

THE UNITED CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES.

THEIR EXISTING AGREEMENT IN DOCTRINE, POLITY, AND WORSHIP.

THE associative tendency of the Christian masses has shown itself wherever they could act freely together. In our own country for more than a hundred years there has been a steady effort after religious unity, following the political movement through the successive stages of the colonization, the confederation, the constitution, and the recent consolidation of the United States. During the colonial period the few mission churches scattered along the Atlantic coast were temporarily fused together by the evangelistic labors of Whitefield and Wesley. In the revolutionary war they were simply massed and compacted in the common struggle for civil as well as religious freedom. Since the declaration of independence we have seen them at first separately organizing themselves, and then spontaneously combining in great common causes, such as the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, the American Sunday School Union, the American Boards of Domestic and Foreign Missions, as well as the various moral reforms in which they became leagued against vice and infidelity on the platform of their common Christianity. In the late civil war they appeared as one holy phalanx of charity and mercy in the Sanitary and Christian commissions; and at the present time they are interlaced by a network of Young Men's Christian Associations, Inter-Denominational Alliances and Church Congresses, designed to combine them practically in Christian work and intercourse, to say nothing of inter-ecclesiastical councils, based upon organic bonds of unity between kindred churches.

It is true that all such compacts, being temporary expedients, as fast as they serve their purposes must decay and disappear; and it is also true that in some cases the dissolution of a league of churches has been followed by their seeming recoil and reassertion of sectarian peculiarities in more pronounced form than ever, as may now be seen in the various boards of charity and missions maintained by the different denominations. But it will be found at the same time that another set of causes has been tending, if not to bring them together again in closer bonds and on a more enduring basis, yet at least to reveal to them, more and more clearly, the ultimate grounds of a true organic unity.

By the organic unity of churches is here meant such unity as inheres in their internal organization, and is traceable in their forms of doctrine, government, and worship, as well as in their whole historic life and development; and is not, therefore, due to any mere artificial arrangement or conscious effort. Institutions are not made, but grow; and sometimes they grow so slowly that one generation rejects as irrational and visionary what the next generation accepts as the logic of events. Whole churches, as well as states, have thus been reasoned out of the divine right of English monarchy and American slavery; and it is safe to assume that any scheme of ecclesiastical union which could now be devised, even though the true one, would be repudiated, perhaps by all existing denominations, as involving the suppression of some essential truth or the sacrifice of some valuable principle. We are not yet ready for such schemes, and it would only be a waste of time to discuss them. The first lesson to be learned is that the unification of the American churches, if it is ever to come at all, cannot be precipitated by platforms, coalitions, compromises, in short by any mere external association of the different denominations, which leaves them still without internal modification and vital connection, as true and living branches of the Vine of Christ.

How then is such organic unity or union ever to be reached? Perhaps we can trace a rough likeness between the case of the American churches at the present time and that of the American states at the close of the revolution. The articles of confederation had proved a rope of sand. The colonies, in becoming independent of the British crown, had also become independent of one another, and with their diverse creeds, institutions, races, and climates, seemed on the verge of anarchy. It was not until they had surrendered some of their sovereign attributes and readjusted their whole domestic polity, that they could come into the more perfect union of the constitution; and ever since then they have been racked with internal conflicts, until at last welded together by the fiery blows of civil war. In like manner the different denominations, after having been loosely confederated in various compacts and alliances, are falling apart in fresh estrangement, wasting their resources in

mere propagandism, and often wrangling over time-worn theological issues in the face of their common foes. And now, it is thought by some, they can only be driven together again by the rod of persecution. The peace of Westphalia, they will tell us, was but a truce, and the warfare once waged between the Catholic and Protestant powers of Europe is yet to be decided by some terrible intestine struggle within our own borders, fulfilling the great Armageddon of the Apocalypse. With the sects thus cast into the furnace of affliction, to be purged of their errors, and melted and molded to one likeness, the church militant is at length to come forth from the ordeal united and triumphant.

We need not, however, push a mere political analogy so far. Rather may we hope that the age of religious wars is past, and that any remaining issues between religious parties are to be fought out, not with carnal weapons, but with spiritual. Certainly the American churches have at least gained all the freedom that they need. Free of the state and free of one another, they may now peacefully work out their respective missions without let or hindrance. But whilst thus left to the combined action of providential events and spiritual causes, it is inevitable that in the long future they will undergo much modification, perhaps gradual assimilation to each other, or to some one divine model towards which they are tending. Despite their present divided and distracted appearance, if we will survey them from a high outside point of view, in a Christian, philosophical mood, we shall discern amongst them vast unifying tendencies which have been operating quietly through successive generations, and which can only be measured by comparing one period of their history with another. We can no more control such tendencies than we can control the winds of heaven. It is the part of wisdom to recognize them and shape our course by means of them. We need not forsake our respective positions; we cannot force an immediate harmony of views; but at least we may profitably engage in a study of the existing germs or grounds of organic unity in the American churches.

In entering upon this study, whatever theories of the Church we may severally hold, we should lay aside even just prejudices, so far as to take into view impartially the various Christian bodies claiming an ecclesiastical title and jurisdiction, which are coextensive with the nation, or which may be otherwise due them in courtesy, such as the "Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America," the "Methodist Episcopal Church of America" (Northern and Southern), the "Presbyterian Church in the United States" (Northern and

Southern), the "Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States," the "Reformed Church in America" (Dutch), the "Reformed Church in the United States" (German), the "Roman Catholic Church," the "United Brethren" (German and Moravian), the "United Presbyterian Church of America," the "Universalist Church in the United States," the "Baptist Churches" (Calvinistic and Arminian), the "Congregational Churches" (Trinitarian), the "Disciples of Christ" (Campbellite), the "Society of Friends," the "Unitarian Churches." Some of these bodies, and others which might have been named, are inconsiderable in numbers and influence, and not likely to play any chief part in the development of American Christianity. Confining our attention to the great Christian denominations of the country, we may fairly concede to them the possession of ecclesiastical elements more or less perfectly organized; and our task will be to look into their respective forms of doctrine, of polity, and of worship, in search of the three corresponding grounds of unity which are afforded by their *dogmatic agreement*, their *ecclesiastical or political likeness*, and their *liturgical culture*.

The first of these three grounds of unity is the least hopeful. Perfect consent in theological views, were it attained between the different denominations, might indeed issue in their perfect union, if not in one and the same organization, since among other doctrines it would include the same doctrine of church polity; but it may be doubted if such consent is in the nature of the case attainable. Doctrinal distinctions are largely due to the paradoxical relations of essential truths which are alike derived from Holy Scripture, as well as to original diversities in human nature which are alike legitimate. Accordingly they appeared among the Apostles themselves in the two schools of St. Paul and St. Peter; they were renewed among the church-fathers by Augustine and Pelagius; they were reaffirmed among the schoolmen by Thomas Aquinas and Dun Scotus; they were emphasized among the reformers by Calvin and Arminius; they were early transferred to our own churches by Whitefield and Wesley, and have since spread with enormous growth over the whole continent; and they are likely to continue in some form until the end of the world.

