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I.

THEORY OF CULTUS.

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THE word *cultus* is used, in theology, in a two-fold sense: first, in the general sense of divine worship, and, secondly, in the sense of theory or doctrine of worship. It is in the latter sense mainly that we propose to treat the subject in this paper.

Cultus comes from *colo*, *colere*, and was originally a term pertaining to agriculture. *Colere* means, literally, to work upon the earth, in a field or garden—to *tend, till, take care of the ground*; then also *to dwell in a place; to inhabit*—since the idea of *cultivating* implies that of *abiding* in a place. Tropically *colere* means to *bestow care* upon something, and is used, first, with a neuter object in the sense of *cherishing, fostering a thing*; secondly, with a personal object, in the sense of *regarding with care, treating with respect, reverencing, worshipping*. From this usage comes the application of the word to the reverence and worship of the Deity, and to the respect paid to objects connected with this worship.

Cultus in the religious sense, then, signifies the system of divine worship, embracing the various acts, both mental and

II.

THE ONE FLOCK OF CHRIST.

BY PROF. CHARLES A. BRIGGS, D. D.

The story of the good Shepherd, told by Jesus in the tenth chapter of the Gospel of John, is a favorite one with most Christians, especially because of the tender personal relation between Christ and His people which it so clearly and touchingly illustrates and sets forth. This personal relation is usually considered with reference to the individuals of the flock. I propose at this time to consider it with reference to the flock as a whole.

Jesus Christ is the Shepherd of each one who knows His voice; but He is also the one Shepherd of a flock which embraces the whole body of Christians.

No one can be a rightful member of that flock who does not know the Shepherd's voice, who has not entered by Him into the fold, who does not go in and out at His call. And such sheep will not fail of recognition by the Shepherd. He saves them at the cost of His own life and no thief or robber can snatch a single lamb out of His hands. No Pharisee or Sadducee can exclude a single one of them from His love.

At least two Messianic passages of the old Testament are at the basis of this similitude. The prophet Ezekiel (34: 11-31) predicts that Yahweh the faithful Shepherd of Israel will recover His scattered sheep, restore them to their land again, and make with them a new covenant of peace and blessing. At the time of this prediction the people were scattered in exile. The prophet sees them restored to the Holy Land. In the time of Jesus the Jewish people had for many centuries been dwelling in the land of Israel worshipping their God in the temple at Jerusalem. There were still multitudes of Jews scattered over the world; but they were not in exile; they had the privilege of returning to

Palestine if they chose; they remained in other lands for commercial reasons. Therefore we cannot think of the Jews of the Dispersion when Jesus said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must lead and they shall hear my voice (John 10: 16); for all of the Jews of the Dispersion were recognized as belonging to the fold of Israel; their offerings were received in the temple, and whenever they made pilgrimages to Jerusalem they entered the holy places as freely as the Jews of Palestine.

By the other sheep not of the fold of Israel, Jesus means Gentiles scattered over the world, whom He was to lead into union with the flock of Israel, making of the two one flock. Jesus recognized that there were in His time sheep of God which did not belong to the race of Jacob; that God was preparing other nations as well as Israel for the Messianic salvation; and that the mission of the Messiah was to gather all the sheep, Jew and Gentile, into one flock. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3: 16). "The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (I John 4: 14). The world is the aim of the redemptive activity of Jesus Christ. The Saviour is the Saviour of individuals, each one by himself; but He is more than that; He is the Saviour of the race of man; He is the Saviour of the organism of creation; He is the Saviour of the world.

The goal of redemption is and can only be the comprehension of an infinite variety of individuals, each one in the initial stages of his redemption, saved alone by himself, but gathered into an organism of salvation, in which alone, through the action and reaction of redemptive forces, the salvation of the individual can be completed. Jesus does not propose to save every individual man or thing in the world, but He does propose to save the organism of the world and the organism of humanity. Every man and every thing that obstructs the redemption of the organism will be cut out from it, as one cuts off a dead branch, or prunes a sluggish vine, or removes a corrupt growth from the human body; but every salvable part of the organism will be retained and improved; each will be treated effectively by itself; but each also in its relation to the organism as a whole.

The story also presupposes another prediction of Ezekiel (37: 21-28). The prophet by the joining of two sticks symbolizes the reunion of Israel and Judah under the second David, and predicts that "they all will have one shepherd." The predictive Spirit of Jesus is not confined, like that of Ezekiel, to the two sections of the children of Jacob and to the land of Palestine. The land of Palestine has been transformed for Him into the whole creation. Israel and Judah had for centuries been united; all the tribes of Israel worshipped in union in the temple at Jerusalem.

