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I.

THE MISSION AND OPPORTUNITY OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY.*

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There is only one Christianity. It issued from Bethlehem and Calvary. It is one the whole world over. It acknowledges one Lord and Saviour, the Son of Man and Son of God. It yields allegiance to one supreme law. It is gladdened by one hope. True as this is, the expression "American Christianity" is justified in the sense that the Church in the United States is confronted by new problems growing out of the peculiar institutions of the land and the novel gathering together of populations within our boundaries from many lands and speaking diverse tongues.

The Church historian divides the history of the Christian centuries into ancient, mediæval and modern Christianity. He does not mean by this that Christ has changed or that the law of the New Testament has undergone modification, but that there has been in some respects a three-fold apprehension of Christ and that men in different ages have thought differ-

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ently about the best methods of advancing the kingdom of God and even about matters of faith and doctrine. In the ancient Church individual piety was emphasized and devotion to the person of Christ. Christian experience preceded the formal statement of the Christian doctrines by the Church. In mediæval Christianity, the Church was regarded under the form of an imposing visible organism, controlling individual conduct and destiny by conciliar decrees and prelatial fulminations and priestly judgments, upon high and low, king and beggar. Modern Christianity, as represented by the Reformation, magnifies the authority of Scripture and justification by faith alone. The individual finds God in his own way and is his own priest in securing forgiveness through the merits of Jesus Christ. In these most recent times in which we live there is a mighty movement going on towards the fellowship of all believers, an effort to lay stress upon Christian living, a firm purpose to carry the Gospel to all men, and a return to the Christ as a living and controlling personality.

The water that descends from the clouds is all water. It fills the basins of the rivers and enables them to do various service. In the Nile it floods the fields and makes them bring forth harvests. In the Mississippi, it bears the commerce of many states. In the Penobscot it carries down the timber. In the Columbia it furnishes the home for countless millions of salmon. In the Merrimac it turns the wheels of mills. But, in all rivers alike, it offers drink and refreshment for the thirsty. So it is with Christianity. It has the power of salvation, though in different periods and in different lands it may be expressed in different forms.

It would be indeed strange, if in this new land, the latest to be discovered and to become a great Christian nation, there should not be some peculiar type of Church life and destiny intended. The diverse constituent elements of our population, the separation of Church and state among us, the varieties of Church confession and practice which are here brought together on a footing of equality, our geographical location

and growing international importance, these seem to justify the assumption that God has some special religious purpose for his Church in America which involves us in extraordinary responsibility. Paul could say of the Church in the imperial city of Rome: "I thank my God for you all that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world." What shall be said by some future historian standing upon the ledge of some distant era, what shall be said of the part which our land has played in the history of God's kingdom in the earth and the title of the American Church to having kept the faith?

The religious beginnings of our history show a manifest preference of Providence for the free Scriptural forms of Protestantism. Among the many buildings of the Centennial Exhibition in Chicago, there was one which attracted every lover of his country for the historic interest which centered in it. Its thick, dusky walls, its small casements, all betokening a remote and aged architecture, were in the strongest contrast to the graceful and airy structures which held the products of field and mine and machinery of our modern time. Looking upon the walls and walking through the passage ways of the building, modelled after the Spanish convent, one recalled that in the Rabida four hundred years before, it was the conversation of Columbus with the Franciscan friar which virtually brought consummation to the great discoverer's plan. What mighty movements hinge upon small incidents! And as one followed in imagination the passage of the three Spanish ships to these western waters, one could not help but muse upon the strange check put upon the Spaniard's conquest of this new world and his tenure of it. Within hearing of the pulsating throb of machinery and the step of thousands, differing in garb and from all parts of the world, mingling in peaceful company on the intersecting pathways, that was the place to study American history and to reflect upon the purpose God has in view for his Church on this Western Continent, so different in its type of piety from that which, genu-

ine as it may have been, was represented in the old Franciscan convent of Spain where Columbus spent the night.

