

THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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I. THE LOLLARDS.

IN the Middle Ages there were developed two opposite views of the sphere and mission of the church. One was that of Hildebrand and his school, who began with the claim that the church should be independent of the secular power, and ended with the demand that all civil rulers should recognize the successor of St. Peter as their suzerain. The natural outcome of this theory was that the administration of civil governments should be largely in the hands of ecclesiastics, that the hierarchy should be enriched at the expense of the state, and that the whole body of the clergy should be practically divorced from their spiritual functions.

The other view found advocates in William of Ockham and Marsilius of Padua, who held that the sphere of the church was purely spiritual. Not only was the state independent of the church, but the pope, with all ecclesiastics, was of right, in all secular concerns, subject to the civil ruler.

Of this latter view John Wyclif became the champion in England. It was as a member of the Parliament of 1366, which repudiated the papal claim for tribute that King John had engaged to pay, that we first hear of Wyclif's opposition to the pretensions of Rome. From that time forth he was busy refuting her claims, and, by the use of all the means in his power, helping on the efforts, then making under the lead of John of Gaunt, to exclude the dignitaries of the church from secular offices and confine them to their legitimate work.

IV. THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

WHEN the church received its great enlargement in the family of Jacob, we find that it was divided into twelve tribes, besides the priestly sons of Levi. These tribes had their separate inheritance and local officers; and their rival interests and jealousies led to strife and sometimes to bloodshed. For political reasons, they finally separated into two nationalities, which were not only engaged in almost perpetual warfare with each other, but also had an entirely distinct worship. Later on, in the interval between the close of the Old Testament canon and the coming of Christ, rival sects arose, Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes, to one or the other of which every worshiper of Jehovah attached himself. So it was when our Saviour was upon the earth.

When Pentecost ushered in the peculiarly Christian period of the church, it was attended by the gift of tongues. This seemed to indicate that the Babel reign of confusion and division was now over, and that the days had come when the multitude of them that believed would be of one heart and soul. There had been strife among the apostles of the Lord, during the period of his presence with them, as to who should be the greatest. Some had then rebuked those who cast out devils in Christ's name because not of their own following. So we find very early that there was a diversity of opinion and practice which separated the very apostles. Paul rebuked Peter to his face, and the same apostle separated himself from Barnabas on a question of expediency. The church itself was divided into two grand sections, the Judaizers and the followers of Paul. The synod, which met at Jerusalem to consider this question, failed to settle it. The decision was a compromise, and was doubtless unsatisfactory to both the severely logical and the passionate minds of each extreme.

Beginning with the apostolic age, we find that contentions, divisions, heresies, sects, schisms mark the history of the church, in every period at all distinguished for its activity or progress. During the sleep of the middle ages, the peace of the church

was, comparatively, but little disturbed. There were the faithful few, "the Church in the Wilderness," the Waldenses of Piedmont; and in 1054, after long contention, lasting several centuries, the Catholic Church was disrupted, and its fragments were known as the Eastern or Greek Church and the Western or Latin Church. The Greek communion has, since its separate existence, been in a state of hibernation; enjoying the unity which comes from the torpor of ignorance and lack of thought. But even this church has its dissenters, in the Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites, Copts and Abyssinians. Moreover, the orthodox have found it necessary to divide themselves into the six national churches of Russia, Servia, Roumania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro, which have no organic connection with each other.

The Western, Latin, Roman Church has always had a life more or less active, and consequently has been correspondingly distracted with dissensions. There were the contentions of the Realists and Nominalists, of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, of the rival popes at Avignon and Rome in the fourteenth century, and almost continual trouble with dissenters and heretics, such as the Albigenses, the followers of Wickliffe, John Huss and Jerome of Prague. The most marked of these was the convulsion of the sixteenth century, which shook this church from centre to circumference, resulting in the separation of the great majority of the Teutonic races from the papal communion and the establishment of the Protestant Church. But Rome's troubles have not ceased since it has been freed from this active, progressive and aggressive element. The Jesuits and Jansenists, the Gallicans and Ultramontanes, the Holland church, the believers in and the deniers of the temporal power, the Old and the New Catholics, all attest that the outward unity of the papacy but thinly veils a turbulent life within.