Jesus, in His vision, sees Jew and Gentile in place of Israel and Judah, and predicts their union under the one Shepherd, the Messianic King. He Himself will effect that union. It is His mission to accomplish it. He will die for His sheep. He will rise from the dead and ascend to His Messianic throne to redeem them. He sends forth His ministers to preach the gospel to the whole creation, and tells them that until the world has heard His gospel and accepted it He will not come again. His advent to judge the world and to accomplish its full salvation will be then, and then only, when all the sheep have been led into the one flock.

The one flock, as a complete and perfect organism, is the goal of the redemptive work of the Messiah, the ideal at the end of the Messianic age. Was it therefore in the mind of Jesus that His sheep should remain scattered or organized in a great number of different flocks until that time? Is the one flock an ideal of the second advent not to be realized until that event? No one can think so who duly considers these words of Jesus and the corresponding teaching of His Apostles. The one flock will not be complete and perfect until the redemptive work of our dispensation has been accomplished, for the reason that until then there still remain persons who have not heard the gospel, who may yet be saved. The full complement of the Gentiles and all Israel have not yet been gathered into the flock. But that any of the sheep that know the voice of the Shepherd should remain apart from the one flock is out of harmony with the teaching of Jesus and of the entire New Testament. There is one Shepherd

for each of the sheep and one only Shepherd for the whole body of the sheep. It is altogether abnormal for the sheep to be scattered into different flocks. The only normal relation is one flock, one Shepherd.

When now we look at the history of Christianity, and especially at the present condition of the Christian world, it is evident that all Christians are not gathered in the one flock. The Roman Catholic Church recognizes no other flock of Christ than that embraced in its own fold. There are other sheep not of its fold, but they are scattered sheep and in peril of damnation. Protestants distinguish between the visible and the invisible Church. They recognize that the visible Church is broken up into different organizations, but they regard all true Christians as members of the invisible Church. No visible Church at present coincides with real Christianity, for it excludes some real Christians and it includes some who are not real Christians. The one Shepherd, looking down from His heavenly throne, recognizes every one of His sheep whether they are included in the ecclesiastical organizations or not, and in whatever ecclesiastical organization they may be. And He does not recognize as His sheep any one who knows Him not, however eminent he may be in ecclesiastical affairs. Those whom the Good Shepherd recognizes as His sheep, by virtue of that recognition belong to one flock. What right has any ecclesiastic to exclude them? If Jesus, the one Shepherd of the flock, knows them as His, those under-shepherds who refuse to recognize them are in rebellion against Christ. It is not sufficient for Protestants to say that these Christians are in the invisible Church, for they ought to be in the visible Church likewise. Those who are excluded from the visible Church are deprived of all the advantages to be derived from the organization. No one can exclude them from the Shepherd's love; but they may be excluded from the redemptive grace, which flows through the means of grace which are in the hands of the Church alone. Jesus would lead them into the one flock, but, as in the New Testament times, so there have always been, and are now, Pharisees who obstruct the way to the

Kingdom, and with pious phrases and devout requirements prevent the union of Christ's sheep with the one flock.

Many Protestants seems to have given such an undue emphasis to the invisible Church as to obscure the importance of the visible Church, and minimize the great wrong done to the individual Christian by excluding him from the organization of the Church in this world, and the still greater wrong done to the one flock of Christ by scattering it into a number of different organizations. The failure of Christianity to realize the ideal of our Saviour cannot be any other than sinful. The origination and perpetuation of divisive measures in the Church are sins which should not be condoned. Those who under the plea of discipline and use of the power of the keys exclude Christians from the Church are guilty of a sin of an enormity which it is difficult to estimate. It is a sin against the one flock. It is a sin against the one Shepherd. It is what is known in law as *Crimen Majestatis*, *lèse majesté*, treason to the Church and to Christ.

1. It was not the design of Jesus Christ that His one flock should be divided by racial differences.

No greater racial difference could exist than that between Jew and Gentile. And yet Jesus proposed to make the two into one flock. In the Epistle to the Ephesians Paul says that Christ "made Jew and Gentile one;" "Brake down the middle wall of partition between them;" "created in Himself of the twain one new man;" "reconciled them both in one body unto God." (2: 13-16.) In the Epistle to the Colossians it is said that in putting on the new man "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, free-man; but Christ is all and in all." (3: 11.)

