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EBENEZER PORTER MASON.\*

NEARLY five years have passed since the death of Mason. His short and brilliant career was closed on the 26th of December, 1840, at the age of twenty two years. The fact was duly announced by the journals of the day, in terms expressive of unusual sorrow for the departure of one so promising and so much beloved. But whatever the impression made by this melancholy event within the circle of relatives and a numerous band of college and scientific friends, it could not be expected that the world should long remember a passing notice. Obituaries are generally deemed the tribute of private friendship, rather than the expression of the public judgment, unless a wide reputation has previously existed; and besides, the candidates for honorable mention after death have become numerous in these days, so that almost every attentive Sunday school pupil is thought a fit subject for newspaper eulogy.

The distinction which *Mason* had acquired at the time of his death,

deserved more than such ephemeral record. The impression he left behind him of his genius and worth will long remain in the university where he graduated, and where he spent the greater part of his short subsequent life. A general desire was expressed, soon after his death, by those who had known him, that he might not pass away without some permanent memorial. Persons of mature judgment, and of the highest reputation in those departments of learning in which he had excelled, united in the opinion that a memoir should be prepared, as a tribute due to his merits, and as a means of prolonging the influence of a noble example. Classmates and other intimate personal friends urged strongly in behalf of the deceased the claims of justice and affection.

In accordance with these suggestions, Prof. Olmsted undertook to write the biography of his favorite pupil, and to prepare for the press a selection from his literary and scientific papers. This work he was qualified to perform by a long personal acquaintance, and by the fullest knowledge of his scientific attainments. To aid him in his undertaking, relatives and intimate friends confided to his inspection a corres-

\*Life and Writings of Ebenezer Porter Mason, interspersed with hints to Parents and Instructors on the Training and Education of a child of Genius. By Denison Olmsted, Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy in Yale College.

## THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

THE word sacrament is not of scriptural origin. This, however, is no argument against the propriety of using it as the name of Christian ordinances, if the thing designated and understood by it is found in the Bible. The same is true of the words Trinity, depravity, &c. which express in a brief and precise form, what the Bible teaches in scattered passages. Without inquiring into the original classical import of the word *sacramentum*, when it was first appropriated to a Christian use, it was employed to signify the mysteries of religion generally, and corresponds to the Greek *mysterion*. Whatever else a mystery may be, this at least is implied in it, that, besides what is obvious and perceptible to the mind, it involves something more that is unperceived. In this way, it is quite probable, that it came to be made the generic and distinctive appellation of the signs and seals of the covenant of grace, which, by means of visible emblems, represent and ratify to us the invisible grace of which they are the symbols. Or, it is possible, that it may have obtained this appropriation of itself from its classical use, in which it signified the military oath, by which Roman soldiers were inducted into an army, and vowed allegiance and fidelity to its commander. The analogy of this to the Christian sacraments is obvious. For they are the most impressive badges of our union to the "sacramental host of God's elect," and of unwavering devotion and fidelity to the Captain of our salvation. But without traveling farther in quest of the origin of the term, we all understand its present universal and unquestioned use. It designates those outward and visible rites of Christianity, which, by divine institution, are perpetual in the church, and

are, in some sense at least, admitted by all to be signs and symbols of the saving benefits resulting to man from the mediatory work of Christ, and to be instrumental in promoting our interest in those benefits. Under this description common consent ranks circumcision and the passover under the ancient dispensation; and baptism and the Lord's supper under the New.

The first point to which we invite attention, is the extent to which the sacraments of the Old and those of the New Testament agree and differ with each other respectively. For, although this course inverts the usual order of investigation on this subject, yet, as will in due time appear, this is the great point on which hinges the whole debate between the Protestant and evangelical doctrine on the one side, and the Roman or sacramental system of religion on the other. By settling this question, therefore, at the threshold, we clear the way for tracing out the whole subject with ease and perspicuity. The difference, then, between the Protestant and Roman, the evangelical and high-church view of this subject, may be thus stated. According to the former, the sacraments of both dispensations were the same in their nature and kind of efficacy, but differed in circumstances. The latter hold that they differ radically as to their substance not less than their accidents,—that circumcision and the passover were signs and seals foreshadowing the blessings which baptism and the eucharist actually accomplish and convey by their inherent efficacy. The reason why the Romanists so strenuously urge this claim, is obvious. Should they once allow that there is no substantial difference between the Jewish and Christian sacraments, as to their import and kind of efficacy;

