 3).

“ It would apply some plaister to this soare, if the Divines of both sides would remember, that although all the Articles of the Catholique Faith are plaine, and perspicuous (as written in God's Word with capitall Letters, so that he that runneth may read them), yet what thence is extracted by the chymistry of man's understanding are divers, and of different kinds, most of them so obscure that they escape the eyes of the most sharpe-sighted Divines. We must therefore confidently leane with all our weight on what the Scriptures have decided ; but not lay so much stresse on the consequences of our own deduction. *Luther* said well out of *Ambrose*, *Away with Logicians, where wee must beleve Fishermen.* For in the mysteries of Faith the majesty of the matter will not bee pent within the narrow roome of Reason, nor come under the roof of Syllogismes ; wherefore the same *Luther* wisely admonisheth us, that in matters surmounting the capacity of Humane Reason, we beware of Etymologies, Analogies, Consequences, and Examples ” (Davenant, *in l. c.*, pp. 6, 7).

Another sin of Protestantism as well as of Romanism has been the abuse of the sacred Scriptures by improper methods of interpretation. The grammatical and the historical sense has been neglected. The variety of type of the Biblical authors has been ignored. The Scriptures have been too often interpreted to conform to the Rule of Faith. The Rule of Faith to the Reformers and the Westminster divines was in the plain passages of Scripture, but the Reformed system of doctrine of the scholastic type was often substituted for the Scriptural rule of faith, and thus the Scriptures were forced to correspond with the scholastic system. It matters little if Scriptures can be adduced in favor of these elaborations of doctrine unless these

passages speak in such plain language that they convince mankind in general. As Herbert Palmer, one of the Westminster divines, says : " When we have to do with Scriptures that are ambiguous, then those things produced should not be with too much rigor urged upon other men ;" * and Thomas Gataker, another Westminster divine, tersely says : " Fundamental poynts ly in a narrow compass." †

And Richard Baxter says :

" And indeed he knoweth not man, who knoweth not that universal unity and concord will never be had upon the terms of many, dark, uncertain, humane, or unnecessary things, but only on the terms of things, *few, sure, plain, divine, and necessary.*" ‡

The names Lutheran, Reformed, and Arminian are the badges of distinct systems of Protestant faith ; they will continue so to be. It is fortunate that Arminian is not a name given to any particular Church. The names Reformed and Lutheran smack of the old controversies ; they have been rightly abandoned by the United Church of Germany, and the name Evangelical has taken their place. It would be a happy thing for American Christianity if these names could be abandoned here likewise. The names will remain, however, so long as the differences remain. We have to learn the great principle of Unity in Variety. That Variety we find in the sacred Scriptures in the four great types of doctrine represented by James, Peter, Paul, and John. We find them in the Old Testament in the Levitical writers, on the one hand, and the prophets on the other, to which we must add as separate types the authors of the Wisdom Literature and of the Psalter. We find these types in all the great religions of the world ; they recur in Christian history ; they are rooted in the different temperaments of mankind ; they manifest themselves in those great types that dominate all thinking, that we call Mysticism, Rationalism, Scholasticism, and Utilitarianism. Accordingly the Church of Christ, like the Scriptures, should comprehend them all and not exclude any of them. There can be no true unity that does not spring from this diversity. The one Church of Christ is vastly more comprehensive than any one denomination. If the visible Church is to be one, the pathway to unity is in the recognition of the necessity and the great advantage of comprehending the types in one broad, catholic Church of Christ.

" And brotherly unity is the genuine and rare fruit of brotherly love, by every Christian to be endeavoured to the utmost extent of gossell possibility. Nothing in our own spirits of corrupt distemper, carnall ends, or undue prejudice should hinder it ; nothing

* Westminster Assembly Minutes, II., f. 252.

† *Ibid.*, f. 248.

‡ *True and Only Way of Concord*, p. 143. London, 1680.

in our brethren sound in the faith, and of godly conversation, though not absolutely agreeing with us in way of disposition, or opinion in all things; Christians cannot be all alike here. All have not the same intellectual complexion. It is a great defect of meekness of wisdom to refuse all agreement with others because they agree not with us in all things. Neither may any other Christian precept hinder us" (*The Agreement of the Associated Ministers of the County of Essex*, p. 12. London, 1658).