The great divisions of Christianity are on racial lines. The Greek and Latin Churches are divided by racial lines of cleavage. The Latin race combines with the Celtic in the propagation of the Roman type of Christianity. The Greek race combines with the Russian in the conservation of the Greek type. The Copts, the Armenians and the Syrians remain apart, except so far as they have been compelled by poverty and oppression to seek refuge

in the arms of Rome. The German race is essentially Protestant. All these racial divisions have resulted from the intolerance of one race toward another. Christianity was designed to comprehend all races, not to make a Greek into a Jew, or a Jew into a Roman, or a Roman into a German; but to comprehend these and all others in one flock, in which all that is essential to every race should be conserved and combined in the higher unity of a Christianity which comprehends all the races of mankind.

The ecclesiastics of Christianity have been more intent upon constructing sheepfolds than in gathering sheep into the flock of Christ, and they have constructed such small folds that the flock of Christ could not get into any of them. And they have made the doors so low and narrow that it has been impossible for many to enter therein who were anxious to do so. Jesus came to save the world and to gather the different races into one flock. His under-shepherds have sought to save certain kinds of sheep that were of the approved stock.

The races will doubtless continue to live apart; but the racial types of Christianity should abandon their efforts to impose one type upon another and recognize the legitimacy of various racial types in the common Christianity. It is a folly for us to think that our missionaries can ever succeed in making over Africans into Europeans, or Mongolians into Anglo-Saxons. Jesus Christ sent His apostles to preach the gospel to all the world; let us beware lest we adulterate it with our Latin, Greek or Germanic notions.

2. It is not the mind of Christ that his flock should be divided by national distinctions.

There is much less excuse for these than for the racial. Racial distinctions are rooted in great physical and temperamental characteristics of human nature. National distinctions, while in some respects minor forms of these, are often also artificial, and determined by the results of war or diplomacy. Christianity did not overflow the barriers of Judaism, in order to limit itself to the boundaries of the Roman Empire. It was never the mind of the ancient or mediæval Church that the unity of Christ's flock

should be divided by national lines. It remained for the successors of the Reformers to commit this sin. The Reformers were obliged from the necessities of their situation to organize national Churches; but the Reformed Church in Switzerland and Germany, in France and in Holland, regarded itself as one. The Lutherans of Germany and Scandinavia did not regard themselves as separated by the Baltic Sea. The Church of England did not originally separate itself from the Reformed Churches of the Continent, but recognized them as true Churches, and welcomed their ministry and their people. But in the strifes of the seventeenth century the separating national spirit developed itself and wrought disunion in the Church; the greatest sin in this regard was committed in our own country.

It was the desire of the supreme judicatories of Scotland, Holland and Germany that all the Reformed in the American colonies should be combined in one Church organization. The honor of making this proposition was given to a minister of the Reformed Church. In 1744 Dorsius appeared before the Presbyterian Synod with a proposition for a union of the Dutch and German Reformed with the Presbyterians; and presented letters from the Synods in Holland in favor of such a plan. This magnificent opportunity was thrown away by the Presbyterians because of their own division into the Old and New Sides. As I have elsewhere said "twelve Presbyterian ministers by persisting in the wrong which they had done in dividing the American Presbyterian Church threw away the one great opportunity, which has never since been repeated, of combining the entire Reformed and Presbyterian strength of America in one compact organization." (Briggs, *American Presbyterianism*, p. 284.) This failure resulted in the continued existence of two branches of the Presbyterian Church, representing the Scotch-Irish and the Puritan types and the Dutch Reformed, German Reformed and French Reformed; and these have been the parents of divisions which exist to the present day. Very much the same state of things exists among the Lutherans. Although there are other reasons for their divisions, many of them are based entirely upon national distinctions.

It is difficult to see valid reasons why the national Churches of the Old World should be perpetuated in our United States. The State puts the Church to shame. Any man from any nation may become an American citizen, and is welcomed into either of the great political parties, and may, if worthy, be chosen to office; but in the Christian Churches of America it is still important to know whether a man retains the religious peculiarities of certain national Churches of Europe, and whether his religious ancestors came from Scotland or Ireland, Germany or Holland, Scandinavia or England. And in not a few instances these daughter Churches of America claim to be more orthodox than their mothers, and think that they may give the law in ritual and dogma to the Old World.