then what is so clearly taught in the Bible in regard to circumcision, would apply with equal force to all the sacraments, and would wholly subvert the Romish fiction of their inherent regenerating, sanctifying and saving power. On the other hand, if the Protestants allow this claim, they thus virtually admit the Romish doctrine, that sacraments confer grace and salvation in and of themselves, and are invested with the crowning and exclusive glory of Christ, as the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. And they further rob themselves of all that light respecting the general nature of the sacraments, which Paul sheds so copiously, in his endeavor to reclaim the Jews from their superstitious high-church reliance on the intrinsic virtue of circumcision. It is plain, therefore, how the decision of this question lies at the foundation not only of the whole sacramental controversy between Protestants and Romanists, but also of all inquiries in regard to the nature of the sacraments in general. Let us then understand clearly what the question is. It is not whether the old sacraments differ from the new in any circumstantial and subordinate respects. It is admitted on all sides, that they differ as they have different external rites,—as the old respected blessings flowing from a Savior yet to come; the new were emblematic of the same blessings issuing from a Savior already come; that the old were more burdensome than the new: the former belonged to an economy in which the light and power of Christ's salvation were conveyed to the soul through the dark medium of types and shadows which vanished when He himself appeared; that thus they were obscured and enfeebled in comparison with the ordinances of a dispensation freed from these incumbrances, and enriched by larger communications of the Spirit. This is indisputable. But it does not prove that

the sacraments of these respective dispensations were diverse in their main features, their characteristic interest, and kind of efficacy, any more than it proves that the God of Abraham is different from the God of Paul, or that the Messiah of the Jews differs from our own Redeemer, and is not the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. That the new and old sacraments are essentially of similar import and force, is evident from the following considerations.

1. Paul declares of the Jews, 1 Cor. x, 2—4, "They were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." These indeed were temporary and unusual sacraments. But they can not, on this account, be deemed superior to those which were perpetual in the church. At all events, we thus learn, that the Israelites received whatever virtue there is in baptism or in the eucharist. The language is quite equal to the most intensive phrases of the New Testament on this subject. "This Rock was Christ," proves transubstantiation quite as strongly as "This is my body." But the Apostle cites this case for the express purpose of warning the church against relying on outward ordinances and sacraments, to the neglect of that spiritual and moral excellence, without which they are vain. He does this by showing them how many of their fathers, notwithstanding they enjoyed equal sacramental privileges, sunk into fatal apostasy. This case proves, therefore, that the Jews were favored with the same sacramental virtue as Christians, and that, with both alike, it was unavailing, if divorced from that faith without which it is impossible to please God.

2. Baptism and circumcision signify and seal the same blessings,

and the efficacy of each is the same in kind. They are symbols of the removal of our natural sinfulness and corruption. How baptism is an emblem of the washing of regeneration, the ablation of the soul from the filth and guilt of sin, is plain. How circumcision signifies the crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts, another aspect of the same radical change, is equally plain. For as we are commanded to circumcise the heart, and taught that circumcision profiteth if we keep the law, but, if we break the law, our circumcision is made uncircumcision; so water-baptism is contrasted with the baptism of the Holy Spirit: and we are taught, that it is not the mere washing away of the filth of the flesh which saves us, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. Hence it is plain, that we are thus taught that each of these are symbols of that great spiritual change, that inward piety, without which they are both represented as of no power to save. So circumcision is declared to be to Abraham a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised. But we know that faith works by love, and purifies the heart. Baptism was likewise administered to those who had already believed, as all the evangelical narratives show. It must, therefore, like circumcision, have been a seal and pledge of the righteousness of faith and its attendant blessings, and not a rite which, by its own power, renewed the soul, thus giving birth to faith and repentance, justification and salvation. But in Colossians ii, 11, 12, circumcision and baptism are both mentioned together, as filling the same place, and endowed with like properties. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also