In the southern part of the continent the Spanish missionaries touched the soil first and said the first Christian service this side the Atlantic. The whole land seemed to be before them by right of first conquest and by papal decision. The king and queen of Spain had a religious purpose as they looked to the newly discovered land. They officially decreed that "the conversion of the Indians formed the principal foundation of the conquest, that which ought principally to be attended to." From his first voyage Columbus took back with him six natives who were baptized in Spain. On his second voyage he was accompanied by one who had been appointed by Alexander VI. vicar apostolic of the Indies. Charles V. declared "his principal interest in the discovery of new lands to be that the inhabitants, who are without the light of faith, may be brought to understand the truth of our holy Catholic religion * * * that they may become Christians and be saved."

Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits from Spain established their colonies in Florida, destroyed the Huguenot settlements in South Carolina, entered New Mexico and took possession of California. Their explorations have left their memories in the names of mountains and rivers and towns from St. Augustine to Santa Fe and from the Sierra Nevadas down to Los Angeles and Monterey. But the land was to be given to another.

On the north, the gateway of the continent was first entered by French missionaries who lived out in their explorations and missionary endeavor one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of heroism. With Quebec and Montreal as starting points they ascended the St. Lawrence, traversed the great lakes and followed the Mississippi to the Gulf. In those northern tracts they founded churches, schools and hospitals. The words have a tone of primitive simplicity which the Jesuit Le Jeune wrote back to France: "I have become

a teacher in Canada and have a little savage on one side of me and a little negro on the other. Behold me after so many years of teaching returned at last to the A, B, C with so great content and satisfaction that I would not exchange my two pupils for the finest audience in France." We will not withhold admiration from him and those other men and women who kindled the first fires of piety in those colder regions to the north, and even suffered horrible deaths for their missionary labors. But in the providence of God the destiny of North American institutions, both civil and religious, were destined to be committed to other hands.

Germany had in those days no ships or naval explorer, but she had Luther and the discovery of the continent was delayed till after his birth, and its colonization till after his doctrines had found firm lodgment in a large constituency in the European Church. North America was to be given into the hands of the Protestant nations and the Anglo-Saxon, who was made master of the territory from the St. Lawrence to Florida and gradually westwards to California and in 1867 as far as Behring Straits. Upon its institutions were to be stamped the principles of personal liberty and the free spirit of the Protestant Reformation.

Here the earliest Protestant populations were the English, the Huguenots and the Dutch of Holland, colonizing from Plymouth Rock to South Carolina and Georgia. A second wave of colonists consisted of the Swedish Lutherans, the Scotch-Irish, the Germans of the Palatinate and the Salzburgers. They stopped on the Hudson and entered Pennsylvania. These peoples were for the most part deeply religious. They came to worship God in their own way; Puritan driven out by Laud; Huguenot by the revocation of the edict of Nantes, 1685; Quakers by the persecution of Charles II.; the Scotch-Irish by the tribulations imposed by William, 1688; the Palatines by the fierce ravages of Louis XIV., and the Salzburgers by the sweeping enactments of the archbishop. Herbert, the English poet, was expressing the feelings of an observer of the movements of his day, when he said:

Religion stands on tiptoe in our land
Ready to pass to the American strand.

And to apply the famous words of Stoughton in his Election Sermon, 1668, to other peoples than the Puritans and Pilgrims: "God sifted a whole nation that He might send choice grain over into this wilderness."

The immigration of the eighteenth century was not the result of religious persecution as the immigration of the seventeenth had been. It also proceeded, however, mainly from Protestant lands. To the free evangelical spirit of the Protestant churches it seemed to have been said again as it was once said to Abraham: "Lift up thine eyes westwards." At the beginning of what other history was there such religious purpose as at the beginning of the Jewish people and the founding of New England? As the Pilgrim fathers looked across the ocean, it was "with a great hope and inward zeal of laying some good foundation or at least to make some way thereunto for the propagating and advancing of the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world, yea though they should be but even as stepping stones unto others for the performing of so great a work." They were not alone among our early immigrants, cherishing this noble design.

When the American Revolution came and established civil and religious liberty throughout the land, the Congregational, Presbyterian, Moravian, Lutheran, Reformed, Episcopal, Baptist and Methodist churches were firmly established as well as the Roman Catholic Church.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the Germans and the Irish poured in through our ports and especially its middle years. Then came the Scandinavians and later, in the closing years of the century, vast populations of entirely different types have come to our shores, and assert their rights among us. Last year no less than 230,000 came to us from Italy, for the most part southern Italy; 266,000 from Austro-Hungary and 136,000 from Russia. More than 600,000 altogether! Is the Christian life of the land genial enough to

attract these new elements and vigorous enough to permeate them with its blood?