The Protestant Church has wonderfully exemplified the differentiating influence of active, independent thought. Leaving the old harbor with the pennant flying at the masthead, on which was written in capitals, *The Right of Private Judgment*, instead of a single boat, we find a numerous fleet of vessels, each with a different flag to distinguish it from its neighbors. There are two

grand divisions of the Protestant host: the Lutherans and the Reformed. The Lutherans, or as they sometimes call themselves, "Evangelicals," especially in their earlier days, have had a stormy life. There were the antinomian, the synergistic, the justification, the consubstantiation, the Form of Concord controversies; and there is now a well-defined division between the high-church sacramentarian party and the low-church evangelicals. In addition to these causes of division, there are the differences of nationality and race, which have led to distinct churches in every separate country; while in Prussia and in other instances the union of the Lutherans and the Reformed into one state church has left a residuum of strict followers of Luther, who refuse to submit to the amalgamation, and are known as dissenters.

But the disintegrating process has reached its maximum in the Reformed branch of the Protestant Church. Here the divisions are so numerous and so complicated as to defy a completely accurate classification. It will answer our purpose to allude to a few of the more important. There is a division by nationality. The cases are rare where church lines, except so far as missionary enterprises are concerned, overlap state or national limits. For example, there is a separate Presbyterian church for England, for Ireland, and for Scotland. The most interesting and important basis of division is upon the system of grace in theology, according to which there are Calvinists and Arminians. The form of government classifies them into Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. The mode of administering baptism arranges them into Baptists and Pædo-baptists. Each one of these is still further subdivided. For instance, the Presbyterians of this country have more than half a dozen distinct organizations. The minor sects are almost numberless; and it is doubtful whether an exhaustively complete list of them has ever been made.

We are struck with the fact, that these divisions multiply as the centuries roll around; that they are more numerous in the most active and intelligent periods of the church's history; and that many of them are caused and perpetuated by mere trifles. The *Filioque* controversy and schism strikingly exemplifies the last statement.

THESE DIVISIONS MAR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH,

Chiefly, it would seem, in three ways: I. By the *strifes* which they engender. This is seen in the civil wars between the tribes in Old Testament times, beginning with the slaughter of the Benjamites and continuing to the days when Judah vexed Ephraim and Ephraim envied Judah. It is seen in the heated contentions that marked the early centuries of the Christian era. It is shown in the mutual excommunications hurled against each other by the rival bishops of Rome and Constantinople. It is read on the bloody pages which record the history of the Albigenses and the Vaudois. The Thirty Years' War of Germany is a record of it. The Roman Inquisition tells its most sickening story; while the heather hills of Scotland and the fires of Smithfield bear sad witness to its dreadful facts. Since christians have ceased to use carnal weapons in their conflicts, they have employed as the instruments of their strife, not only argument, but too frequently satire, irony and even calumny. It is happily true that persecution of one body of christians by another has almost entirely ceased within the limits of Christendom. Moreover, wordy warfare, disputes, debates, have decreased and are apparently destined to become mere memories in the church. It is no longer the staple preaching to denounce the creeds of others, and it has become a rare thing that we hear a controversial sermon. The religious press, to a large degree, reflects this more friendly spirit, and devotes itself more and more to the positive and the practical. In the new and growing sections of our own country, this evil attendant of the division of the church is now probably seen at its worst. When a new town is started, every denomination feels called upon to enter the field. The result frequently is a number of starveling, contentious organizations, who fight one another as lustily as they do the powers of evil. There is, however, by no means so much of strife, even under these conditions, as there formerly was. The church is learning that there may be and ought to be active rivalry without the jealous spirit of opposition.