ye are risen through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Here, plainly, the highest efficacy is attributed to circumcision which any Romanist ever claimed for baptism,—a putting away of the body of the sins of the flesh; but then it is declared to be the circumcision made without hands, in other words, that inward spiritual change, of which corporeal circumcision is the symbol. On the other hand, if we are said to be buried and risen with him in baptism, it is declared to be through *faith* of the operation of God. Its efficacy is thus shown to be dependent on faith. If we have succeeded in showing the perfect resemblance between baptism and circumcision, as to their main intent, we may be more brief in regard to the substantial identity of the Lord's supper and the passover. It is enough, then, that Christ is declared, 1 Cor. v, 7, to be our passover. This language, surely, is not less explicit and intense than any used respecting the Lord's supper, and shows that there was as strong a participation of him in the passover, as in this latter ordinance. Indeed, Christ is the true paschal lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. Having thus shown the substantial similarity of the sacraments under both dispensations, we proceed to deduce from this fact their general nature, influence and efficacy. In this exposition our guiding light will be Paul's definition of circumcision, Rom. iv, 11, in which he declares it to be a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith. Now it is by faith that we become interested in the righteousness of Christ, and all the blessings of salvation which are the purchase of his blood. Thus we arrive at this definition.

The Christian sacraments are divinely appointed visible signs and seals of the grace of the Gospel.

Now it is the office of a sign to represent or suggest to the mind

something beyond itself. A visible sign conveys such representation to the mind by picturing it to the eye.

It is the office of a seal to attest and confirm solemn promises or covenants. It is obvious, therefore, that the same visible rite may perform both offices.

As signs and seals, the sacraments correspond to the two great aspects under which the Gospel may be considered. 1. As it *exhibits* to us those great truths and realities which lie at the basis of our salvation. 2. As through it God stipulates to confer its blessings on the believer, by solemn promise and covenant. To each of these aspects of the Gospel, its sacraments correspond as signs and seals.

How then, let us inquire, are the elements of water, bread, and wine, used in the Lord's supper, invested with a sacramental character, so as to be signs and seals of the covenant of grace? We answer, in the first place, they are naturally adapted to the purpose, inasmuch as they do that for the body, which the things represented by them do for the soul. The application of water to the body is in itself a fit emblem of the cleansing of the soul from pollution. The bread broken is a fit emblem of Christ's mangled body: when eaten, it exhibits him as the nutriment of our spiritual life. The wine, by its color, is a fit symbol of his blood shed for us: by its refreshing property, it suggests the reviving power of his cross to the soul drooping under the burden of conscious guilt. These elements undergo no change in themselves, either as to substance or accidents, by being set apart from a common to a sacramental use. That there is no other change, is obvious to our senses, and corresponds with their whole nature and intent as signs and seals.

But here let us notice the great plea of the Romanists for transubstantiation, which is, that the lan-

guage of the institute giving the elements their sacramental character, v, 12, "This is my body," "This is my blood," prove transubstantiation, or the conversion of the elements into the real body and blood of Christ. But when the strict literal sense of any passage of the Bible is obviously absurd and self-contradictory, we are bound on every principle, to give it a figurative construction which shall harmonize with its other clear and undoubted teachings. We might as well say that Christ is a literal vine, or lamb, as that he is literal bread. But, to bring this question to the test, let us try the phrase, "this is my body." The word *this* refers to bread. Christ declared therefore, this bread which I now hold in my hand, a member of my body, is my body. Now according to scriptural usage, the word *is*, in this passage, may mean, *is figuratively*, or *is really*. As a specimen of the former use, take the following. The seed is the word. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. Now did Christ mean by these words, "This is my body," it is figuratively or literally my body? I answer, the former:

1. Because that of which he said it, was held by a member of his body, and spoken of as something wholly distinct from it. Could that which was a separate substance from his body yet be his body?

2. Because the language does not constitute or change any thing, as the Romanists maintain, but simply declares an existing fact. But as all admit, before the utterance of these words, there is no conversion of substances from their natural state.

3. When Christ uttered these words, his body had not been crucified or broken: how then could the broken bread be literally his unbroken body?

4. Christ is now in the highest heavens. While by his divine omni-

presence His spirit is every where at all times; yet his body can not fill two different spaces at the same time: it can not be at the same moment at the right hand of the majesty on high, and on every communion table.

5. If the sacramental bread is his real body, then he is sacrificed anew at each successive communion. But this is in direct contradiction to the Scriptures, which teach that, in contrast to other priests, who need to make a frequent repetition of their sacrifices, Christ, after he had made one offering for sins, forever sat down at the right hand of God.