If history teaches anything plainly, it shows that the attempt to organize churches on the basis of mere dogmatic distinctions will always tend to schism rather than to unity. They often exclude more true Christians than they include, and sooner or later go to pieces in some fresh dissension. And even more difficult would it be to connect together conflicting

churches on such a basis. It is certain that none of the leading Protestant confessions, not the Augsburg, not the Belgic or Heidelberg, not the Westminster, not the Thirty-nine Articles would now be generally accepted by the American churches. It is doubtful if any of the great Catholic creeds, the Athanasian, the Nicene, or even the Apostles' Creed, would afford a platform broad enough to embrace all the denominations calling themselves Christian. And still less could they be marshalled together by any of the new-made creeds of our own time and country.

Nor can it be said that such attempts as have hitherto been made at a dogmatic confederation of churches have been very successful or promising. The Evangelical Alliance of Protestant churches, though based upon a partial consent in doctrine, takes a polemical attitude by its very name against the Roman Catholic Church. The proposed league of the Protestant Episcopal and Russian Greek churches would have excluded all the other Protestant churches, besides covertly involving the gravest doctrinal differences. Even the Presbyterian churches in their late general council could not reach a consensus of their own kindred standards. The Congregational churches, discarding all the old creeds, are engaged in framing a new one. And other large family groups of churches, such as the Baptist and the Methodist, show but few signs of either agreeing among themselves or seeking agreement with the rest of the American churches.

To see how complex is the problem before us, we should need only to bring together the various creeds and confessions for comparison and contrast and arrange them in their degrees of difference between the extremes of Catholicism and Protestantism. It would be found, at the first view, that the points of variance are simply endless, embracing a variety of opinions upon numerous questions in every department of sacred science, theology, anthropology, christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology. On closer examination we would see that the two extremes of Unitarianism and Romanism, in their latest outcome, would utterly refuse to coalesce, consenting in nothing but the few articles of natural religion which Christianity has in common with Judaism and Paganism. Next, we would find that between these extremes the chief evangelical confessions, whilst agreeing with the Roman Catholic creeds in some essential doctrines, such as the trinity, the incarnation, the atonement, disagree with them in others no less essential, and still further disagree among themselves by all the differences known to Lutheranism, Calvinism, Arminianism. Then,

we would discover that the Lutheran, Calvinistic, and Arminian confessions, though largely consentient as to the chief essential doctrines termed evangelical, are most widely dissentient as to some relatively non-essential doctrines, such as are held by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists. And, lastly, we would see that it is precisely some one of these non-essential doctrines which each denomination puts in the front as its standard, claims as the source of its life and the only reason for its existence, and often cherishes as an inherited faith, hallowed by the blood of martyrs and endeared by all the associations of home and kindred. In a word, the concords of American creeds would be so drowned and lost in their discords as to leave us hopeless of anything like a true doctrinal harmony.

From this showing of the case, it is plain that the utmost we can hope for is some ultimate consensus which cannot now be formulated into a common creed of the churches, but must be largely matter of surmise and speculation. We may assume, not unreasonably, that it will exhibit the essential faith in distinction from the non-essential, and exalt the great things in which Christians agree above the small things in which they differ; and we may expect, on good grounds, that in the course of its evolution some dogmas will be sloughed off as erroneous, others reduced to a relative importance, and still others left indifferent. But we cannot hope to see it start forth at one blow as a feat of logic by some ambitious peace-maker, or even carefully wrought out as a piece of legislative wisdom by some advanced body of divines met to adjust the disputes of Christendom. Rather must we look forward to it as to a coming survival of truth over error, to be slowly evolved from the present conflict of opinion, in the general progress of Christian knowledge, and through a growing spirit of Christian freedom, charity, tolerance and catholicity.

It is a cheering remark of Dr. Schaff, at the close of his survey of the creeds of Christendom, "that the age of separation and division is passing away, and the age of the reunion of divided Christendom is beginning to dawn." Glance at some of the grounds of this inspiring hope here in our country. In the first place, we should not overlook the doctrinal agreement already known and expressed, such as the consent of the Roman Catholic and some Protestant churches in the Athanasian, Nicene, and Apostles' creeds; the consent of the Lutheran and Moravian churches in the Augsburg confession; the consent of the various Episcopal churches, the Protestant, the Meth-

odist, the Reformed, in the Thirty-Nine Articles; the consent of the Congregational, the Baptist, and the various Presbyterian churches in the Westminster Standards, together with the indorsement by the reunited Presbyterian Church of the Heidelberg catechism of the Dutch and German Reformed churches. In the second place, we may find some tendencies to a doctrinal agreement between these different groups of churches,—in their American revisions of these various standards which show, now and then, a slight though unsought mutual approximation; in their fraternal intercourse, which always brings into view a large latent consent in the great evangelical doctrines of our common Christianity; in their very controversies, which often serve only to show how trifling is their dissensus as compared with their fundamental consensus; and even in their heretical departures, which sometimes express that consensus with a primitive simplicity free from the scholastic technicality of the old creeds, whilst their pulpit expositions of it are ever setting it forth with scriptural freedom, freshness, and power. And lastly, we may everywhere discern the signs of a waning interest in the mere dogmatic distinctions, which have long hindered the growth and assertion of a true doctrinal agreement,—such as the decline of theological controversy in the New England churches; the disappearance of the old and new schools in the reunited Presbyterian Church; the comprehension of doctrinal differences within the Episcopal Church, and the rise of Broad church parties in other churches; the spread of open communion in the Baptist churches; the liberty of preaching in the Methodist Church; the allowance of heretical departures in many churches up to the point of scandal; the searching revision of creeds in the light of modern thought and science; the disuse of the old scholastic catechisms, the decay of polemic preaching, and the growing preference for evangelical themes of a moral and practical purport. Through the silent action of such causes, it may yet happen in some distant future, not indeed that all dogmas shall be obliterated, but subordinated and graduated in harmony with the one universal faith. Even now, could the American churches, leaving their existing standards unchanged, be simply confederated in a formal profession of the Nicene or Apostles' creed, in which most of them might readily join, their denominational dogmas would at once sink towards a proper relative value, their essential consensus would begin to emerge into view, and so far forth they would appear to the world as the *United Churches of the United States*.

The second and more hopeful ground of unity is that of ecclesiastical likeness or affinity in church government. The problem is no longer to produce agreement as to the whole mass of dogmas, but only a single doctrine or set of doctrines of minor importance except when made by some extreme view to involve other more essential doctrines. And it would seem easier to secure external attachment to an ecclesiastical polity than internal unanimity in all the endless points of theological science. Experience has shown that Christians who agree in scarcely anything else may hold the same views of church government and even dwell together in the same organization. The church has often included different schools of theology, but no school of theology ever yet included the whole church. Indeed, it is a common reproach of Protestantism that in its grand effort for freedom and progress, it has given birth to a medley of jarring sects, by exaggerating doctrinal differences which had been allowed and adjusted within the pale of the church from the Apostles' time until the Reformation. And that such outward ecclesiastical unity may be more than the mere enforced uniformity or feigned conformity, so often charged against state-churches, might be proved by examples in free churches where no political restraints have been imposed. Even conflicting churches, the most unlike in their dogmatic standards, Lutheran, Calvinistic, Arminian, Socinian, may be found substantially alike in their ecclesiastical organization.

