

CHRISTIAN UNION AND ECCLESIASTICAL REUNION.

A Sermon at the opening of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Dayton, Ohio, May 19, 1864.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN.—It is just three quarters of a century since our first General Assembly met in the city of Philadelphia. The little one has become a thousand. The Presbyterian Church then numbered 188 ministers and 419 churches; from these have sprung, under different names, more than 5,000 churches, 4,500 ministers and 500,000 communicants, representing a population of two and a half or three millions. Our growth and history have been determined, we trust, by a Divine wisdom, whose counsels never change. The oracles of that wisdom still teach us the lessons needed for the present hour, in the words by which Paul describes the final unity and perfection of the church, in his epistle to the Ephesians, the fourth chapter, at the thirteenth verse: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Though the Son of God, says the apostle, ascended on high that he might fill all things, yet he descended to give to men a royal ascension gift, that of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And the end to be attained by this gift is, that all the church become one in faith and knowledge, and so become one, that it shall be, as it were, the earthly counterpart of the Redeemer. Christ is none other person in nature and towards us, just as a plant, as it grows, is held together by a more intense unifying power at the head of its life. The church in its essence is a spiritual organism, vitally united to Christ, and all its atoms are ensouled by the common life of one and the selfsame Spirit, as all the branches leaves, flowers and fruit of a tree are made one by the common sap. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. It is as contrary to the true idea of the church, that its parts should be schismatic and warring, as it would be to the true idea of a full grown man, that his eye should say to his hand, I have no need of thee, or, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Any such "note" of the church applies in an eminent sense only to the radiant bride of the New Jerusalem; yet it is also the instinct of her deepest life even while militant here on earth, that she may at last appear before her divine bridegroom, having no spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, and receive from his loving hands the seamless robe and the victor's crown.

And never did this great fact of the essential oneness of Christ's church and of the special duty of the ministry to labor for it, need to be more wisely pondered and emphatically urged than in the present state of Protestant Christendom, and in view of the relations of the church to the other great interests of human life and society as developed in our own country. In the rivalry of sects we are apt to lose sight of the primal social instinct of the Christian life. The unity of the church is idealized, while its disintegration is realized. The only idea of the visible church which many seem to have is based on the theory of a social compact, long since abandoned by the best thinkers in relation even to politics. Terms of communion have been adopted so narrow and local, that they could foster only dissension. The union of the church has become a figure of speech, a theme of sentimental rhapsody; its consummation is postponed to the millennium. And then, as Christian fellowship must find some expression, the organizing and aggressive power of the Christian life has been transferred to other institutions, which often take the proper work of the church, and are made their power against itself. All this, too, is but a part of a general tendency which has shown itself in the state, as well as the church. The vicious sophism, that "the world is governed too much" has borne its fruits in secession and rebellion. Discord costs more than concord: the nation is now vindicting its unity by the costliest sacrifices. Let the church of Christ heed the lesson, scrutinize the disease and inquire for the remedy. And it is already doing it. Many true hearts in different communions feel the burden of these evils. Weary of strife, they ask for peace. In view of past feuds and bitterness their speech is low out of the dust. This longing for union is as yet chiefly in the form of feeling; yet feeling precedes action. Sentiments may seem to be evanescent flowers; but their fruit is only full grown flowers. By inspiring such longings, the great Head of the Church may, in his own garden, be preparing a golden harvest. We are then heeding his promises and may ask for his guidance when we consider the subject of Christian Union and Ecclesiastical Reunion, to which our text invites us. And we propose to speak of it, first, in its more general aspects, as the goal and consummation of the church; and then, in its particular relations to ourselves and those with whom we are now nearly allied.

Our first topic is Christian Union; not uniformity, nor even unity under one government, but union in its more general relations. While those speculations and plans which look to an immediate reunion of all the severed branches of the church may well be regarded as impracticable and illusory, yet tendencies to union must increase with the sound and vital growth of the church. If union and even unity is to be the consummation of the church, then its progress must be in that direction. It would be profitable, did our time admit, to inquire into the leading causes of those divisions and subdivisions by which union has been frittered away. As long as there is imperfect knowledge or imperfect love, there is an element of discord, for ignorance and animosity divide, while wisdom and love are universal and tend to unity. Besides this, two potent and fruitful principles of division and alienation may be traced through the history of the church, strongly contrasted, yet both working in the same direction: the one, the lust of ecclesiastical domination, the other an extreme individualism. The one enforces conformity to external rules in matters non-essential, and so runs into spiritual despotism; the other sets up the individual will, under the name of conscience, in opposition to the general will and the historic order. The one calls itself conservative, the other progressive. The former materializes the more latter idealizes it, as a vague spiritual state. The one puts the church into circumscription and confines it by rites and ceremonies; the