No other nation has had represented within it so many types of the one Christian faith as this one of ours. The new races which so recently have begun to mingle with our life seem to render easy the first answer to the question what the mission of American Christianity is.

I. It is to propagate the pure Gospel among all the peoples who compose our population. Is there not foreign mission work to be done here on our own soil as well as across the seas? Are there not large masses within our borders who are living without the hopes of the Gospel and in defiance of its restraints? Are there not a great host who at best know Christ imperfectly, or know him not at all? What more exhilarating task than that which is here offered to show that peoples, with such diverse antecedents and coming from such widely separated lands, may be one in Christ pursuing, in the fear of God, their avocations and respecting each the rights of the other? This is our first mission and would to God we might be more alert to use the opportunity to build chapels and churches to win confidence by free familiar intercourse and respect for the newer comers and also to pursue the way which Priscilla and Aquila took of meeting personally groups or single individuals in small circles and teaching them the way of God more perfectly. This may be regarded as one of the distinctive missions of the American Church, even to bring to expression as elements in our Christian life the spirit of John Huss and of Savonarola and of John a Lasco in the ears of many of their fellow countrymen in our midst, and perhaps to send back through them new currents of piety to the lands from which they came.

II. It is laid upon our Christianity to demonstrate that in the separation of church and state, we have adopted the principle most favorable for the development of the Christian Church and her exercise of the strongest influence over the conscience and conduct of individuals and the just adminis-

tration of civil affairs. The position of the Church in this land differs from its position in every other. Religion among us is not supported by the state. Every European country, even to the cantons of Switzerland, supports an established church.

When the kingdom of God was established by the teachings and atonement of its founder, it was as an institution distinct from the state, governed by its own laws and directed by its own ministry. During the first three centuries, the Church remained independent of the state. Its adherents appealed simply for toleration, liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience without molestation by the government officials. Some of the leading teachers, Tertullian and Justin Martyr, stated the theory that in religious matters there should be no compulsion, but freedom.

A different state of affairs was brought into being when Christianity became triumphant in the Roman Empire and Constantine adopted the religion which his predecessors had endeavored through three hundred years to stamp out. Then state and church were united. The theory which had prevailed while Rome was pagan that the government should regulate religion and support it from the public treasury was reëstablished. It was carried so far that Christians disagreeing with the state church were condemned, banished, their books and themselves thrown into the flames and pagans, refusing to give up pagan rites, were also by state enactment punished with death.

After centuries had passed away, the church, with the pope as its head, grew to be the most stable institution in Europe. Then the Church claimed the power over all temporal governments. It asserted the right to put up and cast down princes and emperors and again and again the pope, its highest functionary, exercised that right. The Church, which, as a governing and teaching organism, was synonymous with the pope and the hierarchy, encroached more and more upon the secular domain even to compelling the state to punish

heretics with death and to organize against portions of Europe, where religious dissent was rife, crusades of extermination.

The Reformers denounced these unchristian assumptions, but they too knew no theory other than that of the union of church and state by which the state had oversight over religious affairs, taxed the people for religious ends and appointed the clergy to positions, whether it was in Wittenberg or Geneva, Zürich or Edinburgh.*

It remained for us in this land to separate the two institutions, so that here the church is free, independent of state control and regulation. All support of the church is voluntary and no compulsion may legally be used in religious matters. Our Constitution asserts that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." And one of the first amendments declared that Congress "shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This laid down an entirely new principle, the independence of church and state, the church enacting its own laws and directing its own proper affairs just as fully as the state manages its own affairs and makes its own laws.

This was a departure from the system which had been in vogue in the Colonial period. In the colonies of New England, state and church were united as closely as they were in that age in Europe. Each had its own established religion and at first, at least, was intolerant to all other churches. Did not Massachusetts in 1661 call the Quakers "an accursed sect of heretics lately risen up in the world," banish them from its borders and even put them to death in Boston? In

* This sentence must be taken to express a general truth. In Geneva Calvin's actual system of Church government showed a much closer relation of State and Church than did his theory laid down in his Institutes. In Scotland Knox's "Book of Discipline" called for the election of pastors by the congregation, but Parliament appointed the commissions to formulate the Church formularies in 1560 and ninety years later adopted the Westminster standards.

