American Protestantism and Toleration

Raymond Abner Smith

Butler University

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AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM

AND

tolerance.

A THESIS.

BUTLER COLLEGE, JUNE, 1904.

BY

RAYMOND ABNER SMITH.
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AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM AND TOLERATION.

CHAPTER I.

PREFACE.

I. Purpose and Statement.

It is the purpose of this discussion to consider American Protestantism with special reference to the growth of toleration. In the discussion there will be two phases or sides of the subject, each having a vital connection with the other. Their relation will oftentimes be that of Cause and Effect. Not always, however, can the practical results be traced to doctrinal causes, though they may follow.

While it is not our immediate purpose to show that the idea of toleration in American Protestantism is an evolution, yet we expect that shall be prominent as the theme is developed.

Men's practical, commercial, political and social relations have greatly modified their doctrinal positions, and the influence of different phases of American Christianity may be seen to pervade the whole realm of our national activity.

In our view of the question, we do not think of toleration as an end, but it is a growing indication of a closer relation and fellowship among American Christians which leads us to hope for the exercise of the widest diversity of opinion and the fullest liberty of thought and expression, always
considering the rights of others; for the heartiest co-operation in all movements for Civic betterment; for the economic disposition of religious forces and funds so as to show a practical unity which shall go forth conquering and to conquer; for active sympathy and brotherliness between all men who do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.

II. Bibliography.

In studying this question the writer has had recourse to numerous works of reference. It will be impossible to give credit to all to whom it is due. The thesis is largely the outgrowth of the contact the writer has had during the past few years with many men of different religious creeds.

Of formal treatises I have read and used upon the subject, I desire especially to mention:—(1) "Problems of Religious Progress", Daniel Dorchester; (2) "Religious Forces in the United States", H. K. Carroll; (3) "Christianity in the Nineteenth Century", Geo. C. Lorimer; (4) "A History of American Christianity", L. W. Bacon; (5) "American Church History", Vol. XII, (Disciples), B. B. Tyler; (6) "The New Era", Josiah Strong; (7) "Religious Movements for Social Betterment", Josiah Strong; (8) "Forward Movements of the Last Half Century", A. T. Pierson; (9) "Church Unity--A Series of Essays", E. Benjamin Andrews and others; (10) "American Historical Association Papers", Vol. II, Ch. IV., Philip Schaff.

Other references are:—Articles in the current magazines, periodicals and daily papers, the year books of the Disciples, Presbyterian, Methodist Episcopal, and Congregational Churches.

In order to get a wider expression of sentiment and a wider range of information as to the current doctrinal and practical positions of the various bodies, I wrote to fifty repre-
sentative ministers of the bodies composing the greater part of Protestantism in America, viz.: Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran, Disciples, and German Evangelicals, of the East, West, North, and South, asking these questions:--(1) What do you understand by the term "CHRISTIAN CHURCH", in its broadest sense? (2) What is your conception of the relation between your church (denomination) and the church as described in question one? (3) What requirements of membership are insisted upon, and in what manner in your church (denomination)? (4) What are your relations with other churches (denominations)? a. In reception of members from them; b. In sending members to them; c. In co-operative movements, etc. (5) How do you distinguish between "EVANGELICAL" and "NON-EVANGELICAL"? Of what importance do you consider the distinction?

I have used their answers in forming my conclusions with reference to present conditions in doctrine and practice. The liberal and hearty reply from college presidents to rural preachers was most gratifying.

I have had conferences with several of the Indianapolis ministers on the topic and am also indebted to them.
II. The term American is geographical but not exact. It refers particularly to the United States, and is used because the conditions of Protestantism in the United States may well be applied to all of American Protestantism.

II. Two definitions may be given of Protestantism. a. In its broadest sense it includes all bodies avowedly Christian outside of the Roman Catholic Communion. This would except, according to Mr. H. K. Carroll, six other Catholic bodies. Their numbers and influence, however, are insignificant. b. In the narrower definition, compelled by the most conservative men, in their estimation of modern religious tendencies, those usually regarded as the "Liberal" churches are not included. Among these are the Unitarian, Universalists, and kindred bodies. This estimate would restrict the term Protestantism to include those churches holding distinctly to the Sacrificial and Trinitarian theology.