III. UNIFORMITY OF WORSHIP.

The third great barrier to Christian Union is the insisting upon *uniformity of worship*. This is a special sin of the Church of England. The British prelates pressed this theory of Christian Union to an extreme, and persecuted the Puritans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The result of this persecution was civil war and the organization of the three national Churches of Great Britain, with a large number of dissenting churches.

Uniformity of worship has proved the fruitful source of discord. The points of difference between the Puritans and the Prelatists at the start were not great. The separation greatly increased them. The churches that sprang into existence as the result of the civil wars are farther apart in worship than they were when they were all nestled in the bosom of the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It would have cost the British bishops very little concession to have satisfied the Puritans at the close of the sixteenth century, or even at the Savoy Conference in 1660-61. The Puritans were as much opposed to separation as the Episcopal party and as earnest in their desire for a national establishment. But the bishops refused to make concessions, and insisted upon uniformity and the persecution of non-conformists. The distraction in religious affairs in British and American Church History are in great part due to this fatal blunder. There can be no such thing as uniformity of worship. The separating of non-conforming churches did not lead to uniformity, even in the Church of England itself.

Francis Makemie well puts it at the close of the seventeenth century :

"Therefore let us still value and esteem *unity* in *Doctrine* and *Worship*, and the greater and more weighty matters, preferring it before an exact and accurate uniformity, in every *Punctilio of Circumstance* and *Ceremony*, which no nation hath hitherto attained, the *Church of England* not excepted; for what uniformity is between your *Cathedral* and *Parochial* worship? between such churches as have *Organs* and those that want them? between such as *Sing*, or *Chant* the *Service*, and such as do not? between such as read the *whole Service*, and others that *Minse* it, and read but a part? between those that begin with a *free Prayer*, and such as *do not*? And in the same Congregations, what Uniformity is between such as use *Responses*, and such as *do not*? between such as *Bow* to the *East*, or the *Altar*, and such as *do not*? between such as *bow the knee*, and those that only *bow the head*, at the Name or Word, *Jesus*? What *uniformity*—between such

as Sing Psalms. and most that *do not*? And I find many of the *Sons* of the church, break *uniformity*, and *Canons*, as well as their neighbours: what *uniformity act* or *Common Prayer*, allows any to begin with a *Prayer of their own*, as the greatest and best have done, though others call it a *Geneva trick*? What *uniformity act* enjoins *Organs*, and *Singing Boyes*: and where is bowing to the *East* and *Altar*, with all other *Church Honours*, commanded? What warrants the use of the *publick Form* for *private Baptism*? why is the *burial Service* read over any *Dissenters* that are all *excommunicated* by your *Canons*?

"Let me humbly and earnestly, with all Submission, address the *conformable clergy*—in this Island, to instruct their People, that *they* and *we* profess the same Christian and *Protestant Religion*, only with some alterations in external *Ceremonies* and *circumstances*; that we may unite in affection and strength, against the *common enemy* of our Reformation, and concur in the great work of the *Gospel*, for the manifestation of God's glory, and the Conviction, Conversion, and Salvation of Souls in this Island, instructing such as are Ignorant, in the principal and great things of Religion, promoting vertue and true holiness, and Preaching down and reprovng all Atheism, irreligion, and profanity, sealing and confirming all by an universal *Copy, pattern and example*, of a holy, and ministerial life and Conversation" (*Truths in a True Light*, pp. 21, 22. Edin., 1699).

There are at the present time as great differences in the worship of the Church of England and her daughters. With the optional parts of the liturgy, the additions that may be made especially in ceremonial, in robes, in decorations, in altar furniture, and in gestures of bodily worship, uniformity of worship is certainly out of the question. The Reformed churches and the Methodist Episcopal Church have liturgical forms for sacramental services, and some of the Reformed churches have optional liturgies for the whole or part of the Sabbath services. The German Reformed and the Lutheran Churches have liturgical books. But there is no uniformity of worship in any of these Churches. The Presbyterian churches have Directories of Worship all based on the Westminster Directory, but these have been changed from time to time. They prescribe the order of services, but leave the use of forms of prayer entirely optional. There is an entire lack of uniformity of worship in the Presbyterian churches. The Congregational and the Baptist churches have still greater diversity in modes and forms of worship. There is greater diversity of worship in the Christian Church now than at any previous period of its history. There is every reason to suppose that this will increase rather than diminish. There is no hope whatever of uniformity of worship.