1652 the colony passed a law that "all not accepting the books of the Bible as the written and infallible Word of God should be banished or put to death." Religious tests were the rule in the colonies. As late as 1718 the Select Men of Boston resolved to "clear the city of the passengers lately arrived from Ireland," referring to some Scotch-Irish immigrants. In Virginia the Episcopal Church was the established church. All were taxed for its support and those failing to pay due respect to the ministry or absenting themselves from the church services were well punished. Puritans, Quakers and Baptists were banished and threatened with death if they remained within the fair borders of that southern colony.

The Dutch in New York felt in the same way and legislated against all churches except their own and the French Huguenots. In 1658 Governor Stuyvesant sent back to Holland a Lutheran minister, Rev. Mr. Goetwasser, "together with some bad women," because he did not want Lutheran rites. Unlicensed conventicles, so called, they would not tolerate except when commercial considerations overcame the scruples of the Dutch Company.

Perhaps the only reason why the German Reformed, the Lutherans and Presbyterians did not show the same spirit of intolerance was because none of them had control of any colony.

In Maryland there was religious toleration, but the regulation proceeded from a desire to populate the colony rather than from any high religious motive.* There were two notable exceptions to this general rule among the colonies. Roger Williams established the principle of soul liberty or religious freedom in Rhode Island and William Penn declared "that no person was to be called in question or molested for his conscience or for worshipping according to his conscience."

In the Providence of God, the colonists were modifying their strict governmental supervision of religion before the

* See C. E. Smith, "Religion under the Barons of Baltimore," Baltimore, 1899.

Revolution came on and God was forcing the system of separation of church and state by bringing together large representations of a number of churches before the Constitution was written, so that it would have been the rankest injustice and at the same time an evident resistance of Providential design, if that document had undertaken to establish any one church as the American church.

In England, where there is an established church, manifest injustice is being done to the so-called Dissenters who belong to other churches than the Church of England through the recent laws concerning education. Germany is suffering from the union of church and state. The state appoints the pastors of the churches and supports them. The people have no choice in their pastor and a rationalist, who cares nothing at all for evangelical religion, may be placed over a church for life, baptize the children and administer the Lord's Supper and this not seldom occurs.* In Switzerland, where the same system prevails, the officials who have charge of appointing ministers are often rationalistic and even irreligious and care nothing for the culture or piety in congregations. The university faculties are appointed entirely by the state. Recently a protest was sent against a professor of theology at Kiel who denies all the fundamental facts of Christianity, but the government refused to unseat him. And one of the theological professors of Zurich openly denies, in his articles in one of your recent Bible dictionaries, the resurrection of Christ and yet holds his place in spite of the religious community which believes that a theological department established to train a Christian ministry is dishonest which teaches as false the fundamental tenets of the Christian religion.

Judge Story said† that the object of the Constitution in separating church and state was "to cut off the means of re-

* One of the most distinguished theological professors of Germany told Dr. Philip Schaff, and wrote to him that he could see no hope for an improvement of affairs in Germany except by the separation of church and state.

† In his "Commentary on the Constitution."

religious persecution (the vice and pest of former ages) and the power of subverting the rights of conscience in matters of religion." If the state officers were invariably governed by religious motives the union of church and state might be a good arrangement for an intelligent state of society. But the idea that an unbeliever or non-churchgoer should regulate the affairs of the Christian Church is to us incongruous and abhorrent, as it would be to appoint a man who knew nothing about machinery to have charge of a train engine.

The advantages of our system is that religion must stand on its own merits. The kingdom of God is an independent kingdom. It cometh not with observation. It rules over the consciences and hearts of men. It should be supported by the voluntary suffrage and adherence of individuals. Compulsion is contrary to its very essence.* It exercises its proper control by appealing to the reason and heart. It does not say ye *must* fall into line and submit to religious forms, but Give me thine heart; Believe and have life. No man can be forced or legislated into the kingdom of God. He must be won by love through the consent of his own will. It is true that the support of churches seems at times to be a burden for a few to carry, but there is not the restlessness or deadness under this system of ours that there is under the other where the state taxes for religious purposes, for church buildings and the support of ministers. People here may stop giving when they choose. But abroad they have to pay whether they want to or not, and in many parts they have to have their children baptized or come under suspicion.