In order to bring into view these latent affinities of the American churches, we may conveniently group them in three great classes according to their structural likeness: First, Congregational, those which make each local congregation self-governed and independent, such as the Baptist, the Unitarian, and the Orthodox churches; Second, Presbyterial, those which unite congregations under presbyteries composed of representative clergymen and laymen, such as the Lutheran, the Dutch and German Reformed, and the various Presbyterian churches; Third, Episcopal, those which subordinate both congregations and presbyteries to bishops as a higher order of clergymen, such as the Methodist, the Protestant, and the Reformed Episcopal, the Moravian, and the Roman Catholic churches. It will be seen at a glance that these three classes, when viewed together, present a scale rising from the simplest to the most complex forms of polity, and on closer inspection it would be found that each higher class includes the lower with more or less modification, Presbyterian churches being not without Congregational elements and Episcopal churches being not without Presbyterial elements.

Nor can it be said that some organic union of these more or less kindred organizations would be wholly beyond analogy and precedent. In less than two hundred years the world has seen a medley of incongruous polities, theocratic, monarchic, democratic, aristocratic, grow up into that cluster of homogeneous republics known as the United States, by a series of transforming events,—first by the ascendancy of the Protestant over the Catholic powers in North America, then by the revolutionary destruction of the royal and proprietary charters in the colonies, and at last by a vindicated constitution forever guaranteeing the freedom of states, classes, and races. And so complete a political metamorphosis could not but affect the religious bodies which have been more or less involved in it. Freed thereby from the papal supremacy, from a foreign establishment, and from all connection with our own government, they were at the same time freed from the causes which once drove them asunder, and brought under the causes which have since drawn them together. Not only has each group of kindred churches been fraternizing and coalescing, Congregational with Congregational, Presbyterian with Presbyterian, Episcopal with Episcopal, but the different groups have been growing like each other in their structure as well as in their aim and spirit. Congregational churches, no longer in conflict with a Presbyterian parliament and monarchy, have themselves been becoming Presbyterian with their series of representative associations, consociations, conferences, and councils, and their facile combination with Presbyterian bodies in fit emergencies. Presbyterian churches, delivered from a prelatical peage as well as from state patronage, have been allowing Congregational freedom in their parishes and adopting Episcopal elements in their overseeing boards, agencies, and secretaryships, as well as becoming pervaded with church tendencies. Episcopal churches, freed from royal control and left wholly self-dependent, have been admitting Presbyterian deputies, clerical and lay, into their diocesan conventions and standing committees, and otherwise curtailing the extraneous powers of the episcopate; whilst some churchmen have almost stripped it of doctrinal significance and left it with a mere expedient or political value, as a sort of Episcopal Presbyterianism or so-called Congregationalism tinged with Episcopacy. Reformed Episcopalians interpret the Ordinal in the sense of the early Presbyterian school of Archbishop Usher. Methodist Episcopalians also hold to an Episcopacy without apostolic succession, and have adopted lay-representation as well as lay-preaching in their administrative policy. The Moravians practically

tend to a kind of Presbyterian Episcopacy. Even the Roman Catholics, at the late Plenary Council, seem to have taken the first step towards bringing their Episcopal system into formative contact with republican institutions. At the same time the average American layman has a growing dislike of hierarchical orders and exclusive pretensions. With the exception of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churchmen who claim a divine right and special grace in their own ministry, the chief Christian bodies have been fast becoming congruous in polity as well as consentient in doctrine. It is conceivable that these assimilative changes may go on, together with lessening dogmatic differences, until all existing ecclesiastical distinctions shall have become more superficial than fundamental, more nominal than real, if not themselves be merged in some comprehensive polity which shall be at once Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopal, and wherein Protestant freedom and intelligence shall appear reconciled with Catholic order and authority. Already, indeed, were it possible for the leading denominations to give visible expression to their own hidden structural unity by acts of mutual recognition, organic connection, and coöperative charity, like the scattered bones which Ezekiel saw coming together into a great army they would at once start into new life and activity as the *United Churches of the United States*.

Hitherto we may seem to have been investigating grounds of unity which are obscure and only lead out into a visionary future; but the one still to be considered — liturgical culture — belongs to our own time, and calls for practical thought and action.

It would seem that the first step towards true church unity must be liturgical rather than doctrinal or strictly ecclesiastical. Christians who differ cannot begin to agree until they come together in the region of devout feeling and are thus predisposed to brotherly concord. Hence it was amid the Pentecostal fervors in the early church that all divisions of race, language, lineage, sect and party become for the time effaced; and ever since then it has been found that in the fire of true devotion the sternest sectarian feuds melt away and are forgotten. People of all creeds, Calvinists, Arminians, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, can and do unite in performing the same acts of worship, in observing the same sacraments, and in commemorating the same religious events. And such devotions are not confined to times and scenes of revival excitement. When they have become expressed liturgically in time-hallowed hymns and prayers which breathe the common

Christian heart of all ages, in significant rites and emblems which set forth the essential Christian faith in all churches, and in annual festivals which thrill the whole Christian world with the consciousness of great Christian facts and doctrines, there is then afforded a permanent practical communion of saints between different denominations.

It is such a liturgical fusion that has long been going on amongst us, hidden and unnoticed. The great historical churches, whose doctrinal standards have remained fixed for generations and whose ecclesiastical bounds are still jealously guarded, have meanwhile been so modifying their service-books and insensibly so interchanging their modes of worship that now, with scarce a thought of any incongruity, Catholic creeds are recited in Protestant assemblies, Anglican rites are couched in Lutheran forms, Presbyterian prayers are intoned by Episcopalian priests, Wesleyan hymns are sung after Calvinistic sermons, portions of High Mass are chanted by Covenanter choirs, and Puritan cathedrals are decked with Christmas evergreens and Easter flowers. It is in fact no longer possible to ignore a deep and wide-spread liturgical movement pervading the leading denominations like a groundswell and threatening some day to upheave and bury out of sight the sectarian differences in which the popular mind has ceased to take interest. The general demand, as we are often told by the secular press, is for more of Christian life and worship and less of a mere metaphysical and polemical theology. The people, not content with having the choicest literature and oratory in the sermon, are calling for the aids of music and architecture in the service and secretly revolting from a mode of worship in which a theological lecture is the one all-absorbing feature and by which feeling has been divorced from expression, devotion from art, and doctrine from every-day life. In some denominations, as in the Lutheran, the Dutch and German Reformed, the Presbyterian and the Methodist, their own defunct liturgies have been restored or republished and brought into discussion; whilst in others attempts are made to construct new formularies, without regard to antiquity, catholicity or authority. At the same time, the Protestant Episcopal Church has been reaping a harvest of conversions not likely to have been made upon strictly dogmatic grounds, and is itself already engaged in the timely work of enriching the prayer-book and adapting it to American life and institutions.

It would be a great mistake to think this whole movement due to the clergy alone or even confined to the educated and fashionable classes. In some churches the people have

been acquiring the liturgical culture which once belonged only to the priest and choir, and can say or sing in English the *Gloria, Te Deum*, etc., whose Latin titles show their origin. Where such culture is not found, the plainest and rudest, gathered in slums or in the backwoods, seem glad to become active worshipers instead of mere passive listeners, and to have their devotion enkindled through the senses and the imagination as well as the intellect and conscience. And as if to insure such a culture in the future, the whole rising generation in our Sunday-schools is being trained into a liturgical habit by a crude lectionary, responsive psalter, recited prayers, and often all the appliances of a dramatic ritual.