other is often reckless of all outward and visible forms and orders. The one is more objective and was rooted in the ancient church; the other is more subjective and works itself in modern society. Each has its relative rights; each, left to itself, rushes into evil; the problem is, their mutual conciliation in one complete system. Both the centripetal and the centrifugal forces must be combined if the church is to revolve in a true orbit around Christ, the central sun in our spiritual system.

And both these tendencies in their extremes infallibly lead, from opposite causes, to dissension and disunion. Rome illustrates the one; the history of many Protestant sects the other. The reformers opposed Rome because it put the centre of unity in the Papacy instead of in Christ. They desired that there should be, or that there ought to be, no other central organized hierarchy for the whole church throughout all the world, since this must trample on natural and personal rights. And so the reformation formed distinct national churches. These, in their turn, through the baleful union of church and state, imposed a yoke on the conscience, which our Reformed or Calvinistic churches were especially unable to bear. Erastianism provoked dissent. Dissent, in its turn, multiplied divisions, some of which doubtless had a providential reason and necessity, and have contributed to the accelerated diffusion and stricter application of Christian truth; while others are based on arbitrary or trivial grounds. But so it is that both these opposite principles, representing external unity and the arbitrary individualism, have tended in the same direction, engendering sects.

Nor is it easy to frame even a theoretic scheme on which the fragments can be restored to their lost union. The idea of universal, visible government for all the churches in all the nations, seems to be as visionary as that of a universal monarchy or republic. And even as to the churches in the same country, there is only one plain and easy way by which they might all be united—and that is, by becoming—Presbyterians, or Baptists, or Episcopalians, or Congregationalists. But this is like telling the hand to become a foot, and the eye to become an ear. Unless all past experience be a delusion, the church can never be united on the basis of any possession or pretension, which is the exclusive of any one of the branches, especially if it be a principle, which, like the papacy, apostolical succession, or the necessity of any one mode of baptism, involves the refusal of church rights and fellowship to other denominations. These are barriers to the very possibility of reunion.

And then, too, supposing the union of the churches effected, there still remains the great unsolved question of the relations of church and state—the central problem of human history as it bears on the final destiny of the race. All our present theories and adjustments are simply provisional. And well it is for us, that we are not now called upon to do anything more than meet present emergencies, and keep these two great forms of human society in a state of excellent balance. For at this end one must be virtually resolved into the other.

While such difficulties attend the final and complete solution of this momentous subject of church union, it is still some comfort to think that each of the larger branches of the church has done and is doing a great and needed work, that each division and corps has some special task assigned it. Spiritual union must precede external unity; and so, in proportion as all labor for the one end in the same spirit, will they be coming nearer together, marching toward the same common centre, with one ensign, full high advanced above all other banners of the sacramental host bearing that One Name, under which alone can be inscribed the words: "In this thou shalt conquer." At the same time, much may be done and is now doing to mitigate the evils of dissent and to draw Christians nearer together. The fragments feel the power of elective affinities. In the rapid multiplication of sects we have almost reached a point, where we must choose between disintegration and reunion. The atoms have triumphed over the forces. In many of our western towns, the sects are starving in the midst of plenty; and they begin to ask after a common feast. Points of difference are neglected, and points of agreement are magnified. And several broad general tendencies are working in this direction.

One of these is, the characteristics of the later reformation, which our churches have inherited. These have been of a more mutual and co-operative character; the laity have taken a more active part in them; the unity of the Spirit has been increasingly felt. When churches are lifeless they are more under the sway of mechanical forms. Cold binds together in rigidity; heat fuses the particles. A higher temperature produces a finer temperament, especially if one sets by who purifieth the sons of Levi and purgeth them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord a sacrifice of righteousness.