The Roman Catholic Church sets us a good example here. There we see Germans and Irishmen, Italians and Spanish, French Canadian and Hungarian, all working harmoniously in the same organization. Why should this not be so among the Lutheran and the Reformed? The objector says: Why, you wish to make our Christianity colorless! Can a color be maintained only by keeping it apart from all other colors? Is it necessary to have every color separated from every other color by a chasm of darkness? The richest colors are in the rainbow, where they blend to constitute the pure light. They may be brought out with a prism whenever they are needed. So the Church of Christ will never shine in the true, pure light of the Redeemer until all these national colors are blended. Any one of these colors may still be shown when needed; but why should they be always flaunting their peculiarities before you? Why, for instance, should the blue flag of Presbyterianism be always waving in your face?

3. It is against the mind of Christ that his flock should be broken up by differences of social condition.

In early Christianity the bondslave and the freeborn citizen were gathered together into one flock. It was not deemed important to have a separate Church for slaves or for freedmen. The early Church did not organize its congregations into social

clubs, putting the poor into one organization, the middle classes into another, and the wealthy and nobility into a third or a fourth. It was not necessary to organize a Salvation Army to preach the Gospel to the slums, still less Volunteers to reach the artisan class. It is the honor of the Roman Catholic Church that in all ages and in every land it has remained faithful in this respect to Jesus Christ. It has not interfered with social distinctions outside of the Church, but it has always ignored them in the Church. It has remained for American Protestants to organize special denominations for freedmen, and to establish congregations on the principles of social clubs. A representative Methodist preacher recently said in my hearing that Methodism had lost its hold on the lower classes, and was rapidly losing its hold on the middle classes, and it never had any hold on the higher classes. If this is so, it is difficult to see that Methodism has any future. This preacher was certainly too pessimistic, but he clearly shows the evil tendencies that there are among Protestants to classify the people by social considerations. Such a classification of the sheep of Christ is contrary to the spirit of Christianity. Christ Himself will eventually separate the sheep from the goats, but where can we find that He or His apostles ever separated His sheep one from another? Even the goats are permitted to remain with the sheep until the Day of Judgment and the Messiah Himself makes the separation.

4. It is not the mind of Christ that His flock should be divided by differences of doctrine.

It would be difficult to find greater differences in doctrine than between the Pharisees and the Sadducees in the time of Jesus, and yet they did not find it necessary to organize two different ecclesiastical organizations. They worshipped God in the same temple. Paul had conflicts with Barnabas (Acts 15 : 39), and then with Peter and with James (Gal. 2 : 11-13). He asserted his independence, but did not break the unity of the Church. Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians remained in the one flock, though the Church of Corinth was sadly torn by three or four contending factions (1 Cor. 1 : 10-13).

It is necessary that Christians should grow in their experience of Christianity and in their knowledge of its doctrine ; but those whose eyes have been opened to see farther and wider than their fellows are not on that account to exclude from the flock those who are too conservative to follow them. Still less should they depart from the flock at the dictation of those who think that they have erred from traditional orthodoxy.

Compulsory subscription to creeds has ever been a wedge of division. Wedge after wedge has been driven into the body of Christ. Numberless Christians have been cut off from the main body and forced to constitute separate bodies. In no age has this wedge of dogma been so disastrously used as in the Churches of the Reformation. The Lutheran and the Reformed divided in the Reformation itself. In the Lutheran body the party of Melanethon contended for more than a century against the stricter Lutherans, but never divided the Church. In the Reformed Churches the division went further, and the Arminians were cut off from the Calvinistic Churches. Then among the Calvinists, Old School and New School, waged a long war, but did not divide in Europe. It remained for the American Presbyterian Church to rise to the climax of division by erecting Old School and New School in different denominations.

In Germany the differences between Lutherans and Reformed have for the most part passed away. In Holland Calvinists and Arminians are no longer at war. Old School and New School no longer contend in France. These divisive issues are dead in Europe ; why should their ghosts continue to divide American Christianity ?