While our government and the church are distinct, each in his own sphere, and while the government supports no church, it gives to all the protection due to an orderly institution, founded not for the destruction of government.

* Of course, we wholly repudiate the interpretation St. Augustine, in his controversy with the Donatists, put upon the words of the parable "Compel them to come in," *cogite intrare*. What fell use Thomas Aquinas put this statement to in his theological formulation of the Church's right to adopt the Inquisition and have heretics put to death!

Christianity is a part of the common law of the land. Our presidents and judges have, many of them, set forth in their public utterances clear evidence of their own Christian conviction and of the conviction that the Christian religion is the highest safeguard of our national liberties. The ordinance establishing the territory of the Northwest in 1787 declared that "religion, morality and knowledge are necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind."

A free church, provided the spirit of Christianity is at all prevalent, is adapted to secure three things, the first pertaining to all Christians, the second to the laity and the third to the ministry. It is adapted to develop a body of genuine believers. The church constituency is apt to be governed not so much by the advantages that may accrue from conformity to an accepted outward form and habit as by the principle of a vital faith in Christ. It is adapted to develop lay activity. It is not necessary to deny that in other lands laymen show a genuine interest in the advance of Christ's kingdom. Especially active are laymen in England whose institutions are nearest to our own. But here, it is of the essence of the Church that the laity should take a prominent part in the management of its affairs and unite with the ministry in the advocacy of Christian morals and the extension of the kingdom. From the Sabbath School to the highest church judicatories laymen must take an active part. And once again our system is best adapted to develop a ministry actuated to choose the sacred office from pure motives and pursuing their calling from sincere devotion to promote the salvation of men. Whatever differences in method there may be among ministers, formalism and an official and perfunctory performance of duty are discredited. Here piety is a more essential qualification for the holy office than intellectual attainments. With us the congregation selects its own minister and the opinion is properly abroad that when ministers cease to be pious and to believe the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, common honesty demands that they seek some

other calling and do so without stirring up discord in the religious bodies to which they belong.

In working out this most important chapter, which America has thus far contributed to church history, it behooves us to insist upon sincerity of religious profession. Here the very existence of the Christian religion will depend upon the diligence with which the Church instils into the minds of the coming generation the principles of godliness and wins them to its practice, that as lawyers and mechanics, as physicians and merchants, they may show themselves to be the true followers of Christ and be active and liberal in the support of the Church and Christian institutions. Here the existence and perpetuation of Christian institutions must depend more than under other systems upon the doctrinal purity of the Church and the Christian activities of its members. The voluntary principle is on trial. Shall it not be shown that under it religion produces its best fruits? Many years ago that shrewd observer of our institutions, de Tocqueville, declared "that there is no country in the whole world, in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than America." Let us thank God for the testimony, and, recognizing the purport of the words of our Lord, "to render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's and to God the things that are God's," be strenuous and persistent in our attendance to Christian duty and the support of the Church in all her good work.

III. The third great mission of American Christianity is to show that, where there are diversities of administration, the heartiest spirit of Christian union may prevail. In this land many denominations were brought together. Here came those that were developed on the soil of Great Britain, the Episcopalians, Congregationalists, the different families of Presbyterians, the Quakers and the Methodists. With them were joined the Lutherans of Sweden and Germany, the Reformed of Holland and Germany and France, the German United Evangelical Church and the Moravians. And here we have

the Roman Catholics coming from all countries. In addition we have the denominations which have been born on American soil, Baptists, the Evangelical Association, the United Brethren, the Christians (called by some, Campbellites), the Cumberland Presbyterians and other bodies. These all hold to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. They agree in accepting the redemption of the world through Christ and the authority of the Scriptures. And yet there was a time when they insisted upon their characteristic tenets as if the whole truth of God depended upon these and not upon Christ. The Puritans abhorred all ritual and forms. A church was "a voluntary agreement based upon a covenant," each congregation independent of the other. The Episcopalians insisted upon the government of the Church by bishops and the literal use of the liturgy. The Presbyterians eschewed episcopacy and a liturgy but held to a close form of church government. The Methodists magnified the free movements of the Spirit of God, even where the preaching was sometimes weak, and they insisted upon certain inner experiences as a test of conversion. The Baptists, well we know what the Baptists are, and love them. The Lutherans magnified Luther and the old ways of the fatherland. The Reformed churches have looked a little askance at the evangelistic and Methodistic methods of other bodies as being innovations and dangerous. The Christians or Campbellites have discarded all creeds, while they still hold on to the Bible and Alexander Campbell.