And yet there is essential unity even in the midst of all this diversity. The five great parts of worship are found in all churches—namely, Common Prayer, Sacred Song, Reading of the Sacred Scriptures, the Sermon, and the Apostolic Benediction. The differences in the selections of the themes of sermons and in the passages of Scripture to be read do not destroy the essential unity in these two parts of public worship. Some Presbyterian churches

have insisted upon uniformity in sacred song no less than the Church of England has insisted upon uniformity in common prayer. We have to thank the Episcopal churches for our freedom in praise no less than the Presbyterian churches for our freedom in prayer. Happily there are at present few Presbyterians who insist upon limiting our praise to the Psalm-book and Paraphrases, and the bare, cold worship without organs. It is a singularity of several branches of the Presbyterian Church that they insist upon excluding Christian hymns and musical instruments from divine worship. So far as musical instruments are concerned, these form so important a part in the worship of the ancient temple and in the great assembly of the Church in heaven revealed to us by the Apocalypse that one is amazed that any one should refuse to employ them. In our opinion, the use of musical instruments in the worship of God will be increased in the future. The drift is so strong in that direction that it is impossible to resist it. But if any congregation should prefer to worship without musical instruments they should be allowed to do so. Only they ought not to commit the sin of rending the Church of Christ on such unscriptural and unreasonable grounds as these. The use of Christian hymns began in the Scriptures of the New Testament. There are several hymns in the New Testament writings ; so all ages of the Church have produced hymns of beauty and of power. There is no sufficient reason why these should not be used in divine worship. There is no prohibition of their use in Scripture. There is no prescription of the use of the Psalter in public worship either in the Old or the New Testament. The Psalter was a book for the synagogue rather than the temple. If any congregation should desire to limit itself to the Book of Psalms and paraphrases of Scripture we have no objection, so long as it does not obtrude this opinion upon other congregations. It is a sin and a shame to rend the Church of Christ for such a trifle as this.

In sacred song uniformity has entirely disappeared. Private selections of hymns have taken the place of the official hymn-books of the churches, and these are used often without regard to denomination. A considerable number of Christian hymns are used in all Protestant churches that do not limit themselves to the Psalms and Paraphrases. It would be easy to select a hymn-book of considerable size, even from their own books, that would satisfy all of these churches. The freedom here has wrought greater unity than we find in those parts of worship where there is less liberty.

There is greater difficulty in the common prayer. The excellence of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England is generally recognized. But considerable alterations will need to be made

in order to make it acceptable to American Christians in general; and there must be the recognition of the liberty of free prayer in a part of the service. I would prefer the use of a prayer-book for all the parts of Common Prayer at the Sabbath services, with the exception of a brief free prayer at the close of the services expressing the special needs of the congregation and the day. But the mass of American Christians would not at present go so far as this. It should also be said that there are other admirable prayer-books besides that of the Church of England. The prayer-books of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches have also their advantages; and there is no good reason why we should be confined to forms of prayer of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or those of earlier date. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ought to be able to enrich a prayer-book that would adequately express the worship of our day. The churches that use prayer-books should direct their energies to enriching them by removing obsolete parts and adding more appropriate prayers from other service books and modern divines. If an effort were to be made to enrich the prayer-books similar to that which has been so successful in the hymn-books, it would meet with equal if not greater success. It is probable that unofficial hands will have to lead in this noble work.

On the other hand, those churches that have no prayer-books should overcome their prejudices against their use. These prejudices are largely traditional, and are owing to the fact that our Puritan fathers had to battle for liberty against uniformity. But it is a happy circumstance that the Presbyterian churches have not taken any official action against the use of liturgical books. Any Presbyterian congregation has the right at the present time to use a book of prayer if it see fit, and some of them avail themselves of the privilege in whole or in part. There are great advantages in written forms of prayer. As Richard Baxter says:

“The famousst Divines in the Church of God, even *Luther, Zwinglius, Melancthon, Calvin, Perkins, Sibbs*, and abundance of non-conformists of greatest name in *England*, did ordinarily use a form of prayer of their own, before their Sermons in the Pulpit, and some of them in their families too. Now, these men did it not through idleness or through temporizing, but because some of them found it best for the people, to have oft the same words; and some of them found such a weakness of memory, that they judged it the best improvement of their own gifts” (*Cure of Church Divisions*, p. 183. London, 1670).