Even those who do not sympathize with the movement have ceased to deride it, and exchanging indifference for grave astonishment at its portentous bearing are casting about for means of explanation and resistance. By many of them it will no doubt be summarily set down to the account of our original depravity, as due to a general decline of vital religion, or to the increase of wealth, luxury, and fashion, or to the demoralizing influences of a civil war, or to some merely temporary excess or aberration of modern civilization. After duly allowing for such causes, however, we may still accept the new development as a necessary and in the main a sound reaction of the Protestant mind from an extreme into which it was driven under the impulse of the Reformation,—an extreme which was unavoidable in so great a religious revolution and which was needed at the time for the purification of European Christianity and for the colonization of the American churches, but which, now that those great ends have been attained, may well give place to some more moderate and reasonable course. In other words, it would seem the true policy neither to ignore nor to oppose this reactionary tendency, but to candidly recognize what is true and valuable in it, to indicate its needed checks and safeguards and to provide for its legitimate gratification. We need not renounce existing Protestantism as a failure; we cannot accept existing Catholicism as a success; but surely we may look somewhere between these extremes for the path of wisdom and safety.

On surveying the present state of religious culture we shall find two conflicting theories of worship, in neither of which exclusively is the great body of Christian people likely to abide. The one, for want of a better word, has been called revivalism; the other is known as ritualism. The one would take exalted religious sentiment amounting to rapture as the normal state of every worshipping con-

gregation; the other aims at the outward expression of religious sentiment in a ceremonial and artistic form, with the view of impressing the mind through the imagination and the senses. The most perfect example of revivalism, the one to which it constantly appeals for its warrant, was the rapt assembly at Pentecost, with its many-tongued psalmists and inspired prophets, its transports and fervors and miraculous conversions. The typical illustration of ritualism, and that to which it naturally reverts for its model, was the mediæval cathedral, with its supposed reënactment of the great tragedy of the Cross, amid all the æsthetic influences of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and eloquence. Whilst the affinities of revivalism are with new and rude populations, which have neither the means nor the taste for literary and artistic modes of worship, the tendencies to ritualism are found in older and richer communities, whose culture and art must sooner or later permeate their religious as well as domestic and social life.

Now, it is enough thus to fairly state the two theories in order to see that neither can hope to exterminate its opposite, or arrogate to itself the whole truth in respect to the vital matter of Christian worship. Too often their respective advocates have proceeded upon such an assumption, until they have simply become incapable of appreciating each other. The mere revivalist has ended in decrying all artistic culture as essentially irreligious, and conceiving it to be impossible for refined and fashionable people to be as good Christians as himself, whilst the mere ritualist has at length reduced his whole religion to a fine art, and learned to look upon all other manifestations of religious feeling as vulgar rant and hypocrisy. But the history of Christianity shows that neither tendency can be safely pushed to an extreme. Even in the primitive church the revival spirit, with all the advantage of miraculous gifts, gave rise to so shocking abuses that the Apostles enjoined a more decorous and formal mode of worship, and often since then, when not wisely checked and guided, it has fostered a spasmodic type of piety, consisting of nervous exaltations, followed by dreary collapses, destructive of all normal church growth and healthy Christian activity. In like manner the ritualistic spirit very soon began to harden the simple usages of primitive worship into an elaborate ceremonial to which all the arts contributed, until the church became a temple of the Christian Muses; and in our day even that earnest expression of a once living belief has sometimes given place to a mere scenic symbolism akin in effect to the spectacular drama.

At the same time, notwithstanding these extremes, the essential good that is in each tendency is still apparent. It would be folly to treat as mere morbid excitement such a great religious awakening as that which attended the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley when like new apostles they traversed the American colonies, kindling them into a flame of devotion; and on the other hand it would be almost an insult to argue that liturgies foster a low type of Christian faith and practice, in view of so illustrious examples as Bernard, Herbert, Taylor, and Keble. In our own time much of the earnest working Christianity of the Church of England has gone into the ritualistic party, and in our own country a high order of liturgical service may be found associated not only with faithful pulpits, but with city charities and frontier missions. Even the evangelists, Moody and Sankey, resort to a kind of crude ritualism in their revival meetings, whilst the ritualist Fathers Maturin and Knox-Little tincture their ritual with a kind of mild revivalism. The simple truth is that both tendencies are legitimate and valuable within the limits which they impose upon each other. There are churches, especially those still doing pioneer work, in which revival methods must long prevail; and there may be times in the history of all churches when such methods will be needed to refresh their languid faith, and quicken them into new life; but for the ordinary sound states of feeling in churches becoming replenished with learning and culture, the need of a more or less literary and artistic form of worship presents itself as a foregone conclusion for which due provision should be made.

It will be easy at this point to sneer at literary and artistic tastes as weak and trivial compared with religious interests. That is not the question: that may be granted. Nevertheless, the faculties used in the cultivation of letters and the fine arts, small as they may be, are an original part of human nature and essential to a fully developed manhood. Unless they be simply obliterated they must somehow share in the regenerative power of the Christian faith, and find their due place in any symmetrical scheme of Christian nurture. Neglect them or train them apart from religious ideas and influences, and sooner or later they will ally themselves with vice and superstition, and at length appear in some terrible Nemesis of faith like that which avenged the Puritan rigor with the licentious reign of Charles II. Moreover, it has become a practical question how to deal with them. The culture which has invaded our homes cannot be kept out of our churches. In fact it has already come into

them, and come to stay. If we will not go back to the Puritan meeting-house, the Covenanter psalm-singing, the Methodist camp-meeting, the Quaker silence, we must go forward to some new adjustment of the advanced civilization and Christianity of our day.

Precisely what that adjustment should be, how far the contemporaneous literature and art of a community can be wisely admitted within the sphere of Christian worship, it might not be easy to decide as an abstract question. Practically, however, as we have seen, it is being settled for us by the course of providential events, by the spontaneous working and interaction of the two interests. The much-dreaded corruption of religion by science, of piety by art, of devotion by taste, has not come to pass. Allowing for exceptions, we may fearlessly claim just the opposite result. Pulpits as orthodox and steadfast as any of the last generation are to-day reinforced with all the stores of modern literature, and applying Scripture doctrine, as never before, to current questions in trade, morals, politics, and philosophy. Congregations, as devout and earnest as any once gathered in the barn-like chapel or imitated Greek temple, are now worshipping in Christian buildings amid Christian emblems and legends, and with the aid of choir and organ offering up the glorias and canticles of a Christian ritual. In short, churches which have been longest on the soil and most fairly express our national life and social growth, without any loss of their early purity and zeal, and without the least compromise of their distinctive orthodoxy, are adopting all the elements of liturgical worship.