How the denominations used to assail one another and point out each others' weaknesses and defects! Now it was the Methodists declaring that the Presbyterian Church made God the author of the perdition of the non-elect. Now the Baptists decried all other denominations because they alone practised the true mode of baptism. Up to this date the Episcopalians, whose modest Christian self-consciousness some would show by monopolizing the name of the American Church, persists in condescending to speak of other Protestant Christian bodies as Christian communions or sects, while it affectionately agrees with us in calling the Roman Catholic body a church.

To this present day some of the Protestant bodies stand aloof from the others, will not acknowledge their ministry or admit their ministers to their pulpits or at any rate will not join with them in communion at the Lord's Table.

This spirit, the vast majority of Protestant Christians are assured is not the spirit to cultivate. It is not in harmony with the free offer of the Gospel, and the evident liberty allowed under it. There may be differences in secondary matters, matters of form and ritual, of organization and discipline, of race and inner experience, and yet all are one in Christ through whom they have alone redemption. An orchestra is made up of different instruments, violin and flute, trombone and cymbal, but at the nod of the leader they all agree in harmonious movement. It may be most to the edification of the Sabbath congregations to use a liturgy but others there are praying to the same Lord and worshipping the same triune God, who do not choose so to do. Let them both be as brethren beloved. Some there are who feel that the only Scriptural mode of baptism is immersion. If a little water baptizes certainly a great deal does, so I will continue to treat them as my brethren in the Lord and ask them to make kindly allowance for my possible mistake about the mode of baptism for I agree with them in holding that without the washing of regeneration and the forgiveness of sins no man can please God. And if one persists that the episcopate is essential to the Church, then I say to him hold on to your view if you will, but in courtesy allow me the right of judging what the New Testament teaches, and do not try to force me to deny that Calvin and Luther and Zwingli and Jonathan Edwards and Robert Hall and Mathew Simpson and Thomas Chalmers and Krummacher and Tholuck belonged to the Apostolic succession of the ministry.

America has been disparagingly spoken of as the breeding place of denominations. In Germany our condition of affairs is not easily understood, but I venture to say there is more brotherly communion and coöperation here among the

churches and ministers of the different denominations than there is in Germany between the confessions, as they are called, the Lutherans and the Reformed. There is far more intercourse and interchange of pulpit. And it is also true that ministers of different denominations mingle more freely together here than the members of the different bodies of Presbyterians in Scotland do. In Germany they always go back to the types of the Reformation and divide there. Here we go back to the New Testament and unite around Christ.

This spirit of Christian unity and coöperation has shown itself in our interdenominational movements, the Y. M. C. A. and Young Women's Associations; in the Evangelical Alliance, in the groupings of denominations that naturally belong to one family in the Alliance of the Reformed Churches, the Pan-Wesleyan Alliance and in the movements now going on for the corporate union of different ecclesiastical bodies as between the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Cumberland Presbyterians.

There was a time in the history of the Reformed Church in this land when the sentiment was very strongly in favor of keeping it German in language and in its methods. In 1826 a minister was rebuked on the floor of Synod at Frederick for daring to make an address in English. When my father was called to Mercersburg it was with the view that the German language should be used in that institution and the German language be perpetuated. When he came to the conclusion that it was not wise to attempt by studied attempt to perpetuate the use of German in America he became the object of widespread attack. He came to the conclusion against his natural prepossessions. He felt that loyalty to the nation demanded that there be one national tongue and that it was not wise for the denominations to take a position hostile to the spirit of the other American churches and insist upon transplanting German theology and church customs without modification and adaptation to the freer and more practical spirit of this newer land. He also loved his mother tongue. He also

knew it was unchristian or shortsighted to expect the first generation of Germans and their children to give up the German and to listen to prayers and sermons in English. But he also knew that it was impossible to prevent the third generation from preferring English which they learned at school and on the street and that they would have English in the church service, or leave the church of their fathers, or abandon the church altogether. What would be the result of this attitude if it were to be strictly insisted upon in view of the large populations which are pouring in upon us from the nations of southern and southeastern Europe? Certainly we would not want these languages perpetuating themselves indefinitely among us in church rituals unwilling to adapt themselves to American conditions.