We hail with gratitude to God the noble declaration of the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church when they say

“that in all things of human ordering or human choice relating to modes of worship and discipline or to traditional customs, this Church is ready, in the spirit of love and humility, to forego all preferences of her own.”

We sincerely hope that other Christian Churches are ready to meet them in the same generous spirit.

The greatest difficulty remains in the celebration of the Sacraments. Many of the Baptist churches hold that immersion is the only mode of baptism. This implies that all who have not been baptized by immersion are not members of the visible Church, and that therefore there are no other visible churches than these Baptist churches. The doctrine of close communion is a necessary consequence of this doctrine, for no one can rightly partake of the Lord's Supper who has not been baptized. We apprehend that our Baptist brethren do not realize how intolerant this position really is. It is more intolerant than the doctrine that refuses to recognize the validity of the ordination of the ministry of the non-Episcopal churches, for this doctrine only denies the ministry of these churches, while it recognizes their baptism as valid, and that they and their people are members of the visible Church of Christ. But the Baptist doctrine with one blow destroys the ministry and the church rights of all the people of other Christian churches by refusing to recognize the validity of their baptism.

It should be admitted, after all the scholarly discussion upon the subject of the primitive mode of baptism, seeing that the Baptist churches are in a small minority of the Christian world on this question, that baptism by immersion is not distinctly commanded in the New Testament, and that it is by no means clear that it was the mode by which our Saviour and his apostles were baptized. Our Baptist brethren have not been able to convince the ministry of the other Christian churches, who are equally competent with themselves to interpret the Bible and the first Christian century. I do not believe that Christ and his apostles were baptized by immersion. I should not hesitate to follow any evidence that could be produced to prove the Baptist position, for even then it would by no means follow that the mode of baptism should be by immersion throughout all time. It seems to me that the Baptists sin as greatly in their insistence upon uniformity in the ceremony of baptism as Episcopalians in insisting upon uniformity in certain ceremonies of worship, and some Presbyterians in insisting upon uniformity in Psalm-singing. We would suggest that if the Baptists could affirm from their point of view that the baptism celebrated in other Christian churches is valid as to its essence, owing to the application of water in the name of the blessed Trinity, though irregular in form, the barrier would be removed. Other churches recognize baptism by immersion as valid, and the ceremony might by common consent be left to the conscientious preferences of congregations, or even individuals.

The most serious difficulty is in the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Here diversity of doctrine determines to some extent the ceremonies that are used. The objections that the Puritans made against the ceremony of kneeling have been removed by time. No one would impute to the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church any adoration of the Bread and the Wine such as was made by Crypto-Roman Catholics in the Church of England in the sixteenth century. The Presbyterian method of sitting at tables has been generally abandoned on account of its great inconvenience. The present fashion of sitting in pews during the celebration is a modern practice that has little to recommend it other than convenience. It might be well to return to the more reverent postures of kneeling or standing in the solemn partaking of the Lord's Supper. In the Protestant Episcopal Church the ceremonies allow people of widely different views to partake of the same bread and wine in the same service. In the Evangelical churches of Germany, Lutheran and Reformed partake of the same bread and the same cup. In the Presbyterian and Congregational churches Calvinists and Zwinglians sit down together at the communion feast. I see no sufficient reason why all of these may not hold their variant opinions and yet join in the Supper of the Lord.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

John Bergius, the court preacher of Brandenburg, well said :

"Whosoever hath this gracious help and presence of Christ ever before his eyes, will easily forget that unprofitable strife of words about such a presence of an invisible, untouchable, incomprehensible Body, wherein he cannot comfort himself, and whereof he cannot tell what effect or benefit it hath; and will tremble again and be ashamed before the face of Christ, to condemne or to cast out of Christ's Communion those that heartily believe and set before their eyes onely his helpfull and gracious effectual presence. Whereas on the contrary it may be justly questioned of many, that quarrel so much of Christ's corporal being on earth, whether they truly believe that he is in Heaven, and doth see and hear and will judge such unchristian contentions" (*The Pearle of Peace and Concord*, p. 47. London, 1655).

IV. TRADITIONALISM.

Traditionalism is another great barrier in the way of Christian Union. There are in human nature two forces which, like action and reaction, tend to keep everything in stability—the conservative and the progressive. Either of these apart is hurtful. Their combination is a great excellence. There can be no improvement without progress. There can be no genuine improvement unless the

previous attainments have been conserved. Conservatism is healthful, but it too often reacts until it becomes mere Traditionalism. This is at present one of the chief barriers to the reunion of Christendom.