II. The divisions in the church are a *stumbling block to outsiders* and a *grief to many believers*. Bacon, in his essay on *Unity in Religion*, expresses the judgment that "it is certain, that

heresies and schisms are of all others the greatest scandals; yea, more than corruption of manners." Neither the grammar nor the sentiment of this quotation is endorsed. It is probably true, however, that the two facts mentioned, the divisions of the church and the inconsistencies of christians, constitute the greatest barriers to the complete triumph of the church in gospel lands. The unholy lives of many professors is, however, a far greater hindrance to the success of the gospel now than the divisions in the church are. It may have been quite different in Bacon's day. Every pastor who is aggressive and personal in his work has doubtless sometimes heard the objection urged and the plea made by the unconverted, that the contentions of the churches constitute a barrier to their acceptance of christianity. With some this is doubtless a mere pretext, but with others it is a serious difficulty. It seems to them incredible that a divine organization, blessed with the perpetual indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God's own kingdom upon the earth, could become rent into numberless factions, all different and many of them hostile and discordant.

This evil is great in christian lands, but it is much worse among the heathen. Every intelligent man in Bible countries can see many things which offset these divisions. Moreover, here the whole tone of society is christian, and every presumption is in its favor. But it is the reverse in China and India and Japan. How strange the differences of christians must seem to them! How ridiculous it must appear to find churches founded upon a peculiar mode of administering a rite, the particular kind of psalmody to be employed, the section of the same country from which its missionaries hail! It would seem that this must be a serious drawback to the thoughtful, critical heathen.

These divisions are a grief to many earnest lovers of our Lord. With some it is, as to outsiders, a trial to their faith. Satan uses it to torment their souls with questioning doubts. With others, it is a temptation to bigotry and intolerance. Like John, they are prone to say, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him because he followeth not us." Such christians are greatly injured by the cultivation of this spirit of uncharitableness. It is worse for them than it is for

their brethren whom they thus unchurch and dechristianize. With still other believers, these divisions are a great sorrow. They mourn over the breaches of Zion, and sigh as they think of the distractions of the Lord's people. They long and labor for the outward as well as the inward unity of the church.

III. Perhaps the most serious evil, growing out of the divisions in the church, is the *waste of force* caused by them. It is difficult to estimate this. Let us look at the pastorate in the small towns. The average number of members in each of the Southern Presbyterian churches is less than sixty-five. We may presume, then, that the small towns of three thousand inhabitants and under will not average over one hundred members each. In such places, from four to eight separate churches are found, usually each with its own pastor. It is within bounds to say that an average minister is amply adequate to supply the religious wants of these small communities. A church of five hundred members is, in some respects, more easily handled than one with a hundred or less. It usually furnishes better material for active, efficient officers, and the *esprit de corps* is superior. Suppose that, instead of weak churches, averaging less than a hundred, in these villages and towns, it was the rule that no second church of any denomination should be organized unless each will have a strength of at least two hundred; we can see at once that congregational expenses would be not more than half what they now are. This would save to the Southern Presbyterian Church, in pastors' salaries and other congregational expenses, possibly as much as three hundred thousand dollars a year: more than is given to all the committees of the church. If this amount could be saved and expended upon the missionary work of this church, it could easily plant missions in every opening that presents itself in our own country, and more than double its work among the heathen. It would be an equal saving to all other communions, whose cords could be lengthened and whose stakes greatly strengthened by the more judicious and economical expenditure of the Lord's money.

If these divisions did not exist, another large sum could be saved in the amounts expended upon our religious papers and other publications. There are said to be seven hundred religious peri-

odicals in this country. It may be safely said that one-fourth of these papers would then be unnecessary. The reduced number, with a larger subscription list, could furnish better reading at less cost. The same money would be far more efficient than now in our church schools and colleges. Church academies and high schools could be greatly multiplied, and would accomplish a work not second in importance to that of our colleges and universities. The expenses of the foreign field would be greatly curtailed, and the same money would probably go ten per cent. further than now.

It will doubtless be said that the union of the churches is impracticable, and that, therefore, it is useless to speak of what would be saved by it. This is not the point now before us. We are simply showing that the division of the churches involves a very heavy expense, that would otherwise be unnecessary.

This will suggest, however, the second observation, that

MANY OF THESE DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH ARE UNAVOIDABLE.