Leaving it to appear hereafter how much of this movement is crude and rash and likely to pass away, we come at once to the practical questions, How is it to be met and satisfied? Whereto does it tend? And to the former question the answer is plain, that it can not be met and satisfied by new-made liturgies or patchwork services. Such expedients proceed upon a misconception of the true liturgic ideal as an historical growth and flower of the piety of the whole church in all lands and ages. In distinction from extemporaneous worship, a liturgy is a system for both minister and people of fixed forms of prayer and praise, of administering rites and ceremonies, of methodically reading the Holy Scriptures, of commemorating Christian events and doctrines, together with any literary and artistic aids which may be afforded by the existing state of religious culture. Such a system cannot be made by one man, in a day. To attempt it would be to set at nought the wisdom of eighteen centuries of Christian worship. It would

be the absurdity of composing new hymns as well as prayers, of framing new creeds, of celebrating the Lord's Supper, baptism, matrimony and burial with new ceremonies, of constructing tables of Scripture lessons which have never been tested, and of instituting Christian festivals of which the church has never heard. It is something like this absurdity which is perpetrated whenever a liturgymaker sits down in his study to write out an original and complete formulary for the use of his people or of his denomination, in ignorance, and sometimes in contempt of the devotional treasures which have been accumulating for ages.

And scarcely any better is the incongruous mixture sometimes made of liturgical with extemporaneous worship. Each is good in its own place, and either in place is better than the other out of place. In social prayer-meetings, especially during times of revival, the prayers, hymns, and exhortations will be free and spontaneous, and anything like a liturgy would be felt as an intolerable bondage; but in large assemblies on public occasions there must be more of method and formality, and it would seem a strange impropriety, when we think of it, to improvise stated, ordinary acts of divine service, to extemporize the administration of solemn rites, to express the moods and wants of but one individual out of a thousand people and often leave their most essential devotions to his chance impulse. And yet something very much like this will be endured by intelligent congregations who have taken steps to formulize their worship in some respects but not in others; who will come together for impromptu services in a cathedral-like structure adapted to ritual uses; who will insist upon a carefully written sermon, but sit listless through long desultory prayers; who will let their children read the same appointed Scripture lesson with all the Sunday-schools in Christendom, but have their own public reading of God's word arranged, if arranged at all, on some occult principle known to the minister alone; who will grope after him through a service supposed to be introductory to the unknown theme of his sermon; who will only join him intelligently in saying a Psalter which was meant to be sung, or have his unprepared effusions mixed with a few liturgical forms, such as the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, the Commandments, the Glorias, torn piecemeal from their only proper liturgical connection; who will keep anniversary days and weeks of prayer by human appointment, but discard the observance of Lent as without divine warrant, or perhaps celebrate Christmas, Good Friday and Easter as mere public or social incidents, without regard to the Christian

year in which they find their true significance ; in a word, who will seek to blend fragments of the ancient liturgy with an otherwise informal service. The wonder is that the two can live together, and it would seem certain that sooner or later one or the other will have to be abandoned.

This brings us to the other practical question as to the issue of the liturgical movement, and the answer is already at hand,—it must have its logical conclusion in the English prayer-book as the only Christian liturgy worthy of the name. I do not forget the Lutheran, Dutch and German Reformed and early Presbyterian formularies, each admirable in its own day and for its own purpose ; and were it at all likely that any of them could now come into general use among our churches, it might be well to pause and estimate their claims. But on their face it will be seen that, being of foreign origin and modern translation, they are wanting in the quaint classical English of the age of Shakspeare, as well as in that solemn Scriptural style which is so desirable in order to separate the phrase of public worship from that of ordinary literature and conversation. Moreover, in their structure it will be found that they break more entirely with Christian antiquity than would now be deemed desirable, whilst their own contents, as we shall see, have been largely included in the prayer-book compilation, together with other forms of still greater liturgical value.

Let it be here premised that by the English prayer-book in this essay is meant the liturgy of the Church of England as it has existed substantially for more than three hundred years, long before any of the American churches had come into being, and that liturgy chiefly in distinction from the Articles and the Ordinal, with neither of which is it indissolubly connected, as is shown, not only by their separate origin and use, but also by the existence of other versions representing other views of doctrine and polity, Calvinistic, Arminian, Socinian, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational. For the main purpose of this argument the Protestant Episcopal edition, with which we are happily so familiar, need not be taken specially into account, but our attention simply fixed upon that ancient service, whose structure and contents have remained essentially the same through all the revisions to which it has been subjected and amid all the varieties in which it is still extant.

The English liturgy, next to the English Bible, is the most wonderful product of the Reformation. The very fortunes of the book are the romance of history. As we trace its development, its rubrics seem dyed in the blood of martyrs ; its offices echo with polemic

phrases ; its canticles mingle with the battle-cries of armed sects and factions ; and its successive revisions mark the career of dynasties, states, and churches. Cavalier, covenanter, and puritan have crossed their swords over it ; scholars and soldiers, statesmen and churchmen, kings and commoners, have united in defending it. England, Germany, Geneva, Scotland, America, have by turns been the scene of its conflicts. Far beyond the little island which was its birthplace, its influence has been silently spreading in connection with great political and religious changes, generation after generation, from land to land, even where its name was never heard.

At first sight, indeed, the importance which this book has acquired may seem quite beyond its merits, as the Bible itself might appear to a superficial observer a mere idol of bigotry and prejudice. But the explanation is in both cases somewhat the same. It is to be found in the fact that the prayer-book, like the sacred canon, is no merely individual production, nor even purely human work, but an accumulation of choice writings, partly divine, partly human, expressing the religious mind of the whole ancient and modern world, as enunciated by prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, and formulated by councils, synods, and conferences, all seeking heavenly light and guidance. Judaism has given to it its lessons and psalter ; Christianity has added its epistles and gospels ; Catholicism has followed with its canticles, creeds, and collects ; and Protestantism has completed it with its exhortations, confessions, and thanksgivings. At the same time each leading phase of the reformation has been impressed upon its composite materials. Lutheranism has molded its ritual ; Calvinism has framed its doctrine ; Episcopalianism has dominated both ritual and doctrine ; whilst Presbyterianism has subjected each to thorough revision. And the whole has been rendered into the pure English and with the sacred fervor peculiar to the earnest age in which it arose ; has been wrought into a system adapted to all classes of men through all the vicissitudes of life ; and has been tested and hallowed by three centuries of trial in every quarter of the globe.

It would be strange if a work which thus has its roots in the whole Church of the past should not be sending forth its branches into the whole Church of the future ; and any one who will take the pains to study its present adaptations, whatever may have been his prejudices, must admit that there is no other extant formulary which is so well fitted to become the rallying-point and standard of modern Christendom. In it are to be found the means, possibly the germs, of a

just reorganization of Protestantism as well as an ultimate reconciliation with true Catholicism, such a catholicism as shall have shed everything sectarian and national, and retained only what is common to the whole Church of Christ in all ages and countries. Whilst to the true Protestant it offers evangelical doctrine, worship, and unity on the terms of the Reformation, it still preserves for the true Catholic the choicest formulas of antiquity, and to all Christians of every name opens a liturgical system at once Scriptural and reasonable, doctrinal and devotional, learned and vernacular, artistic and spiritual. It is not too much to say that were the problem given, to frame out of the imperfectly organized and sectarian Christianity of our times a liturgical model for the communion of saints in the one universal church, the result might be expressed in some such compilation as the English Book of Common Prayer.