The German Reformed have the distinguished honor in this country of remaining undivided. There have been controversies among their Churches of much greater importance than those which have rent asunder the Dutch Reformed and the British Presbyterians, but the German Reformed have ever remained true to the genuine type of the Heidelberg Catechism. The German Reformed Church has retained the comprehensive character of the original Reformed theology rather than the

distinctive Calvinistic peculiarities of that type. She has the graceful form and well rounded proportions of a blooming daughter of the Reformation. One does not see in her, as in so many Reformed Churches, the sharp visage and the angular proportions of a venerable dame who has spent her days and wasted her strength in fruitless contentions with her own flesh and blood. Wherefore the German Reformed occupy the best position in our country to mediate between the different Churches of the Reformation and to take the lead in the reunion movement.

Moreover, the emphasis which this theological school, once of Mercersburg, now of Lancaster, has always given to the Apostles' Creed enables it cordially to unite with the Protestant Episcopal Church in urging the second of the Chicago-Lambeth articles as a platform for the Church of the future, "the Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal symbol, and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith." (See Briggs, Whither, p. 262.)

Modern ecclesiastics take upon themselves a very great responsibility when they ask young men who would enter the ministry, to subscribe to statements of dogma which were unknown to Christian antiquity, and which would exclude the Nicene Fathers from the flock of Christ. It is doubtful whether Christ's Apostles could receive ordination in many of our denominations. There are some of them who would pronounce the Saviour of the world a heretic if he should again enter our world as a reformer of theology and morals.

Let the orthodox Lutherans adhere to their orthodoxy. Let the various types of Calvinism, supra-lapsarian, infra-lapsarian, Old School and New School, maintain their theories. Let the Melancthonians and Arminians, the Princetonians and every other school of doctrine, contend manfully for their opinions in the forum of scholarship; but he who erects any of these party distinctions as fences for the flock of Christ is guilty of the *Lèse Majesté*. He divides the one flock of Christ; he rejects sheep whom the one Shepherd owns. The time has well-nigh come when Jesus Christ will make it clear that true orthodoxy is to have the mind

of Christ, and to think of men and things as Christ thinks of them, and that He is the heterodox man and schismatic who pushes from him any one of the sheep of the good Shepherd.

5. It is not the mind of Christ that His flock should be divided by differences as to worship.

The Church of Great Britain was torn with controversy for centuries by the persistent effort of the British crown and the English Bishops to impose uniformity of worship upon the ministry and people. Out of that controversy has come all that complexity of worship which is seen in the numerous denominations which were born in Great Britain. The Reformed and the Lutherans of the Continent never suffered seriously from such controversies. They always had liturgical worship, but granted considerable freedom in its use, and did not exact rigid uniformity. There have been liturgical controversies in the Reformed Churches of America, due, if I mistake not, more to their environment than to any internal evolution. A happy result of these controversies in the German Reformed Church has been the agreement of the various parties to live together in peace in the same communion. They have a revised liturgy, which is one of the best. It is not imposed, but is optional, to be used in whole or in part or not at all. They present, therefore, an ideal situation for all the Churches of the Reformation which shows the only legitimate way for the solution of the liturgical controversies of British Christianity.

The House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, notwithstanding their attachment to that marvel of liturgies, the Book of Common Prayer, have said in the Chicago Declaration, in their proffer of reunion to the Christian world, "that in things of 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 their own."

If such a spirit animates the Protestant Episcopal Communion and such a practice exists in the Reformed Communion, there remain no serious obstacles to the solution of the liturgical controversies of Christendom. The practice of the Reformed Church

might be extended so that the Book of Common Prayer should be used in the congregations as well as the Reformed Liturgy, both optional in whole or in part. Let Luther's Liturgy in its various forms have freedom of use also. Such a practice should unite Reformed, Anglicans and Lutherans.

Let the congregations use ceremonies or not, as they please, and whatever ceremonies they please, without let or hindrance. Let the local church have freedom in all such matters. If such a policy could be adopted—and it is only a logical evolution of the spirit of the Chicago-Lambeth Declaration and the practice of the Reformed Churches—then all liturgical barriers to reunion would disappear. The reunited Church will worship God in much grander strains, when every form of Christian prayer and of Christian song, of human voice and instrument of music, of culture and art, of vesture and of ceremony, shall combine in the grander harmonies of earthly oratorios, which will embrace as infinite variations as the heavenly choirs depicted in the Book of Revelations. (5 : 8-13; 7 : 9-12.)