Those who think that the various denominations should be merged into one belong to two quite distinct classes. There are those who contend that unity should be secured on the basis of some one of the existing organizations. The Romanist thinks that every church should acknowledge the papal supremacy; the Anglican, that all ministers should come within the charmed circle of apostolic succession; the Baptist, that every believer should be immersed into the one church. That it is utterly impracticable to unite the church, as it is now, on any such a basis ought to be apparent to every intelligent observer. Unless all other christians besides the Romanists are arrant hypocrites, how can it be expected that they will surrender their cherished opinions and practices, and adopt those which they intentionally and intelligently reject? How can a Presbyterian become an Anglican until he ceases to be a Presbyterian? How can a Pædo-baptist become a Baptist, when he is not a Baptist? As long as each mind is a unit, it will do its own thinking. As long as men are fallible, they will continue to see only one hemisphere of truth. It is useless for me, seeing only the Presbyterian side of the rounded globe, to expect my Episcopal brother to agree with me when he

sees only the Anglican side. When our Baptist brethren propose to unify the church by immersing us all, it is entirely pertinent to submit the counter proposition, to unite all christians by baptizing both infants and adults by affusion.

There is another class of ardent unionists who propose to unify all christians into one organization upon a broad and liberal basis; upon the consensus of doctrines. This is far more plausible and apparently more practicable than the other. But examined closely, it will be found impossible of application. It is said, Why not throw away all creeds and confessions and come together on the Bible? This could be done satisfactorily with regard to the great mass of scriptural teaching; with regard to the most important element of it. The difficulty of application is seen in those beliefs which are projected into outward practice; those doctrines which crystallize themselves into rites and institutions. To exemplify, I am a believer in infant membership, and present my little babe to receive the ordinance of baptism. My pastor, however, does not so read the Bible, and he cannot conscientiously administer a rite for which he believes he has no divine warrant. Am I to give up infant baptism? Or, must he violate his convictions? Again, how would it be arranged about church government? Is it practicable to combine the essential elements of Independency, Presbyterianism and Episcopacy into one homogeneous system? If not, who is to surrender? It is apparent that, on the basis of mutual toleration, the Calvinist and Arminian can meet at the same table and even preach from the same pulpit; but it is not possible to have both parochial and diocesan Episcopacy in the same church establishment; each congregation cannot be independent, and, at the same time, subject to a system of ecclesiastical courts.

THESE DIVISIONS ARE, IN SOME RESPECTS, BENEFICIAL.

I. It has already been said that they lead to strife. This is true, in many cases; and yet, ordinarily, it will be more correct to say that strife leads to division. Strife is more frequently the parent than the child of division; and, in very many instances, the grandchild is *peace*. If incompatible elements are brought

into contact, discord is the result. Let them be kept apart and there is no trouble. These common-sense principles apply to the church as well as to any other association of men. The renewed nature is not a perfect nature. Indeed, every christian has very much of the old Adam in him. Whenever, therefore, any body of christians is disturbed by internal dissensions, whether from a difference of opinion or of practice, whether from a great or a small cause, and it is found impossible to bring the factions into harmony or into mutual toleration, then it is undoubtedly expedient, wise, necessary, that a separation take place, like that between Abraham and Lot. It is hardly a matter for dispute, that there is more peace and mutual respect and good will in the christian world to-day, than if all the various bodies, with their divergent views, were brought together into one communion. What a Babel it would be, if all the families in a community lived in the same house and were subject to the same rules! It has been quaintly but wisely said, that the best way to secure good feeling among neighbors is to have a strong, high fence between them.

II. The separate churches serve to *keep each other pure*. This is strikingly exemplified in the case of the Greek and Roman Churches. One prominent cause of the great corruption of the Eastern church is undoubtedly the fact, that it holds practically undisputed sway in the territory which it occupies. It is more clearly seen in the papal church. In Protestant countries, this church is on its good behavior, and has a higher class of priests and of members than in lands where no rival communion is known. Contrast this church as it is in Mexico and the South American States with its condition in our country. The difference is immense, and is chiefly due to its contact with the strong Protestant churches. So it was in the early days of Protestantism, when intolerance and persecution of heterodox beliefs were common. The fox-hunting, sermon-buying clergy of England are perhaps largely the product of the almost universal sway of Anglicanism in that part of the island. We all need to be watched, and no church in this country can afford to defy the opinion of its sister communions.