The existence of Christian denominations in this land of ours is adapted to produce the richest, broadest and strongest Christian life. They are adapted to provoke one another to good works and to keep one another alert to avoid falling away from the principles of the New Testament. The Baptists may be doing a most excellent service in their insistence on believers' baptism by continually reminding us that Christian profession is not merely a form and that the mere rite of baptism does not fix a man's eternal destiny. The Episcopalians may be doing a very important service to the Church at large by holding to their stately liturgy, consecrated by its use in England prior to the Reformation and by the indirect contributions of Melancthon and Bucer to it. The German Churches have made a contribution of vast value by teaching the majesty of Christian song in public worship and by holding forth that splendid galaxy of men whose voices, going forth from Wittenberg and Zurich and Strassburg and Heidelberg, awakened Europe to a new era of Christian activity. The Methodist Churches deserve all praise for emphasizing the fervor of Christian feeling and warmth of Christian expression. I wish there were more of both. The chilly world needs fervor to warm it up. And the Presbyterian Churches,

whose faith was first kindled under the Alps, I have no doubt, have contributed their share to this fulness of Christian life by insisting upon precision of credal belief and an active body of lay church officials.

Life is not rich because there is uniformity. In far northern climes the trees of the fir family monopolize the soil and grow to a stately height. But there are forests on our mountains where oak and ash and chestnut and elm and beech and birch grow together. Uniformity of method and ritual and even of exact credal statement does not commend itself to me as the ultimate expression of the Christian life. There are differences of administration but one Spirit. It does not seem true that organic union is essential to the best progress of the kingdom of God on earth and the extension of Christian peace among men. As it is, each denomination that holds the truth in love is a spur to the other and if we avoid encroaching upon each other's territory, a friendly rivalry will no doubt be a most efficient aid to the spread of true religion just as competition is apt to ensure enterprise and life in trade. In this land, through the hearty coöperation of different denominations, we are to show that spiritual life is consistent with individual peculiarities. Peter and John and Paul had their differences, and yet all were emissaries of Christ. The inner Christian experience, the outer conduct shown in following Christ are of far more import than precise uniformity in the verbal statements of the truth or the modes of church government or the use of rituals. The borrowed motto of the Evangelical Alliance may well be a watchword for all Protestant bodies for it will unite them in love and coöperation; "in necessary matters unity, in matters of preference variety, in all things charity."

And there are not wanting signs that here on this soil a new era is to be ushered in, in the relations of the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Churches. It may be that the dangers which have in the past threatened republican institutions and which threaten them here may draw us more closely to-

gether. The growth of infidelity and of indifference to the services and precepts of religion are well calculated to fix the attention of both Roman Catholic and Protestant upon the great fundamental religious facts which they hold in common. Why should they not be unified by such contemplation! The danger from unscrupulous politicians who dupe the people by stirring up class spirit and bribe the voter with a trifling indulgence is adapted to bind them together in common endeavor to secure pure administration of government, the restriction of the saloon, the reduction of other evils, the extension of philanthropy and good morals in the home and on the street, and a solid education in the schools. And, if that coöperation can be secured, then will a signal service be done for religion and good government. This coöperation will come perhaps through the constraint of Providence in view of the exigencies of our age and land, but it will come also by a more free social intercourse between Roman Catholic and Protestant and the recognition by each of the good in the other. It will come by modifying polemic attitudes, and by recognizing that above all the chief things in the Church on earth are love to Christ and righteousness. Leo XIII. denounced in solemn encyclicals the Lutheran "virus and poison" and the Protestant schools at Rome as of the devil. His predecessors had denounced Bible societies as pests. In spite of such fulminations, the Protestant world was one in willingness to recognize the virtues of Leo alive and dead.