And is not the power of mere sectarianism losing something of its tenacity and rigidity? Are any of us as sectarian as we were twenty or thirty years ago? If, even in the sphere of our natural life, it can justly be said that the enemies are mortal and the humanities eternal; much more does this hold true of our spiritual life. Polemics die, but Christ liveth forever. Sects are transient, the church abides. Local and personal feuds are soon forgotten. The lines become more flowing; the curve takes the place of the triangle. Without recommending any indiscriminate laxity either of doctrine or of observances, we may hail such tokens as auspicious. We judge our neighbors better, when we know them better: "And we can now compare our differences better than ever before. Some of our divisions imported from the old world are becoming historical anachronisms and accidents. The Arminianism of the Methodists is of a very different type from that of the Calvinists of Europe used to call the "gangrene,"—for it is full of the flame of evangelism; and our Calvinism has been enlarged by the theology of Edwards. If Antinomianism and Pelagianism are found here in our orthodox churches, they have certainly improved in their style of preaching. The members of the different denominations are coming to look more alike. Sidelong influences insensibly creep in. Each judges the others more charitably, and itself less egotistically. It is increasingly felt that each branch of the church represents some important aspect of the Christian life, and that the others may have kept faith or life, which the others may have kept in the background. This is more logical, that one more emotional; another is more historic, still another is more individual; one is absorbed in doctrines, another is zealous for work; while all may be living for Christ and his church. Each may learn from the others, as they grow into one Spirit. And for each and all, a great point would be gained provided they could unite, not only in works of general philanthropy, but also in some stated religious observances, commemorative of the grand historic facts of the Christian faith, in which they all agree, and which cannot be appropriated by any one branch of the church; such as the birth, the death and resurrection of our Lord, and the giving of the Holy Ghost. For these festivals antedate not only our divisions, but also the corruptions of the Papacy; they exalt the Lord and not man; they involve a

public and solemn recognition of essential Christian facts, and are thus a standing protest against infidelity; they bring out the historic side of the Christian faith, and connect us with its whole history; and all in the different denominations could unite in their observance without sacrificing any article of their creed or discipline.

This tendency to union is also aided in this century by the very genius of our republic. Democracy is often thought to be but another name for the triumph of individualism and anarchy. But this is a superficial and unhistoric view. Democracy makes each individual concerned for the general good; and so it has more and higher interests in common than any other form of government, and tends almost irresistibly to unity. It gives to each man the deepest interest in government and law. It must have united action. It needs railroads, steamboats and telegraphs, to abolish space and time, that men all over the land may at the same time think and act together. With one exception, we are a more united people than we that stretch across the continent, now were our fathers when they first fringed the Atlantic coast. There will and must be union here. And if while the state is blending all races, the church continues to split up into fragments, it will inevitably lose its power, in face of the mighty and impetuous interests which are now organizing to subdue this hemisphere. And a republic like ours, where church and state are separated, offers facilities for Christian union, and reunion such as can nowhere else be found. Externally, everything favors it—the spirit of the people and the open pathway. We are far beyond the European complications, and may date hope that here the reunion and pacification of our Lord's divided church may be inaugurated with large promise of success.

And even our present national conflict is teaching us a like lesson: "We are passing from the Iliad to the Odyssey of our republican history (and under our Ulysses, too), in an awe-inspiring and deadly battle between the rational principle of man's right to freedom, and the despotic maxim, that might makes right; and also between the instinct of national life and the heresy of sectionalism, which means national death. The people and all our churches have felt the thrill of patriotic ardor, inspired by the renewed and intense consciousness of that national unity, which is mutually foretold by our very geography and by our common relations to the other nations of the earth; they have all received a new baptism, a baptism of blood, the sign and seal of our national regeneration. And so they have been bound together as never before; not only by common hopes and common fears, by common exultation in the hour of victory and common mourning at the loss of so many of the bravest and best of our country's sons, whom it will take another generation to replace: not only in the ministrations of Christians of every name among the sick, the wounded and the dying in our many hospitals and our many fields of battle, where they have all spoken the same lessons from the same books; not only because our national process, and the holy wrought in all our hearts a calmer faith and a warmer temper, which flows from the voice of discord and longs for the one thing needful; but also because as we have seen the awful result and retribution of the spirit of disunion and hatred in the state, we have read a deeper lesson of the priceless value of Christian fellowship and brotherhood; so that in these throes of agony of our mortal strife, our minor differences have been forgotten or buried out of sight, and our immortal faith and Christian charity have been vivified and enlarged.