The United States of America contain the largest body of Christians in any nation under heaven and the greatest variety of ecclesiastical organizations, representing nearly all the national Churches of Europe and the bodies of Christians dissenting from them. These all have entire freedom to develop in accordance with their own internal principles and organic life. Here the greatest variation in Christendom is to be found. Here, then, the problem of Christian Union must be worked out. The great variations in Christianity that exist side by side in America at the present time are, with few exceptions, not of American origin and growth. The variations simply reflect the differences that exist in the different nations of Europe. They were brought to America by the colonists from Europe. In many respects these American daughters are nearer to the mother Churches of Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than the daughters that have remained in the original homestead. There is a tenacious adherence in America to opinions and customs that are regarded in Europe as antiquated. This traditionalism is quite remarkable in view of the great progress that has been made by the Churches of the same faith and order in Europe.

If one should compare the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland with the United Presbyterian Church of America no one unfamiliar with the history could suppose that the American Church was the daughter. The American Church adheres to certain customs and doctrines that have long been abandoned by the mother Church, and it is in these things alone that there is any ground for separation from the body of American Presbyterians.

The Reformed Church exists in two bodies—the German and the Dutch. The differences are chiefly in traditional usages, and these are the only things that stand in the way of the combination of them both with the Presbyterians in one organism. There was a splendid opportunity of combining British Presbyterianism with the Reformed churches in 1744 under the advice of the Synods of North and South Holland. It failed, owing to the strife in the Presbyterian Church and the division of the American Presbyterians into two rival synods.* Another effort was made soon after the American Revolution, but it did not succeed. It is desirable that these efforts should be speedily

* See my *American Presbyterianism*, pp. 284 *seq.* New York, 1885.

renewed. There is no doctrinal difficulty, in the way, because the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession are, as we understand, acceptable to both bodies. The liturgical books of the Reformed churches are optional books, and would continue so to be in the united Church. The differences in usage in other respects are in the government and worship of the congregations. Here each congregation would be left free to follow its own customs. I can see no difficulties that might not be readily removed by a conference of divines who really desire the consummation of organic union.

The American churches are in general over-conservative in matters of doctrine and worship, but in their forms of government and practical religion they have adapted themselves to the altered conditions and circumstances of the new world. They collectively bear the marks of the American national life. They have common features that distinguish them from the churches of Europe, that make them all constituent parts of American Christianity.

In some respects the American churches are traditional and in other respects radical when compared with the churches of Europe. There is thus an internal inconsistency that will ere long produce great changes that may be little less than revolutionary. The practical side of Christianity will ere long overcome the traditionalism in doctrine and worship, and reconstruct on broader lines and in more comprehensive schemes ; so that there will be better correspondence between the doctrines and worship and the real American Christian life. These traditions are those of foreign national Churches that grew up out of historical circumstances that have long past and that are no longer appropriate to the circumstances of a new age and a new continent. Other traditions originated in old conflicts that have passed away, leaving no other trace behind than those old banners and battle-flags, with which it seems necessary that the denominations should parade once in a while. There are new issues and burning questions of the time that demand attention and that will exhaust the energies of all earnest men. These issues and these questions interest all the American churches alike. In the consideration of them the parties leap the barriers of denominations and divide on other lines of fracture. These are the questions that will reconstruct the churches in the future. They will destroy the old divisions and make new ones. It is greatly to be desired that the new divisions will not find it necessary to express themselves in sectarian churches.

The great questions that loom up before us are the mediatorial reign of Christ and the Second Advent ; Repentance, Sanctification, and a Holy Life ; the middle state between death and the Resurrec-

tion, and the everlasting Future ; Christian Union and Holy Love. The creeds of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries point in this direction, but they do not solve these problems of theology. The Confessions are many of them in advance of the Churches that adhere to them. The Churches ought to be in advance of the Confessions.

It is thought by some that a simple creed is the pathway to Christian Union. I shall not deny that such a creed is desirable. It might be well to formulate the consensus of Christendom, the consensus of Prôttestantism, the consensus of the Reformed Churches, and so on. This will all be accomplished in good time by the science of Symbolics. These are historical questions for scholarly investigation, and not for official action of Christian Churches.