III. The different churches *stimulate each other to activity*.

Competition exerts possibly as positive and healthful an influence in the relations of the several churches to each other as in the affairs of every day life. It may be said to be an unworthy motive, but its quickening influence cannot be questioned. It is a mistake, moreover, to call it unworthy; it may be a low, but it is not an improper motive. What is meant in Heb. x. 24, "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works"? An ill-natured, jealous, envious rivalry is, of course, wrong. But when two churches emulate each other and prompt each other to self-denial, and to active, efficient labor in the Master's cause, there is no evil in the rivalry.

IV. There is a fourth and great benefit resulting from the divisions in the church. There is an endless diversity in the works of nature. It has been truthfully said that there are no duplicates. No two blades of grass are exact counterparts of each other. So with the human soul, which is directly the seat of christian influence. While every human spirit is essentially like every other, and there is thus a substantial unity in the race, it is also true that each soul has its peculiarities. As the race is divided into tribes and nations by reason of a common ancestry or a common home, so it is divided into classes according to mental affinities. There is not only a physical Jew, but also a mental Jew; so there is a mental Greek, Roman, Frenchman, German, Englishman, Scotchman. The Gospels are four, doubtless largely because of this fact of human nature. Matthew is adapted to the Jewish mind, swayed by authority; Mark, to the Roman, controlled by power; Luke, to the classic, inquisitive Greek; John, to the reflecting, musing, mystical christian. So we have all kinds of men called by the Spirit into the ministry, for the manifest reason that one style of mind will influence one class of hearers, and another a different class. As a result, there are more won to Christ. So with the different churches. The very fact that these various, separate organizations have sprung into being, shows that there was something in some minds that called for each of them. *The great branches of the church correspond to great classes of minds in the world.* There are natural Romanists, natural Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists. Let these churches

enter together the same community; each will draw to itself its natural adherents. If any one of them is absent, but few of its peculiar element will enter any of the other churches. Let us use a very homely illustration. Men are like fish of different kinds. You must understand the nature of the fish which you hope to catch, and adapt your hook, your bait, and your manner to them. You cannot catch the active, keen-eyed mountain trout with the same tackle that you use for the sluggish, mud loving cat. So you cannot catch a Presbyterian with a Methodist hook. We may be sure that the Lord has made no mistake in allowing his church to be divided as it is. He understands man, and he sees that the peculiarities of the various churches correspond with similar peculiarities in human nature, and that thus the world is to be the more surely and the sooner saved.

WHILE THESE DIVISIONS MAR, THEY DO NOT DESTROY THE UNITY
OF THE CHURCH.

There is a very short and satisfactory argument to prove that the unity of the church has never been lost. We are expressly told (John xi. 42) that the Father always hears the prayers of the Son. Indeed, how could it possibly be otherwise? In John xvii. 20-23, Christ prays for the oneness of all his people, that they may be one even as the Father and the Son are one. This forces us to the alternative, that our Lord made a prayer which God could or would not answer, or else that there has always been a unity of all believers. We cannot hesitate as to our conviction. We believe, we are sure, that the prayer has been answered, and that the church has never been allowed to lose its unity.

Christian people need to study and to remember this prayer. It is the key to this great subject. To many, perhaps to all, it will shed a great flood of light upon their bewildered vision, and give them great peace and joy in believing. To the sad heart that hangs its harp upon the willows, and weeps as it beholds the breaches of Zion, it will administer divine comfort and sweet assurance that the Lord's people are, as they ever have been, one.