This ideal fitness of the work to serve as the nucleus of a reunited Christianity will especially appear in the American churches, if we view it in connection with their historical origin and their present condition. In the first place, it sustains historical relations to those churches, which, though forgotten or obscured, are vital and enduring. Owing to the mode of its compilation from other liturgies, the very materials out of which it was at first formed have an organic affinity for the various ecclesiastical elements which now lie around it in this country as *dissecta membra*, as yet unassimilated and discordant. Whilst its Catholic or ancient portions, derived from the Greek and Latin churches, may be regarded as the common heritage of all Christians, its Protestant portions can be traced back to their sources in those Reformed churches of Germany, Geneva, Holland, Scotland and England in which the American churches have severally originated; and were they now disposed to any formal correspondence or union, they would only have to come together in the light of their common history in order to see that the English prayer-book, next to the Holy Scriptures, affords the closest visible bonds between them. The Evangelical Lutheran church, besides recognizing in it some of the ancient Catholic formulas which she has also retained, could find in the offices of baptism, matrimony, and burial large portions of the liturgies of Luther, Melancthon, and Bucer. The Reformed churches (Dutch and German) could refer important parts of the daily prayer and communion service to a common origin with their own liturgies in the formularies of Calvin, Lasco, and Pollanus. The Presbyterian church, whose standards were framed mainly by presbyters of the

Church of England in the Westminster Assembly, could not only discern in the articles of religion the original skeleton of her confession of faith, but trace through the entire liturgy her revising hand, and might regain a living embodiment of her directory of worship in that amended prayer-book which some of her own founders strove to establish two centuries ago. The Protestant Episcopal church, the only church that has faithfully kept and honored the whole book among us, after guarding her connection with the Anglican, Latin, and Greek churches, might also acknowledge her large indebtedness to other Protestant churches, now in a position, as never before, to recognize and respect their mutual relationship. The Methodist Episcopal church, which herself originated in an Oxford movement, besides deriving the model of her polity from the Ordinal, still retains the prayer-book as edited and authorized by Wesley. Even the Congregational churches (Trinitarian, Unitarian, Baptist), though without the same historical continuity, might look for broken links in the Westminster catechisms and King's Chapel prayer-book, as well as in the early Puritan revisions before the rise of Independency. In fact nearly all the leading denominations, were they to retrace their history, would come back to the English liturgy as a work which their ecclesiastical forefathers did not so much aim to destroy as to amend; which they finally abandoned only in the larger interest of civil and religious freedom; and which they might now, in the changed circumstances of another age and country, easily resume and modify without the least sacrifice of denominational pride or logical consistency.

If this picture seem strange and visionary, let it be observed, in the second place, that the American churches for some time past have been steadily, though unconsciously, drifting back toward the midway position held by the English prayer-book between the extremes of Catholic and Protestant Christianity. Whilst the European churches, Roman, Anglican, Scotch, Dutch, German, have for several centuries remained fixed in their original seats as state religions, with but little intercourse and mutual modification, the American churches meanwhile, escaping from these narrow confines, have migrated to another hemisphere, become compacted together under a republican form of government, made free and equal before the law, and left to their own spontaneous development. The result is that they have been slowly rebounding from the rash extremes into which they were driven by sectarian warfare in the Old World, and, no longer held apart by political restraints, are

now under common impulses tending towards substantial unity in the midst of trivial diversity. In matters of order and worship, here and there, they have actually exchanged positions in their recoil, and come nearer to each other than to their respective mother churches on the other side of the Atlantic. Presbyterians have been adopting the liturgical usages which once kindled the wrath of Jenny Geddes into a revolution of the three kingdoms, whilst Episcopalians have been admitting the lay elements which brought Archbishop Laud to the scaffold. Congregationalists are reproducing the church buildings which their ancestors defaced as Popish chapels, whilst American churchmen are proposing to make the old Puritan Thanksgiving a holy day in the Church year. Baptist ministers have begun to borrow from a prayer-book which John Bunyan renounced for the Elstow jail, whilst neighboring rectors have engaged in prayer-meetings which the bishops of that day would have legally suppressed as a crime. Methodist congregations, founded by John Wesley, have costly churches, service-books, and written sermons, whilst the Oxford reformers of to-day have surpliced lay-readers, clerical exhorters, and ritual missions. Not long since an association of city ministers devised a "non-Episcopal observance of Lent," whilst Lenten revivals were being conducted by a Protestant order of priests. The whole Christian world is alive with such changes, and becoming visibly marshaled for the issue. On the one side are the various Protestant churches, already beginning to resume those portions of the prayer-book which were once falsely associated with tyranny and superstition, and in spite of inherited prejudices, exploring anew the whole field of Catholic antiquity; and it would be strange indeed if these enlightened Christian bodies, thus moving in the line of great historical causes, should pause in the midst of so inevitable reactions. On the other side are the Roman and Anglican churches, no longer able to bind up the Catholic portions of the prayer-book with hierarchy and social caste, but themselves permeated as never before with the influences of Protestant freedom and culture; and it remains to be seen whether even these least pliable types of organized Christianity must not yet yield to the pressure of democratic institutions and the plastic force of American society. Be that as it may, so long as the religious, political, and social influences by which the different denominations are being sifted and fused together continue to operate amongst them, they will in various

degrees unitedly approximate a Catholicism which shall be truly Protestant, as well as a Protestantism which shall be truly Catholic. In a word, if we are ever to have anything answering to the grand conception of the *United Churches of the United States*, it must come through that spirit of Protestant Catholicism of which the English liturgy, properly amended and enriched, would be the best conceivable embodiment.

And now the very process of such a liturgical concretion of different denominations about the nucleus of the prayer-book has reached a point where it only waits accomplishment. Bring together the fragments of that ancient liturgy as preserved by some churches, or coming into use in others, and recombine them as they may be found in its various offices; restore more fully the links of the Christian year, which are already socially and legally recognized among us, and let them be illustrated by the epistles and gospels which have marked their circuit for centuries past; arrange the present random lessons so that the whole Scriptures may be publicly read in their inspired connection; reduce the rambling "long prayer" to the lucid order and fullness of the Litany, and add a few well-chosen collects from the best liturgies; purge existing hymnals of their copious doggerel and enrich them only with hymns which have become classical; at the same time scrupulously retain a learned pulpit and the liberty of extemporaneous worship for fit times and occasions;— and the result would be an American liturgy expressing the essential common faith of Catholic and Protestant Christianity.

The general conclusion of our study is now before us: a doctrinal compact of the American churches can only be looked for in the distant future; their ecclesiastical confederation may be nearer at hand; but their liturgical fusion is passing before our eyes towards its only logical issue in the prayer-book. How such a fusion is likely to affect the relations existing between the Protestant Episcopal Church and other American churches; whether it will leave those relations unchanged or at length lead to more mutual recognition and organic connection;— are interesting questions which may here force themselves into some minds; but they are not the most urgent questions growing out of the investigation; they belong, as we have seen, to the future rather than to the present; and they are quite aside from the main object of this essay. I have simply aimed to present certain facts and truths to those who are deeply interested in knowing them.

No one denies the foreign author's simple moral right to property in the product of his brain; so we may waive that feature and look at non-existent International Copyright from a combined business and statesmanship point of view, and consider whether the nation gains or loses by the present condition of the thing.