Another and more urgent call to union comes to us from our common interest in the world, and for, which we are inscribed the very citadel of our faith. Infidelity, no longer wasting its strength in skirmishes and partisan warfare, is concentrating its subtle and malign power in a comprehensive and organized campaign. Its two extreme and contrasted forms, materialism and idealism, or atheism and pantheism, are reduced to well defined systems, which are striving to ally themselves with modern civilization and modern democracy. Each claims to be the final system for man, idealism in the name of the deductive process of demonstration, and materialism in the name of the inductive philosophy; while Christian theism attempts to hold and reconcile both these methods. Philosophical and historical criticism seek to undermine the faith. The Essays and Reviews, the German controversy of England, Renan's Life of Jesus, and Strauss's new elaboration of his life of Jesus for more popular effect, are but the beginning of a contest which has been long foreseen, and in which the whole of historical Christianity, the Bible, the church, and all the doctrines and forms of our faith are at stake. Is the Bible the same as all other books, only the most popular? Is the church on the same plane with all other institutions, only the most diffused? Is Christian experience the product of religious imagination? Is the incarnation the process of humanity in history, the Trinity a formula for an abstract law of thought, and the very name of God but another name for the absolute Unknown? These are the questions. A resolute attempt is making to blot Christianity out from the record of living history; to resolve its facts into myths, its miracles into jugglery, its doctrines into ideas, its God-man into a vague moral hero. And this infidelity will strive for the possession of our land as for no other, in the full consciousness that thus it holds the future in its grasp. Here, then, is a controversy, in view of which we cannot afford to spend our chief strength in mutual criminations and doctrinal logomachy; for it concerns our common Christian heritage, lying back of all our ecclesiastical and sectarian disputes. We must here draw Christians together, as they are already doing in Germany, France and England.

And Romanism, too, should the designs of the cool and wary Emperor of the French be carried out in Mexico, may exalt itself anew in this Protestant land. The Latin and Anglo-Saxon races may yet come into deadly conflict on the same question which here in Europe has kept them asunder for three centuries. The governments of Europe, too, as well as the Papacy, would be glad to stay our onward course.

And both these contests against infidelity and against Romanism are not only arguments for Christian union, but also eagerness to the resurrection centre of the Christian life is the adorable person of our Lord. His is the only name which can conquer them and unite us. In proportion as the different branches of the church rally round Him, and make Him to be the centre of their whole system, in that same proportion do they live one life. For the church is, in its essence, the body of Christ. Our text asserts that we are to become one through the knowledge and faith of the Son of God. There is no other way to a living and permanent union and reunion: All other projects know not the word that solves the enigma. No church is ready for union until it is full of Christ. The whole press of this modern thought and theology is our preaching direction. When our theology is our preaching, and our very life is Christ, we are all, then, we shall meet and flow together. And that blessed reunion will come, even though our eyes here on earth may not see its resplendent glories, for the

Head of the church has pledged his unflinching word. And it shall be as much higher than the oneness of the old, even of the apostolic church, as perfect sanctification is higher than unconscious innocence. An old fable tells us that the majestic form of truth once walked the earth, but was dismembered, and that the sundred parts are wandering up and down in ceaseless, weary search—each for the others, since each is still and ever instinct with the old common life, and it is this instinct which impels the search, and this search thus contains a prophecy of the union of all the fragments in one radiant form at last. And so shall it be with the riven body of our Lord; for each separate member is still vital with the memory of the old and loving union, and it will never be at rest until it finds all the others, and bone shall come to bone, and flesh to flesh, and it shall be all clothed upon with the grace of an endless life; and it shall be fairer than any of the sons and daughters of men, all glorious without and within; and it shall be holy and without blemish: love shall distill from his lips, and its words shall be like celestial music; and it shall bear upon its placid brow the victor's wreath, and in its hands the victor's palm; and all this shall be, because it is the bride of the Lamb, and the bridegroom will adorn his spouse, for whom he gave his very life in ransom, with all manner of precious stones, and lead her into the temple of God, and she shall live with Him and serve Him in that heavenly city, and go no more out forever.