6. It is not in accord with the mind of Christ that His flock should be divided by differences in Church government.

The study of the New Testament ought to convince us that only the most general principles of Church government were known and practiced by the Apostolic Church. Theories of Church government by divine right, held by the founders of many of the existing denominations, have been abandoned by the scholars in those denominations. Church history teaches us that the government of the Church has been in great measure influenced by the civil government. The differences between civil and ecclesiastical government in our time are largely due to the survival of more ancient forms of government in the Church after they have been modified or abandoned by the state. There is no existing church government which has the right to say to others, We only have the authority of Jesus Christ and you must submit to us.

The elaborate systems of Church government are divisive. They set up fence after fence, barrier after barrier, limiting the capacity of the fold of the Church, and so compel great masses

of the sheep to remain scattered or to gather in separate flocks. The larger part of the ecclesiastical machinery in our denominations is essentially schismatic. It is un-Christian or anti-Christian and must eventually be destroyed. The good Shepherd will not tolerate much longer the schismatic folds which men have constructed to divide his flock.

The Protestant Churches of the Continent of Europe have not been divided by questions of Church government. British Christianity has committed the great sin of dividing the flock of Christ by questions of polity. Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, Independent, Friend, Methodist—these all represent divisions in British Christianity by theories of Church government. There are certain advantages in each one of these polities, but each one of them has unfolded its own peculiar form at the expense of certain advantages contained in the others. Richard Baxter in 1653 led in the organization of the Worcester Association in which he says: "The main body of our Association were men that thought the Episcopal, Presbyterian 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." (Briggs Whither, p, 235, Church Concord, preface, London, 1691.) These men were right; but the seventeenth century was intolerant to such noble principles. They are the ones which lead to the reunion of Christendom. We should be willing to give up everything that is not essential in order to the inestimable boon of recovering the unity of Christ's Church. Those who have this spirit will readily agree with the League of Catholic Unity, that "the historical Episcopate in various forms already prevails extensively throughout the Christian world, and as connected with the Scriptures, the creeds and the sacraments, it might become a bond of organic unity among the Christian denominations by completing their Congregational, Presbyterial or Episcopal systems, and at length recombining them normally in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

The unity of the flock of Christ is entirely consistent with diversity in the sheep. The greater the diversity the grander the unity. From the German Reformed University of Frankfurt on the Oder went forth a great Irenic wave at the beginning of the seventeenth century. That wave bore on its crest the famous sentence "In necessary things Unity, in unnecessary things Liberty, in both Charity." (Parænesis Votiva. See *Presbyterian Review*, 1887, p. 745.) Rupertus Meldenius, the author of that sentence, was probably from Melden, on the borders of Bohemia and Silesia, in the midst of all the great religious parties at the beginning of the 17th century. Taking our stand upon that sentence, it would not be difficult to coöperate with the good Shepherd in leading all His sheep into the one flock.

The House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church was the first ecclesiastical body to attempt a definition of these essentials. They make four propositions to Unity which have been called the Quadrilateral. I agreed to them as soon as I read them. (See Huntington's *Peace of the Church*, Preface, 1891; *Presbyterian Review*, 1887, p. 132.)

Let other communions consider them and say whether they are satisfactory or not. If they say not, then they are bound to give their own definition of these essentials. If we could get from the supreme Authorities of the several denominations their several definitions of these essentials, we could easily compare them and determine whether they might not all be reduced to common factors.

The definition of the essentials of the Church may be regarded as the formal principle of Church Unity. Something more and something better is needed. That definition itself will never be made unless the irresistible force of a material principle compel it. Love is that force. Love, as Rupertus Meldenius clearly saw and strongly stated, is the cementing principle in things necessary and things unnecessary alike. Love has the only eye which can distinguish between the essential and the unessential in Christianity. Love is the reconciling force which unites the sheep to their Shepherd and attaches the sheep one to another—

concentrates and solidifies the flock. Love covers over and puts out of sight a multitude of sins of individuals and of ecclesiastical bodies. Love detects and brings to light all that is good in the individual and in the denomination. Love sacrifices every individual preference and consecrates all to the common weal. Therefore Love is the material principle of Church Unity.

One flock is the ideal of the one Shepherd. Every ideal of the Christ is sure of realization. He prayed shortly before his departure for his disciples that "they may all be one" (John 17: 21). His prayer will certainly be granted by the Father. The Messiah who lives and reigns over the Church has the same ideals and prayers as those He had in His earthly ministry. We know, therefore, that He is at work in heaven and on earth to accomplish the unity of His Church. Woe be to those who obstruct or oppose the plan of the King of the Church. Blessed are those who pray for it, work for it and share in it.