Having thus exploded this tenet, which is the great support of the superstitions and hierarchical power of the apostate Romish church, we proceed to consider the uses of the Christian sacraments.

Their principal object and use obviously are, to assist and confirm our faith in the truths and promises of the Gospel, through the medium of the bodily senses. By this visible representation of the truths and confirmation of the promises of the Gospel, our corporeal are made to conspire with our mental faculties, in nourishing our faith, in quickening all our spiritual affections. By means of them, the soul-saving, soul-refreshing truths of salvation are figured forth to the eye, and there is no more beautiful and exact description of the precise quality of the sacraments, than this of Augustine, that they are the "word made visible." It is the truth of the word represented to the eye, and through this avenue reaching and stirring the sensibilities of the heart. The addition of this word *seen* to the word *heard*, brings Christ indeed nigh to every one of us, so that we have neither to ascend to heaven, or descend to the depths to find him: he is before us. We not only hear: we have an affecting exhibition of his body broken: his blood poured out: his spirit cleansing our souls

from defilement. Now since we are so constituted as to be powerfully impressed by sensible representations of inward and invisible ideas: since men always crave these visible emblems of the great truths that stir their souls: since they are ever resorting to pictures, badges, seals and similar devices, as the tokens of their strong inward affections, no reason can be shown why this property of our nature should not be enlisted in the service of piety. This God has done in the Christian sacraments, in which he perpetually enlists the senses as auxiliaries to the exercises of the inner man in the promotion of faith. And how immense, past conception or utterance, is the condescension which he thus displays toward our infirmities?

But let us understand what is the precise nature and force of these visible emblems.

Though they are visible signs and emblems which awaken a vivid and impressive sense of the spiritual truths and blessings imaged forth by them: yet they are not mere signs. They are also *seals* of the covenant in which God promises to confer these blessings upon us. Now we know that in all solemn stipulations and contracts among men, it is customary to affix a seal, as the most conclusive ratification of it; the ultimate and decisive guarantee of the full intention and obligation of the promisor to fulfill his contract. This solemn attestation invites and gives additional confidence on the part of the promisee. Exactly analogous to this is the influence of the seals of the covenant. God confirms to the believer his word of promise, by this solemn, ultimate attestation which men ever give in confirmation of their binding promises. What believer, as oft as he eats the bread and drinks the cup in remembrance of his risen Savior, does not feel that it is a precious token, a most impressive and

beautiful pledge of the sincerity and truth of God's promises of grace in Christ?

But in this line we must also guard against error and ultraism. We must not suppose that the word and promise of God are not in themselves true and certain, as proceeding from the God of truth, for whom it is impossible to lie; and we must not suppose that true faith does not confide in it, for the simple reason that it is the word of the Lord. But this no way hinders, that by a visible sign and seal, he should encourage, enliven and confirm our confidence and reliance upon it. And since men have evil hearts of unbelief, and their faith is constantly prone to faint and waver, who does not need to have it constantly upheld and braced by these gracious props? These aids are not by way of supplement to the truth of God, to eke out and perfect that, as if it were in itself incomplete, but helps to our infirmity. A seal on a written contract does not argue that its covenants are not true and obligatory in themselves, but it adds solemnity and impressiveness to them.

We are now prepared to solve the great question between Protestants and Romanists, which, although it has been virtually answered already, it is well to settle decisively, by a cumulative summary of the arguments relating to it. The Romanists contend that the sacraments work grace by their inherent energy, without regard to the faith of the recipient, provided only that he presents no obstacle to their efficacy by flagrant, or as they call it, mortal sin. They call this effect of the sacraments an "*opus operatum*," by which they mean a work wrought by the power of the rite itself, without the concurrent agency of the subject of it. They hold that the sacraments impart faith, instead of strengthening it, and being inefficacious without a believing reception. Protestants on

the other hand, hold that they confer no faith or grace upon us, except as they are received in faith, with a spirit of true piety. Their reasons are—

1. Because without faith it is impossible to please God. But in taking a principle of grace and holiness into the soul, we assuredly do, we can not but please God. And on the high-church theory we do this in taking the sacraments without faith.

2. According to all the New Testament directions and narratives, faith and repentance precede baptism in the case of adults, and the Lord's supper in the case of all, and are the requisite qualification for these sealing ordinances, instead of following and being produced by them. The primitive Christians first believed and then were baptized. They first gave themselves to God, and then to the Apostles by the will of God.