But theological progress is not in the direction of simplicity, but of variety and complicity. We cannot retreat in theological definition ; we must advance in this scientific age. The Apostles' Creed represents the simple faith of the early Church ; we cannot ignore Christian history and go back to that. The Ante-Nicene Church was crude in its theology ; we cannot fall back on the Nicene Creed for a reunion of Christendom. The inheritance of the Truth is more precious than external Unity. Progress is to be made by more exact definitions in theological science, not by suppression of truth and ignoring of differences in order to a superficial and transient harmony. Every Christian should follow the guidance of the divine Spirit into all truth, and regard every truth, even the smallest, as unspeakably precious ; and yet we should have in mind the proportions of truth, and bear on our banner the golden words of Rupertus Meldenus, *In necessariis unitas, in non necessariis libertas, in utrisque caritas.*

The chief reason of differences is imperfect knowledge and an indisposition to follow the truth sincerely and wholly without regard to consequences. A higher knowledge will in time remove the differences. The barriers seem impassable when we keep in the low levels of doctrine and life. When we climb the mountains and ascend the peaks of Christianity the fences and hedges of human conceits are the merest trifles.

Unity is to be attained by conserving all that is good in the past achievements of the Church, and by advancing to still higher attainments. The Holy Spirit will guide the Church and the Christian scholar in the present and the future as he has in the past. The Creeds give us what has already been attained. We should take our stand on them and build higher. Such progress is possible only by research, discussion, and conflict. The more conflict the better.

Battle for the truth is infinitely better than stagnation in error. Every error should be slain as soon as possible. If it be our error we should be the most anxious to get rid of it. Error is our greatest foe. Truth is the most precious possession. There can be no unity save in the truth, and no perfect unity save in the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Let us unite in the truth already gained and agree to contend in Christian love and chivalry for the truth that has not yet been sufficiently determined, having faith that in due time the Divine Spirit will make all things clear to us.

Christian churches should go right on in the lines drawn by their own history and their own symbols ; this will in the end lead to greater heights, on which there will be concord. Imperfect statements will be corrected by progress. All forms of error will disappear before the breath of truth. We are not to tear down what has cost our fathers so much. We are rather to strengthen the foundations and buttress the buildings as we build higher. Let the light shine, higher and higher, the clear, bright light of day. Truth fears no light. Light chases error away. True orthodoxy seeks the full blaze of the noontide sun. In the light of such a day the Unity of Christendom will be gained.

There is a great movement in the direction of alliances of kindred churches. The Alliance of Reformed churches holding the Presbyterian system embraces all Churches of the Reformed faith and Presbyterian order throughout the world. They unite on the consensus of the Reformed Confessions. An effort was made to define that consensus, but it was clearly seen that such an effort must lead to the construction of a new creed, and would develop differences and conflicts. It was accordingly abandoned. It seems better to leave the work of defining that consensus to historians.

The Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal churches have also constituted world-wide Alliances in a similar way. This is a great step in the direction of Christian Union. But a greater one should soon be made in an alliance of these Alliances in a more general council. The Evangelical Alliance has done a good work in the past, but it is a voluntary association of kindred spirits, and is in no sense a representative body. There can be no effective Alliance unless that Alliance represents the Churches that constitute it ; in an assembly of delegates chosen for conference. The times are well-nigh ripe for such an Alliance of the Churches in America ; and we may anticipate, at no very great distance in the future, that there will be such an Alliance for the Christian world. The work of Christian Union is a work which begins in every family, and which rises in greater and greater sweeps of influence until it covers the nation and the Chris-

tian world and is absorbed in the innumerable company about the throne of God and the Lamb.

“ All this while hitherto we have striven (long enough) in words one against another for Religion with much zeale and heat ; it is now high time for us to begin once of all sides to contend and strive about this ; who can most manifest and exercise his Religion and Faith with the best Christian workes and that towardes his Adversaries, that one might say to another in the words of the Apostle *James, Shew me thy Faith by thy workes, and I will shew thee my Faith by my workes* (James ii. 18). This would indeed be the most effectual Demonstration, which every plain Christian would be able to see, touch, and feel, who otherwise cannot so well satisfie himself with a naked Demonstration of bare words and arguments (John Bergius, *The Pearle of Peace and Concord*, p, 180. London, 1655).

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