But there are two ways in which it may be said that the prayer has been answered. Our papal brother may say, "Yes, the church

is and has always been one. Its unity lies in its connexion with Peter and his successors, as the visible head of the church and the vicar of Christ." The purpose of this paper is irenical and not controversial; it is sufficient, therefore, to say that there are several grave reasons why this cannot be the fulfilment of the prayer. The unity of christians has not been preserved in any one organization. No body of christians has preserved its own unity, and no organization of christians has ever held within its communion all those who "believe on Christ through the word." No one body of christians is the inheritor of this precious prayer of the Redeemer. It is the *common heritage of all believers*. The bond of union is not outward and visible, but is inward and spiritual. All of Christ's people must be one, for they cannot be his people except that they believe on him (verse 20), and that they be in the Father and in the Son (verse 21); and all that believe on him must, *ipso facto*, be one in the Father and the Son. It is the unity of believers, and not the unity of Romanists, Anglicans, Baptists, or Presbyterians, which our blessed Lord had in his mind when he uttered the prayer. No one church is the one church, but all the churches that believe on Christ are together the one church. Each is a branch of the one vine; each, a member of the one body; each, a division of the one army; *quam fluctus diversi, quam mare conjuncti*.

If the bond of union is spiritual, if belief in Christ is the link that unites all these churches into one, it may be well for us to see if this link is broken, or has been worn thin and weak. It may be confidently affirmed that all of God's people are:

I. One in *doctrine*. Of course, this is not true as to all details of belief, or as to modes of expression. It is true, however, that beneath and behind all the variant creeds and confessions of Christendom, there is substantial harmony of belief. There may be the masculine tenor and base and the delicate alto and treble; there may be the psaltery, the timbrel, the harp, the instrument of ten strings and the organ; but to God's ear and to the heart of Christ, the various melodies combine into a rich and glorious unison; Greek, Romanist, Protestant, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist, all mak-

ing a choral symphony, which rises as incense to the great white throne.

That there is a consensus of doctrine appears from two facts. *The points in which the christian world agree are in number to the points in which they differ about as three to one*; that is, there are at least three times as many questions with regard to which all christians harmonize as there are with reference to which they are discordant. Any one may satisfy himself that this is true, if he will take the extended creed of any branch of the church to which he does not belong, and see how many of its tenets he accepts and how many he repudiates. The writer of this paper is a decided Presbyterian as to government and Calvinist as to theology; and he has interested himself recently in testing this matter by reading the Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal Church, the creed of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and of the local Baptist church where he resides. The result more than confirmed what is stated above. Take the Westminster Shorter Catechism, with its one hundred and seven questions and answers. How many of those answers would the Baptist, the Methodist, the Episcopalian, the Lutheran, the Papist reject? Is there one that would repudiate twenty-six of the number? Surely not.

The second fact is more interesting than the one already stated. The points of doctrine with regard to which the christian world agree are in *importance* to those with regard to which they differ as one hundred to one. On all the questions that are essential to salvation there is, there must be, agreement. Those who deny these fundamental doctrines do not believe on Christ, and are thus outside the circle of faith. The nine articles of the Evangelical Alliance cover the broad territory within which the millions of believers are to be found. Christians differ as to external rites, as to modes of discipline, as to habits of worship, none of which ever saved the soul of any man; and they agree as to the great questions of theology and soteriology, which involve the glory of God and the salvation of men.

II. As "truth is in order to godliness," so belief very largely determines practice. If christians of all denominations are substantially one in doctrine, so are they in *life*. The Jew is scat-

tered over the civilized world, but can be recognized wherever found by his appearance. The christian is equally ubiquitous, and can be as readily known by his conduct. Christian character is formed under the influence of Bible truth employed by the Divine Spirit. All believers are the children of a common Father. They all bear the family impress; God-fearing, man-loving, self-denying. Some have the traits but poorly developed; some cover them with much worldly-mindedness. But, babes or men, they all more or less exhibit the distinctive traits. The proportion of genuine christians does not vary greatly probably in the several branches of the church. The living child of God finds his brethren in all the communions.