3. The Bible positively asserts the inefficacy of the sacraments without faith. In regard to the Lord's supper, Paul declares, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." Therefore he adds, "Let a man examine himself whether he be in the faith," as the only due preparation for receiving them. In respect to baptism, Peter says it is not the mere outward ablution, the washing away of the filth of the flesh that saves, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, a thing impossible without faith in Christ, which alone purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

4. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Circumcision is that of the heart, not of the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God. The Romanists see the conclusiveness of all this—and therefore to escape it have invented the fiction that the old sacraments differ from the new,

as those only typify what these actually confer. But this pretence has been disproved at the threshold of this investigation.

5. It is possible to have the form of godliness without the power thereof. But the sacraments are a material part of this form.

6. All experience contradicts this papal pretension. Multitudes in every age have received the sacraments who were strangers to all religion, being disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.

To these decisive considerations, it is sometimes objected that the Protestant view subverts all utility and necessity of sacraments whatever; that while faith is demanded as a prerequisite to their efficacy, it of itself has the promise of salvation, and the sacraments can not do more than save us, or any way add to our good estate. But we answer, that while it is true that faith has the sure promise of salvation, it is not only requisite that it should be begun, but continued and increased till we arrive at the stature of perfect men in Christ. Wherever faith is genuine, it will instinctively strive thus to advance and perfect itself; it will eagerly seize and improve all the divinely instituted means of progress. There is such a thing as a weak faith and a strong faith mounting upward and upward to full assurance. Hence the incessant prayer of all but deluded Perfectionists is, Lord increase our faith; and this cry they will lift up to God without ceasing, till faith is perfected, or rather lost in vision.

They can not but delight to feed it with the spiritual meat and drink which God provides to refresh them in their pilgrimage.

Again it is objected that the language of Scripture is full and clear to the effect, that by baptism merely we are regenerated and united to Christ. But since truth can not contradict truth, and one part of the Bible can not contradict another,

these passages, therefore, must be interpreted consistently with the great truth which we have already deduced from the Bible—that no external ordinance is of power to save without faith. They must be interpreted in the light of that use of language by which the sign is often used for the thing signified. In the passages in question, baptism is put for that inward purification of which it is the symbol.

Further it is alleged that infants are incapable of faith, because they can not have a knowledge of the Gospel. How, then, it is asked, can baptism benefit them, if it only benefits those who receive it in faith? We answer, that the application of baptism in infancy, instead of adult years, has at the time of its administration a chief respect to the faith of the parents. It is to them a solemn rite of dedicating the child to God, and of covenanting to bring him up in His fear, and of so training him that, under God, at a proper age he may exercise that faith by which he will apply to himself the grace signed and sealed in baptism, and take upon himself its covenants and duties. If he still abides in unbelief, his baptism avails him nothing. His circumcision becomes uncircumcision. But we need not reply more at length, since it is obvious that the same objection lies in its utmost strength against the circumcision of infants, an acknowledged institute of God, and confessedly what we contend baptism is, a seal of the righteousness of faith. It is remarkable that Papists for one reason, and Baptists for another, deny the analogy between the Christian and Jewish sacraments, in opposition to the whole church of God. Dr. Pusey, in his great treatise on baptismal regeneration, devotes a whole chapter to this purpose, and contends that the authority for infant baptism is to be derived from the Fathers and not from the Bible. Extremes meet.

When we find such forces united on any point against all Protestant Christendom, it is a strong presumption that they all diverge at about equal angles from the golden mean of evangelical truth.

We will not omit to mention another, though perhaps subordinate use of the Christian sacraments. They serve as badges of the Christian profession. They are tokens of membership in the visible church; baptism, of initiation, and the eucharist, of the completion and continuance of membership. This use must be obvious to all. Like the ancient military *sacramentum*, they are the visible pledges of our enlistment and soldiership in the armies of the Lord.

Before leaving this subject, we invite attention to one general observation.