As for the business aspect, a great argument of politicians is that our people get foreign books at a cheap rate. Most unfortunately for the country, that is true: we do get cheap alien books—and not of one kind only. We get all kinds—and they are distributed and devoured by the nation strictly in these proportions: an ounce of wholesome literature to a hundred tons of noxious. The ounce represents the little editions of the foreign masters in science, art, history, and philosophy required and consumed by our people; the hundred tons represent the vast editions of foreign novels consumed here—including the welcome semi-annual inundation from Zola's sewer.

Is this an advantage to us? It certainly is, if poison is an advantage to a person; or if to teach one thing at the hearthstone, the political hustings, and in a nation's press, and teach the opposite in the books the nation reads is profitable; or, in other words, if to hold up a national standard for admiration and emulation half of each day, and a foreign standard the other half, is profitable. The most effective way to train an impressionable young mind and establish for all time its standards of fine and vulgar, right and wrong, and good and bad, is through the imagination; and the most insidious manipulator of the imagination is the felicitously written romance. The statistics of any public library will show that of every hundred books read by our people, about seventy are novels—and nine-tenths of them foreign ones. They fill the imagination with an unhealthy fascination for foreign life, with its dukes and earls and kings, its fuss and feathers, its graceful immoralities, its sugar-coated injustices and oppressions; and this fascination breeds a more or less pronounced dissatisfaction with our country and form of government, and contempt for our republican commonplaces and simplicities; it also breeds longings for something "better," which presently crop out in diseased shams and imitations of that ideal foreign life. Hence the "dude." Thus we have this curious spectacle: American statesmen glorifying American nationality, teaching it, preaching it, urging it, building it up—with their mouths; and undermining it and pulling it down with their acts. This is to employ an Indian nurse to suckle your child, and expect it not to drink in the Indian nature with the milk. It is to go Christian-missionarying with infidel tracts in your hands. Our average young person reads scarcely anything but novels; the citizenship and morals and predilections of the rising generation of America are largely under foreign training by foreign teachers. This condition of things is what the American statesman thinks it wise to protect and preserve—by refusing International Copyright, which would bring the national teacher to the front and push the foreign teacher to the rear. We do get cheap books through the absence of International Copyright; and any who will consider the matter thoughtfully will arrive at the conclusion that these cheap books are the costliest purchase that ever a nation made.

Mark Twain.

I SHOULD be content to rest the argument for International Copyright upon justice, and it would seem that an appeal to the sense of fair dealing ought to be enough. In every civilized country the law recognizes an author's published books as his property for a limited term of years, and gives him a remedy for the invasion of his rights. In all civilized countries a person may go and be protected in what is universally recognized as his property; more, he may hold property and be protected in it in countries where he is not a resident, and where he has never been; he may hold any sort of personal property—even the right of royalty on an invention—except in one case: the author has no property in his books beyond the territory in which he is a citizen. Is it just that this exception should be made against the author? No one contributes more to the entertainment and elevation of mankind.

But the argument stands with equal solidity upon expediency. Take the case of England and America. If our legislators are unwilling to do justice to English authors, they certainly ought to protect the American authors. The latter have a right to ask that their government should secure for them in England the same rights there that American inventors have. But this is not all. We want in this country a literature *sui generis*, the influence of American and not of English ideas upon our increasing millions. But as long as publishers can get for nothing English material, they can not afford to pay for American production. The American author asks to be put upon an equality in this country with the English producers of literature. He does not ask for protection. He is in the position of a cotton manufacturer in Connecticut, who might be able to compete with one in Manchester without a tariff, but who could not hold the market against goods made in Manchester that had been stolen and brought to this country.

Charles Dudley Warner.

THERE seems little need of words on the subject of an International Copyright Law. Justice and fair dealing demand it. I have seen no argument against it which was not, logically and morally, too weak to need refutation. The measure commends itself to every man who is honest enough to keep his hands out of his neighbor's pocket.

John G. Whittier.

Christian Union.

LETTERS FROM EPISCOPAL DIVINES.

From Bishop Dudley.

IT has been a real pleasure to read Dr. Shields's paper in the November CENTURY. His rainbow words of hope must bring a more than momentary delight to the Christian heart that is weary of the "wars and fightings" among us, the stormy controversies about matters of little moment, albeit our joy be but the recollection of the covenant of promise, and our eyes can see no sign of its speedy fulfillment in the oneness that shall be.

Grant that the dogmatic ferocity of the last century has been somewhat tamed, and that sectarian shibboleths are not sounded so loudly as then; grant that the time is near at hand, which, alas, we fear is far distant,

when "the American churches, leaving their existing standards unchanged," can be "simply confederated in a formal profession of the Nicene or Apostles' creed," still how far would we still be from *organic unity*! They might, indeed, "appear to the world as the united churches of the United States"; but a confederation cannot be an organic unity, be the bond of the confederacy identity of theological opinion or identity of devotional expression. Dr. Shields well adduces the political confederation of the American colonies as illustrative of the weakness and worthlessness of such an ecclesiastical union. There was no organ of the confederated colonies through which might be put into operation their united strength; there was no *organic* unity, and so there was no real union. Equally valueless would be a union of ecclesiastical bodies resting upon a consensus of opinion.

And even less stable and less powerful were a merely sentimental association based upon a common liturgical worship. I doubt not that the soldiers of the confederated colonies shouted all the same battle-cry, that the drums and fifes of all confined themselves strictly to the same patriotic tunes, that the officers and men were all arrayed, as far as possible, in the same uniform, and yet the commander-in-chief of the armies was often pleading that his empty chest might receive the supplies which each State owed, and whose payment he was powerless to compel. And his righteous soul was often vexed by the obstructions placed in his path by the interference of wiseacres over whom he had no control. Unity of sentiment, unity of the expression of that sentiment, is not organic unity, and so is unequal to bring to bear the whole strength of the associated units.

Organic unity is unity of organization; it is the oneness of government, despite differences of sentiment, differences of opinion, and differences of expression both of opinion and of sentiment; and it is powerful because the one life puts forth its strength through the organs that are its appointed instruments. When the confederated States had adopted the Constitution, then they became *united*, and then they were strong, although a watchful jealousy sought successfully to hinder their perfect union by the restraints it imposed upon the activity of the one common life. Doctor Shields well says, "Ever since then they have been racked with internal conflicts, until at last welded together by the fiery blows of civil war." Necessity compelled the removal of the hindering reservations; to protect its own life the nation must exert its whole strength through its own organs, and so the restraints of individual State action were practically and quickly removed. The United States are to-day more than ever before, and in a very real sense, organically one. The world recognizes this fact, this changed condition; and to-day, in consequence, the name of "American citizen" is respected as never before. More than this, to-day the bonds of the United States Government are at a premium in the world's markets, though our national debt is of enormous magnitude, while before the Civil War, when the debt was nothing, the bonds of our government were to be bought at a discount.

Shall the illustration teach us, then, the necessity for ecclesiastical war as the alone creator of ecclesiastical unity? But is it not a possible lesson to be learned without pushing "a mere political analogy too far,"

that the organic unity we long for and pray for shall come at last, in the good providence of God, from the ever-fiercer onslaught of the enemies of Jesus and His truth, and from the compelling necessity that Christendom shall be enabled to put forth her whole strength to resist this assault and to save her own life.