III. One in faith, one in life, Christ's people are one in *hope*. Go where you will and this is seen to be true. The poor woman that drudges over the wash-tub has the same blessed anticipations, kindled by the same precious promises, as the noble queen who wields the sceptre of the British empire. This fact is illustrated in the hymns of the church, which are largely the expression of christian feeling. Go to any congregation of believers, and you are likely to hear the same sweet songs, of which Milton said, there are no songs like the songs of Zion. Mothers, the world over, hush their babes to rest with a lullaby that tells of the love of Jesus, a lullaby that sings the happy trust of their own souls. One in song, so every believer meets his fellow-christians at the same mercy-seat. How like we are to one another when upon our knees in soul communion with our blessed Lord! The cross of Christ, our common trust, brings every believer together in loving sympathy.

IV. One in faith, one in life, one in spirit; so we are one in *destiny*. We have different names and different places and habits of worship, but we are traveling a common road that leads to a common home. In the New Jerusalem, there will hardly be a Greek quarter, and a Roman, and a Protestant. We shall all enter the same pearly gates and tread the same golden streets, eat of the same tree and drink of the same river of life, wear the same crowns, wave the same palms, and sing the same new song of Moses and the Lamb, gather around the same throne and bow in grateful adoration to the same loving, precious Saviour.

Yes, God's people are one, his church is one; Christ is not divided. There may be, there are differences; some serious, many trivial, none essential. They are but the surface scratches upon the Apollo of the Vatican; they mar its beauty, but do not destroy its magnificence. Bacon quotes one of the fathers as saying: "Christ's coat indeed had no seam, but the church's vesture was of divers colors." This beautifully illustrates the truth. The bridal robe of the church is variegated in color, but there is neither rent nor seam in it.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

I. *Close up the ranks.* This does not mean that all denominational lines shall be at once obliterated. This is neither possible nor desirable. It may be that the millennial church will not be an outward unit. As the world is now, there is need for the leading branches of the church. But there are many needless divisions. The various bodies of the Presbyterian faith have held a Pan-Presbyterian council; why may not this be made a regular body with a decennial meeting? Why not have a quadrennial General Assembly of all the branches of the church in this country, to which shall be committed the work of Foreign Missions and of Publication? Why may not the various branches of the Methodist church thus unite; preserving, at least for the present, the autonomy of each, but having some outward bond for all that so nearly agree in faith and practice? In many cases where the differences are like the colors of a dissolving view, there ought to be actual organic union. With more of Christ and less of self this might be accomplished. But let us have no forced unions of unwilling hearts.

II. *Avoid strife.* This is the most important suggestion. It is not meant that doctrinal preaching should cease. Far from it, as this is the very meat and marrow of a muscular faith. But we can hold the truth in love. We can carefully abstain from all caricature, travesty, hostility. We can sedulously avoid all controversy, or occasions of controversy, with our brethren. When the gun is loaded and we are ready to fire, we can be careful that it is not trained upon the lines of our comrades, but is directed to the fortress of

our common foe. We can carefully abstain from entering territory already occupied.

III. *Help one another.* This can be done in many ways; and we shall find that he who watereth others shall himself also be watered. It is said that the late Dr. Johns, the beloved Episcopal minister of Baltimore, never passed the church of another denomination without lifting up a prayer for a blessing upon it. Did this spirit prevail, men would say, "Behold how these christians love one another"; and it would go far towards the evangelization of our race, in accordance with our Saviour's prayer, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*"

J. A. QUARLES.

V. THE PRESBYTERIAN ORIGIN OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

THE wisest and best men in every age have felt the indispensable necessity of religion to the stability of society. Hear the testimony of that distinguished jurist, statesman and philosopher, Sir James Macintosh, in his *Letter on the Study of Law*: "I am now to treat of religion, and of the claims which it has upon the acknowledgment and support of him who sustains the character of an advocate in our courts of justice. The opinions of men have experienced a thousand changes; kingdoms that have been most powerful have been removed; the form of the earth itself has undergone various alterations; but amid these grand and ruinous concussions, religion has remained unshaken; and a principle so consentaneous to the first formation of our nature must remain, until by some power, of which at present we have no conception, the laws of that nature are universally dissolved. Powers thus singular must have their foundation in truth; for men may rest in truth, but they can never rest in error. What is thus true must also be just; and, of course, to acknowledge its influence must be the spontaneous and natural effusion of a love of truth; and the love of truth either is really, or is affected to be the character of