Such anticipations of the final state and the perfected union of the church of the Redeemer, may well inspire our hearts and guide our thoughts, as we now pass from the more general to the more particular branch of our subject; from the hope of final union to the question of the union of those who are called by the same name, and who have the same standards of faith and order. All arguments for Christian union have here more direct application, and are heightened by special inducements; while many of the inherent difficulties of wider projects become irrelevant and unsubstantial. And whatever the difficulties, nevertheless, says the Apostle, what unto we have already attained, let us hold by: by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

It is, of course, the reunion of the two main branches of the Presbyterian Church which most directly concerns us. The question is one of direct practical moment. Some think the full time for action has come; all think it wise to discuss the subject in its various bearings. The General Assemblies that met last year inaugurated, for the first time, a truly fraternal correspondence under the happiest auspices. Good men all over the land are praying for entire reconciliation: "If it can be effected, its influence on the broader question of Christian union can hardly be over-estimated; for these two bodies are made up to a large extent of the most solid, energetic, patriotic, wealthy and liberal part of our population, extending through the whole land, east and west, north and south. United they might form the most effective Christian organization on the continent." And the same time we must look the difficulties as well as the encouragements full in the face. This is one of the cases in which it is easier to feel right, than to act just right. Several grave questions will be raised. What were feasible for two local churches or presbyteries, may not be as easy for two widely extended denominations. And, besides, a second marriage between parties who have been divorced (whether legally or not) must be a sober, discreet and rational union, not quite so spontaneous as the first, and accompanied by repentance and forgiveness. Better defer the renewal of the bonds, than come together for a second time, and to smite with the fists of wickedness. Better not try to tune the instruments to the same key, if there is danger of breaking the strings. But still whatever be the difficulties, there are none which cannot be surmounted, if we are all ready to act in the spirit of that famous maxim of obscure or uncertain authorship, but of profound Christian import: In necessariis unitas, in non necessariis libertas, in istisque unities.

Such a reunion implies three prime conditions. The first of these is, that there be a spirit of mutual concession. Each must recognize the good there is in the other, for each has of right a pretty good opinion of itself, and neither can afford to lose its self-respect. An open and manly union: on equal terms is all that either side can ask, or accept. There is to be no capitulation; neither is victor, neither is vanquished, except by the spirit of love. The second condition is, that both accept in its integrity the Presbyterian system of church order as distinguished from other systems. On this ground, the other branch of our church has had its chief stability and strength, and here, for a time, we attempted unequal compromise and adjustments. The third condition is, that the reunion be simply on the basis of the standards, which we equally accept, without private interpretation; interpreted in their legitimate grammatical and historic sense, in the spirit of the original baptizing Act, and "containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." My liberty here is not to be judged of another man's conscience. Any other view notably puts, for all practical purposes, the confession above the Scriptures, but also puts somebody's theological system above the Confession.

Pre-supposing these conditions, let us now look somewhat more critically at our points of difference, yet with an irenic and not a polemic intent, mindful also of our responsibility to our only Master for the preservation and defence of the truth and the trust committed to our especial guardianship. For he that provideth not for his own house is worse than an infidel. Every powerful organization known in history, has been shaped and moved by the influence of contesting and almost opposite elements. Progress through and by conflict seems to be the law of human life. Even the naturalist finds it difficult to unfold the order of nature, without implying the existence of inert atoms as well as living forces. The conflicts of law and liberty, of the conservative and progressive elements of society, enter into every civic debate, as do sovereignty and freedom into all theological disputes. The chief problem of government, whether in the state or in the church, centres in the adjustment of rival forces. As long as this work is done, the system of government is made more effective; for diversity in unity is essential to progress as well as to symmetry. The wheel is ever striving to fly from the axle which reduces the momentum to harmony and use. But, on the other hand, when the colliding powers become exclusive and unrelenting, there must be division to avoid the greater evils of anarchy and despotism. An attempt to secure a cast-iron uniformity shivers a sensitive fabric into mere fragments.

This saying has been ascribed to Augustine, to Vincent of Lerins, and several other ancient writers. Richard Baxter, in 1670, enlarged it, ascribing it to a "pious and judicious antiquarian," and he has since been quoted in a learned treatise on the "Age, Author, Original Form and True Meaning," published at Göttingen, in 1812. It is the famous phrase so often ascribed its authority to Rupertus Madaulaeus, a Latin divine of the first part of the seventeenth century, and is also repeated in the work of the Scotch and German, as Heit, 1861, Lucke further defended the use of the claims set up for Frank, a Reformed Theologian.