Our first definition would include all those Christian bodies which have sprung up historically out of the Reformation. It also embraces those secondary protests against original Protestantism, such as Quakerism—a protest against its ordinances; Arminianism—a protest against its Calvinism, its formalism; and "Liberal" Christianity—a protest against its Trinitarian and Sacrificial theology.

Of the more liberal conception of Protestantism there are two divisions. These divisions were earlier in the century just past very marked. At present time, however, the distinction is not so clearly drawn, and for practical purposes
largely eliminated. I refer to the terms "Evangelical" and "Non-Evangelical" as representing these divisions or distinctions.

1. Evangelical from its primary meaning may be in a general way defined as referring to those bodies of Christians who hold earnestly to the doctrine of the Gospel of Christ as found in the New Testament. More specifically and historically it is the term used to classify those churches who hold to the inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Scriptures; the Trinity; the Deity of Christ; justification by faith; and the work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner.

2. The Non-Evangelical churches, on the other hand, are those which take a rationalistic view of the Deity of Christ, and the doctrines of grace, of which the Unitarians may be taken as an example.

As to the importance of these distinctions in American Protestantism at the present time, there are varying opinions. Out of thirty-three replies to the question of the importance of this distinction, twenty-two considered it large, and eleven thought it to be more and more insignificant.

Rev. W. Robson Hotman, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, says in answer to this question, "I give it up. They shade into each other so as to make scientific distinction impossible. The Evangelical Alliance, however, makes a working basis."

Another answer by Rev. G. W. Anderson, Fourth Christian Church, Indianapolis, takes a different basis for the distinction.—It is ethical rather than doctrinal. He says:—"Any Church that hates sin, loves righteousness, honors Christ,
and is trying the best it knows to do Christ's work in the
world is 'Evangelical', no matter what misconceptions it may
have. I would distinguish by deed, not by creed. If the life
is right, wrong belief will be winked at."

Dr. Teunis F. Hamlin, Presbyterian of Washington, D. C. says:
"The distinction is more and more vague as they come closer to-
gether".

Rev. Ira Billman (Disciple) says: -"I regard a distinction
between them as of slight importance."
The above answers are representative of those who consider
the distinction between Evangelical and Non-Evangelical as
growing less important.

Dr. W. R. Huntington, Episcopalian, New York, says:-- "I
would form my judgment by the answer given to the question,
'What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?' and consider his
distinction as of vast importance."

F. D. Power, (Disciple) Washington, D. C., says:--"I think
the distinction, while not always clearly drawn, is yet a vi-
tal one."

Kerr Bryce Tupper, (Baptist) Philadelphia, says:--"Vast
importance! The one true, the other false."

Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, President of Union Theological
Seminary, says:--"I consider the distinction of the greatest
importance, but in usage I prefer the term 'Christian' to the
term 'Evangelical'."

Williston Walker, Professor of Church History in Yale Di-
vinity School, says:--"We regard the distinction as of very
considerable importance."
Rev. Peter Moerdyke, of the Reformed Church in America, Chicago, says: "The distinction is fundamental and essential."

These answers serve to illustrate not only the present divided attitude of leading men in different denominations toward this matter of definition, but also to illustrate that there is a gradual change from the exacting of strict doctrinal tests, to tests which are rather practical, ethical and personal.