I will not say we Protestants are free from all error. I do not believe the Roman Catholic Church is perfect. But I can say a man is good-looking even if he has a wen on his neck. And though the Roman Catholic seems to me to hold some views which are unscriptural, I may yet fraternize with him, if he will allow me, as a brother in Christ and an associate in Christian work. We both may be willing to be silent about some of our differences, if we can only coöperate in the spread of the Gospel, and the principles and practice of right living.

If I may be allowed to refer to my father again, he was once charged with Romanizing views and was acquitted.* But I rejoice every time I look over the pages of his "Life" and read again of his personal friendship with individual Roman Catholics in this land and in Europe. Here is one of the notices, when he turned aside from the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, assembled in Madison, Wisconsin, and sat with a Catholic archbishop: "I saw Archbishop Henni of Graubünden," he wrote in his diary, "lying on his sick bed, now very old and very feeble but very kind and agreeable." He met them socially. He talked with their scholars in the study† without renouncing any of his own fundamental convictions. He sought to unite them with Protestants in literary composition‡ and win their coöperation in the great cause of Sabbath observance.§ If these be sins and mistakes, then God grant us more of them.

It would certainly be a great distinction, if it were given to the church of America to bring about the fraternal co-operation of Christians of all names and afford proof that Christian love, the best of all gifts, is superior to measures and rituals and forms of administration and vestments.

IV. There may be another distinctive mission of American Christianity, namely, to carry to the mission field this spirit of Christian union and the spirit of supreme devotion to the person of Christ. It is to be hoped that no impression will go abroad that our government is bent on territorial aggrandizement, lest we lose the advantage which the American

* By the German Reformed Synod at Reading sixty years ago. His inaugural address as professor in Mercersburg on the Principles of Protestantism had been misunderstood. His expression of love for the German Reformed Church in the latter years of his life were most tender.

† Such as Döllinger and Alzog and Bishop Hefele, abroad. It was a great joy to him in one of the very last months of his life to be embraced by one of the eminent living American Catholic Archbishops with the words "No, Dr. Schaff, you are not a heretic but a brother beloved."

‡ As in the Series of American Church Histories.

§ As Abp Purcell of Cincinnati, etc.

churches have had, as occupying a strategic point for the evangelization of the nations. The people of the land, the most of them, had little desire for the extension of American jurisdiction when the oversight of the Philippine Islands was assumed. But they did want the blessings of the pure gospel, of general education and of our free institutions carried to those remote peoples. It is the supreme purpose of the American churches in establishing missions in the various lands of the earth to carry to them the Gospel, not to secure power or glory for any denomination. Each body of American Christians must give diligence to do its part in this divine work, but the spirit, now prevailing so widely among our churches at home, will be carried abroad to China and Japan and India and the other mission lands, the spirit of large comprehension in matters of detail and expediency, and at the same time of firm and close union around the cross. It is certainly a question which should not be settled in any spirit of unalterable loyalty to our historic precedents and methods whether we are justified or not in insisting upon the propagation of our historic confessions formulated several centuries ago in unevangelized lands. Confiding in the Lord's care for His church to-day as much as in the past and trusting in the enlightening influences of the Scripture, should not our churches allow the missionaries on the field and the believers there freedom to formulate their own statements and to combine together in churches which shall be known as the Christian churches of Japan and of China rather than as the churches of the Augsburg and of the Helvetic and the Westminster confessions. This policy implies no disparagement of those venerable documents or their framers. But it seems to me that it may prove quite desirable to allow these documents to recede, as John the Baptist did, that if necessary the Christian experience of these new churches in mission lands may find fresh expression in statements of their own choosing.

If God shall be pleased to impress upon the Christian

people of America the conviction that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom to be administered by its own constitution as laid down in the New Testament and not an institution which is to be bulwarked by laws of the state, if He shall impress upon us that Christianity is obedience to Christ and imitation of Him rather than adherence to a peculiar code of ritual forms and credal formulas, then the American Church will come to the appreciation of her opportunity and continue in the execution of her mission. It will then be a matter of minor import whether there are fewer or more groups of Christian believers among us, for upon the basis of a warm Christian experience and an energetic performance of Christ's will, they will all be united as one household, as one army, as one flock under one Shepherd.

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