The history of our Presbyterian Church illustrates these principles. When united, it grew apace because it contained such energetic and diverse elements. The tension at last became so violent, that rupture was inevitable; without such concessions as neither party was in the mood to make. The causes of the rupture were intricate and manifold, some of them running their roots into our colonial, and even our European ancestry. Some persons who are fond of ascribing great events to little causes, who explain the discovery of the law of gravitation by the falling of an apple, say, it was all owing to the ambition and personal disputes of a few party leaders; and they propose, as a sure remedy to let these die out, and then the new generation settle the dispute on easy and agreeable terms. Just as if personal ambition and theological eagerness belonged only to the fathers, and the children had no part in these frailties. It may yet be found, that something of the old Adam is still lurking in our young Melancthons. At any rate, they might profitably be put upon a course of Presbyterian history, adapted to beginners, if only to learn how complex are the causes, theological and ecclesiastical, historical and even political, out of which our division was engendered. A mouse cannot beget a mountain.

Our common Reformed faith was planted in New England by a population singularly acute, practical and homogeneous; and there it assumed the form of Congregationalism. The same faith was later established in the middle and southern colonies by a more diverse emigration, from New England, as well as from Scotland, Ireland and England; and then it took on the form of Presbyterianism, unsupported by state patronage. Our first Presbyteries and Synods were nearly equally divided between New England and the other emigrants. The Adopting Act of 1729 recognizes these differences, and allows them "only about articles not essential or necessary," implying that there are such articles. The scattered churches rallied around this centre, and the circumference grew. The Great Revival of the middle of the last century brought out the differences of Old Side and New Side. New York and Philadelphia, were separated for sixteen years; but they readily reunited in 1758, since they differed chiefly about men and measures. A Plan of Union, acceded to by the New England churches, was framed in 1801, to combine Presbyterianism and Congregationalism in one system; and under this plan, the fast growing West was gathered in large numbers into the Presbyterian Church. The harvest was great; the reapers were many and human, and began to contend for the spoils. New England theology was also felt as a modifying and aggressive power, warring against imputation, inability, and a limited atonement. Geological and semi-political issues fanned the flames. The antagonistic forces began to show their teeth. The highest courage of the church became the arena of conflicts that disturbed their judicial impartiality and senatorial serenity. The will of a majority was substituted for judgment, and the Church was divided. And now for twenty-six years each side has gone on its way, and each has prospered. New England and the other branch of our Church, both proposed to absorb us; and, in fact, the one did pick up some who outran us, and the other, some who lagged behind. But we were able to march on, and save all our cannon and baggage and clothing and small arms; and as we marched we re-organized, and consolidated, and did some good service, especially against a lax theology, a loose independency and the fearful evil of American slavery. And we have still from our peculiar central position, a will as strong as we well defined and so advantageous, that we can leave it only in defence to a plain call of Providence, and that we cannot leave it, if it involves any surrender of the principles for which we have contended and which have given us stability and advantage.

Even this rapid and imperfect recital may suffice to indicate the variety and difficulty of the questions raised by the project of reunion. They were all along the lines of our past history. Some of them have to do with theological questions, inherited from the scholastic Calvinism of Europe, while others turn upon mooted points of modern ethics and psychology. There is even an ethnological problem, growing out of the necessity of acknowledging foreign elements. There are collisions on the theory of moral reform, especially as to the true attitude of the Church about our great national sin of slavery, the foe of our ecclesiastical as well as of our political peace, the skeleton in our feasts of charity. And then we come upon the subject of mixed and pure Presbyterianism, and what each, which leads on to the relation of the church to voluntary societies. There are doctrinal differences, partly as to the strictness of subscription to the confessions, partly on specific heads of doctrine. And, in fine, there are the perennial and generic conflicts between the men whose intellects, as Newton says, need to be weighted with lead and the men who are collisions on the theory of moral reform, especially as to the true attitude of the Church about our great national sin of slavery, the foe of our ecclesiastical as well as of our political peace, the skeleton in our feasts of charity. And then we come upon the subject of mixed and pure Presbyterianism, and what each, which leads on to the relation of the church to voluntary societies. There are doctrinal differences, partly as to the strictness of subscription to the confessions, partly on specific heads of doctrine. 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