3. The fundamental idea in toleration in the present discussion is the bearing with another's opinions, though they may seem wrong, until such expression of truth may be found which is mutually satisfactory. It in no sense calls for the acceptance of things or doctrines as right that are wrong, but for a suspense of judgment and condemnation, awaiting the knowledge of the truth. It implies the conceding to another the same right to his opinion which one holds for himself. The winking at immorality on the part of individual, community, or body of people, is not for a moment to be considered. Our discussion lies wholly within the bounds of Christianity. And while its attitude toward the sinner has not always been charitable, and toward sin antagonistic, yet the attitude is becoming more and more so. Our special attention then will be given to the relation between the various religious denominations with respect to their doctrinal standards of fellowship and the practical grounds of co-operation as showing the growth of a tolerant spirit which points to a stronger loyalty to the founder of Christianity and a larger liberty through Him and His Church.
In contra-distinction from this are the ideas of toleration as expressed in the relation of Church and State. In America there is no American Church. All are independent organizations. In England there is the Anglican Church—others are dissenters or non-conformists. In Germany and Russia there is also the State Church. Dissenters are tolerated, but Propagandism is looked upon with disfavor. In America a man may give expression to his religious nature in any way he may choose, and the State not only does not interfere with, but protects him in this inalienable right. Religious liberty is regnant. "It is not toleration", says Judge Cooley, "which is established in our system, but religious equality."

In American Protestantism however, intolerance expresses itself in sectarian and denominational strife and exclusion. It places barriers in the way of a broad and true religious freedom. It makes the private opinion or interpretation of more importance than, or at least equal to, the essentials in Christianity. Hence, our question is confined especially to the consideration of the relation of the various bodies of Protestants to each other.
CHAPTER III.

THE POLITY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM.

In the exercise of the religious liberty which it enjoys, American Protestantism resolves itself into three forms or polities. These are the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregational. Each maintaining earnestly its superiority over all others—in-so-much that large bodies of Christians are names specifically for the polity they represent.

This naturally forms a fruitful source of division and has erected barriers which contribute largely toward maintaining these divisions. But in polity as in other things, there is a growing tendency toward liberty. Each has been modified by the existence of the other alongside of it and has made it possible that eventually they may all be merged, or at least that the polity shall no longer be a barrier to the unity so essential to the progress of Protestant Christianity.

1. The Episcopalian polity is so called because of the prominence and power of the bishop. To illustrate, I cite the polity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. I quote from Dr. H. K. Carroll:—"Its legislative authority is vested in a general convention, consisting of two houses, the house of Bishops and the house of Clerical and Lay Deputies. The deputies are elected by the diocesan conventions. Each diocese is entitled to eight deputies, four clerical and four lay. The concurrence of both orders in the house of deputies, and the concurrence of both houses are necessary to the enactment of legislation. The general convention is the supreme legislative, executive, and judicial power.

The Bishop is the presiding officer of the diocese. The
Bishop is elected by the diocesan convention and is consecrated by bishops after consent has been given by standing diocesan committees and the bishops." There are three orders recognized in the ministry; bishops, priests, and deacons.

The rector must be a priest. The parish is the unit of the diocese and has its officers as follows:--Rector, church-wardens, and vestry-men. The rector has supervision of the spiritual affairs of the church.

Much stress is given to Episcopal ordination and hence to Apostolic Succession. The historic Episcopate is one article put forth by the Protestant Episcopal Church as a basis of unity for all christians.

There were in the year 1800 but three denominations holding the Episcopalian polity, with a membership of 80,872. In 1850 there were eight bodies, with 1,467,750 communicants. From 1850 to 1890 the increase was such that there were eighteen denominations, with 5,466,205 members, and in 1900 seventeen bodies, with 6,946,470 members.

2. The Presbyterian polity holds to a system of church government by presbyteries. It is representative. Bishops, presbyters and elders are different themes used for the office. Bishops were presbyters in charge of congregations. Presbyters were both to teach and govern.

It provides for the following courts:

a. The session--or court of the congregation, which consists of the pastor, the ruling elders, and the deacons. To the session is committed the care of the spiritual interests of the church. It passes on the reception of members and may suspend them for offenses. It elects representatives to the presbytery.
b. The presbytery consists of all the ministers and one ruling elder from each church within its bounds. It has power to entertain and decide appeals from the sessions; to pass on the fitness of candidates for entrance to the ministry. It may ordain, install, remove, or judge its ministers. It determines questions of discipline and doctrine. It has power to unite or divide congregations and to receive new ones. It has general supervision of the welfare of the churches within its limits.

c. The synod is made up of delegates, ministerial and lay, chosen by the presbyteries belonging to it. It hears and decides appeals from the presbyteries and in general has supervision over presbyteries and sessions.

d. The general assembly is the supreme legislative and judicial court in the Presbyterian system. It consists of commissioners, ministerial and lay, elected by the presbyteries. It entertains and decides appeals from presbyteries or synods and determines all questions of doctrine and discipline. This assembly meets annually.