On the subject of the sacraments, their importance and efficacy, the human mind is prone to err in two opposite extremes, both by excess and defect. This excess and defect answer to a corresponding excess and defect in regard to all the doctrines of Christianity. The nominally Christian world has ever been distributed into three great parties, one of which only is mainly right. These have been called the sacramental, the evangelical and the rationalistic. The first of these chains salvation to outward rites and ceremonies. The second takes the Bible as it finds it, and makes regeneration by the Spirit, a vital union to Christ, with their necessary fruits of faith, love, and all moral excellence, the principal and decisive requisite to salvation, to which all other things are subordinate. The rationalists explain away all the mysteries of the Bible, and reduce them to the standard of human reason, and substitute for the supernatural work of the Spirit a mere moral reformation. To the evangelical system of doctrine generally, corresponds the evangelical doc-

trine of the sacraments, which we have endeavored to explain and defend. The papal view of the sacraments, according to which they impart grace by their inherent efficacy, corresponds, belongs to, and ever accompanies that system which puts the whole stress of religion in outward forms. All tendencies of this description, every propensity to make them saving ordinances, to magnify their importance and disparage the religion of the heart, or the supreme importance of the word preached, err from the true doctrine by excess. On the other hand, in proportion as men lose sight of the doctrines of grace and verge towards rationalistic errors, they will lose sight of those features of the sacraments which correspond to the doctrines of grace, and especially by which they seal that grace to the soul. Thus the Unitarian sees no use in the sacraments, except that which is lowest and purely incidental, viz. that they are badges of the Christian profession. The Pelagian may see that they are signs and memorials of Christ's death, but as he sneers at the doctrines of grace, and especially the notion of a covenant of grace, so he repudiates or loses sight of their sealing properties, which is their most important and characteristic use. It is worthy of inquiry, whether our ministers and churches have given sufficient prominence to this, the highest quality and use of the sacraments; whether they are accustomed to speak of them not only as signs and memorials of Christ's death, but also as seals of his grace? If we are not happily mistaken in the fear which these questions suggest, we ask, can we neglect this high quality of the sacraments, without suffering loss? Let us beware, lest in shunning high-church errors, we swing over to the contrary extreme. It is important not to lose this portion of spiritual sustenance, with which God would cheer and sustain

us in our pilgrimage. To degrade the sacraments below the place which God has given them, must be injurious to ourselves and the church. If they are practically treated as barren and useless ceremonies, the instincts of the pious heart will re-

coil from such inanity; they will seek some view of them, which invests them with real and serious importance; and they will be liable to bound, as many have done, at a single leap, to the opposite extreme of fanatical formality.

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### THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.\*

It is not an improper interference when we inquire into the developments of doctrine in any particular denomination of Christians, especially if such a denomination puts forth extraordinary claims to being modeled after the Apostolical pattern. Such developments are among the methods by which its claims are to be judged, and it is probable that this will be the way by which they will in fact be judged by the great mass of mankind, while the abstract arguments for its conformity to the divine original will be disregarded. The Episcopal church asserts claims for itself which are set up by no other Protestant denomination, and assumes an attitude towards all others which is maintained by no other one. It claims to be the only primitive Apostolic church; recognizes the ministry and ordinances of no other as valid; holds communion with no other as such; associates with no other as such in the efforts to diffuse our common Christianity;

and asserts that it has within its own bosom the best system of arrangements, under the divine appointment, for promoting the work of conversion and sanctification on earth, and for preparing the soul for heaven. To these extraordinary claims Episcopalians invite attention. They make no secret of them. They are put forward in their preaching, their periodicals, their standard works, their private intercourse with the members of other denominations. They are urged without hesitancy or ambiguity, and with a unanimity of view among the ministers and members of that communion, such as can be found in no other denomination.

It is the duty and the privilege of those who feel an interest in the common Christianity, to examine these claims. If they are well founded, we who are unconnected with the Episcopal church are all in grievous error, and are seeking heaven under very decided disadvantage. If they are well founded, there is also a vast amount of wasted talent and learning employed in other denominations in endeavoring to spread what is supposed to be truth, which could be much more economically and profitably employed under the Episcopal banners. It is the duty and the privilege of all such to watch every development of the system which asserts such claims, and to judge by those developments what is its legitimate tendency. An occasion so important

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\*Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, assembled in a general convention held in St. Andrew's church, in the city of Philadelphia, from October 2d to October 22d inclusive, in the year of our Lord, 1844. pp. 320.

Proceedings and Debates of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: held in the city of Philadelphia, October, 1844. To which is added the Pastoral Letter of the House of Bishops. Philadelphia: Stavely & McCalla. pp. 100.