To the question, What shall be the form of this organization which shall include the great company of believers now separated into so many divisions? it would seem that there can be but one reply. Leaving out of our view entirely the question of Scriptural revelation, and granting that there is no definite ecclesiastical polity laid down in Scripture, yet none other than a threefold Ministry of Apostolic Succession can by any possibility be made satisfactory to the great and ancient Churches of the East and of the West, even could the Anglican Communion be induced for the sake of unity to accept another.

But this one element admitted, of the Episcopal Succession which shall insure the continuous witness of the never-dying Apostolate, there may be large room for concession and change in the details of the organization, and it may be that Dr. Shields's vision shall be realized of a "comprehensive polity which shall be at once Congregational, Presbyterial, and Episcopal." But whatever be the polity under which all Christendom shall be organized, when it shall be thus organized, and not until then, will it be *organically one*.

So much I have felt called upon to say, because I believe that it is all-important we shall have full understanding of the end we seek, that we shall know what we mean by organic unity. This end clearly set before us, then may we labor for union of lower and less real character, because subsidiary and helpful to that which is higher and alone satisfying.

Yes, let us labor that we may agree in theological opinion with our brothers of every name; let us minimize our differences and emphasize our agreements,—not because we believe community of opinion to be organic unity, but because we can hope that the more nearly we can approach the confession of a common creed, the more possible becomes the recognition that we may and that we should be members of one household of faith, speak with one voice the one message, and battle in one army for its defense.

Let us rejoice to mark every evidence of intelligent devotional progress, that dissatisfaction with the crudities of extemporized worship is calling to its aid as the vehicles of its prayer and praise, the liturgies consecrated by the use of the centuries,—not because the use of a common form is organic unity, but because the appreciation and employment of the treasures of ancient devotional literature and of the ancient system of Christian worship tends to soften the fierce demand for a narrow sectarian theology and practice, and so tends to create the comprehensive spirit which alone can make organic union possible.

Above all let us strive to love "all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Let us strive to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Let us join hand in hand with all Christian men in works of practical beneficence, of moral reform, of popular education. Let us rejoice to learn from their knowledge, to drink of the living water which they have drawn from the wells of salva-

tion. And let us pray with ever-increasing earnestness of supplication that the Master will haste the day when we shall all be one. As He is in His Father, and His Father in Him, that so the world may believe that God did send Him.

T. U. Dudley.

LOUISVILLE, KY.

From Rev. J. H. Hopkins, S. T. D.

As a churchman, I cannot but express my delight at the general drift and tone of the article of Professor Shields; and especially at his clear-sightedness in perceiving that *organic* unity — not sentimental unity only — must be our true objective point, towards which we must strive to work, no matter how distant its full realization may seem to be. Another point for special thankfulness is, that he does *not* contemplate a union of Protestants only. To begin an attempted reunion of the whole body by leaving out by far the greater part of its members (the Roman and the Oriental churches) is an absurdity which finds no favor with him.

As to doctrinal unity, he does not overstate the difficulties, *if* all present points of difference are to be adjusted before the organic unity is accomplished. But this is, on historic grounds, by no means necessary. The *true* ground is, that no one portion of Christendom has any right to make the acceptance of any doctrinal formula a term of communion in the Holy Catholic Church, unless that whole church has itself set it forth for that purpose. This principle would *at once* subordinate all disputed points that have arisen since the ancient Catholic Church spoke through her General Councils. As for ourselves, no intelligent churchman would dream of insisting upon our thirty-nine articles as terms of communion. Nothing could make this clearer than the noble declaration of the first Lambeth Conference in 1867, which omits all allusion to the thirty-nine articles. This declaration was subsequently accepted by our American House of Bishops, so that it may fairly be styled the *unanimous* voice of the Anglican Episcopate throughout the world, without so much as a single voice raised in opposition. And they said: "We do here solemnly record our conviction that unity will be most effectually promoted by maintaining the faith in its purity and integrity,—as taught in the Holy Scriptures, held by the Primitive Church, *summed up in the Creeds, and affirmed by the undisputed General Councils*,—and by drawing each of us closer to our common Lord, by giving ourselves to much prayer and intercession, by the cultivation of charity, and a love of the Lord's appearing." In this, the Roman and Oriental churches might agree, as heartily as our own. And Professor Shields, when he says that "most of the American churches might readily join in a formal profession of the *Nicene or Apostles' Creed*," proves that the only doctrinal unity which ought to be insisted on is really much nearer than he supposes.

As to church government — practically the toughest of all the problems to be settled — the Apostolical Succession is possessed by the entire body of Oriental, Roman, and Anglican churches, and *cannot* be surrendered without defeating the very unity which is desired to be accomplished. If the churches which have that succession should allow an equal validity in those who have it not, this allowance would simply *con-*

crate the germinal principle of all past and present schisms and lay the nest-egg for *any number of other schisms in time to come*. A ministry of Divine origin and one of purely human origin can never be put upon the same level. But while this principle of Divine authority must be maintained, charity and prudence require that, in order to facilitate the restoration of a visible unity, the *exercise* of that authority should voluntarily be restricted to those things only which are *essential* to a *vital* unity.

As to worship, I have very little to add to the glowing language of Professor Shields, except to accentuate *greatly* the importance of the Holy Eucharist, as the great sum of all worship,—a preponderating importance not yet fully realized among ourselves, but of which we are becoming more and more conscious as we advance towards unity. And also, that his admiration of our prayer-book is rather more unqualified than our own. There are many glorious things in the ancient liturgies which we have not retained; and it is to be hoped that among the many liturgies likely to be compiled and used among the denominations around us, not a few of these may be appropriated, and may so commend themselves in actual use that by and by *we* may get the benefit of them also.

The point of government, as I have said, is the toughest. *Faith* and *Worship* alone will not do. In Scotland there are, I believe, *eleven* distinct Presbyterian bodies. In *Faith* they are identical. In *Worship* they are identical. Yet they are not *one* church, but *eleven*. And so long as the ministry is confessedly *human*, the human tree will bring forth the human fruit.

Of one thing I am certain. If, at the time of any of the great separations among Christians in the past, the condition of the church had been what it is to-day, and if the mind and temper of those who became separatists *then* had been the same as that of their representatives *now*, no separation would have taken place at all. This change on *both* sides is a proof, to me, that the God of Unity and Love is, in His own time and way, bringing us all together again, in Him.

J. H. Hopkins.

WILLIAMSPORT, PA

"Danger Ahead."

IN the November CENTURY appears an able article by Dr. Lyman Abbott, entitled "Danger Ahead," in which, in the main, there is the best of argument; but the author shows an evident misconception of the province of government. At the close, in writing of government control of the telegraph, he says: "Government in England can conduct a great telegraphic enterprise. If government in America cannot, it is time that we found out the reason why." In relation to the Erie Canal he says: "If we can own, administer and control a great water-way, why not a great highway?" Again, in contrasting the Union Pacific railway with the English India railway, he asks: "If England can do this [make two per cent. profit] in India, why cannot we do it in America?" Without, at the present, disputing the conclusion Dr. Abbott would have us reach, we ask, what of it?

If government in America cannot manufacture a purer and better article of baking-powder, to enable