There is but one order in the ministry, that of presbyter. Ruling elders are laymen chosen by the congregation to exercise government and discipline therein in connection with the pastor. Deacons are also laymen elected by the congregation to look after the financial, philanthropic and temporal affairs of the church.

In 1800 there were six bodies in the United States holding to this polity, with 102,000 communicants. In 1850, eighteen bodies, with 857,320 communicants. In 1890, sixty-five bodies, with 3,088,184 communicants. In 1900, sixty-one bodies, with 4,092,938 communicants.
3. The Congregational polity has the following leading features:—The independence of the local church in all things, and the importance of fraternal fellowship and co-operation of the churches.

The officers of the church have but local significance. The pastor is a member of the church to which he ministers, and is subject to the same discipline. Each congregation calls and dismisses its pastor, determines matters of local discipline and government and the extent to which it will co-operate with other like congregations in philanthropic, evangelistic, or missionary work. There are no orders in the churches of this polity. In different denominations holding to this polity, different customs obtain with respect to officers, and co-operative meetings. Elders and deacons are the usual designations for the officers. Elders are sometimes called pastors or bishops. There may be one or more of them to the congregation. Deacons are men not specifically qualified for ministerial work, or otherwise called laymen, who are elected to have charge of the charitable and temporal affairs of the church. The pastors or elders have oversight of the spiritual life of the congregation.

In 1800 there were in the United States holding this polity four bodies, with 182,000 members. In 1850, twelve bodies, with 1,182,827 members. In 1890, forty-one bodies, with 5,802,614 members. In 1900, thirty-nine bodies, with 7,217,021 members.

It is worth while to note that the polity is not held so important in the interchange of members as some items of belief, the churches using the congregational polity and those of the presbyterian polity freely exchange members upon letters
of recommendation as to Christian character and belief. All Episcopal bodies save one, receive freely all persons who are members of any evangelical church. The Protestant Episcopal Church insists upon the Bishop's confirmation, but modifies it by the statement that it is a step in growth.

The lines once drawn so carefully between denominations of different polity are now almost obliterated. At least they are very indistinct. Many of the Lutheran bodies are partly presbyterian and partly episcopalian as to polity and in many cases it is with extreme difficulty that decision can be made whether the body is presbyterian or congregational in its polity.

By this gradual blending into each other is shown a most excellent example of the spirit of toleration--yes, even a fraternal relation that is pleasing indeed. The most concrete example of these things is the understanding between Presbyterians and Congregationalists as to their fields of labor in the early history of the United States. Another is the recent overtures of Methodist Protestants, United Brethren, and Congregationalists to each other in behalf of organic union. This movement brings the extremes of congregational and episcopal polities into a closer union and a more harmonious fellowship.
CHAPTER IV.

THE CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO DOCTRINE.

This division of the protestant forces is with especial reference to the view the denomination holds of Jesus Christ. Is He divine, or is He not? This is the question upon which the principal argument turns. Formerly the questions of "Inspiration", "Future Retribution", and with some denominations one must hold the same doctrinal views with themselves to be classified by them as Evangelical or Orthodox. Dr. Dorchester in his classification in 1880 excludes the Universalists from, and Dr. Carroll in 1890 includes them in the list of evangelical denominations. Thus the line may be but tentatively drawn in any given generation. There are many persons who are actively evangelical in the so-called non-evangelical bodies and many who, from lack of co-operation and active sympathy and support, though in the evangelical bodies, should be properly classed with the non-evangelical.

The test which my investigation suggests as being the one vital and simple, includes both a doctrinal and practical significance. Those who are evangelical are those protestant churches which acknowledge Jesus Christ as a divine Saviour and Lord. The practical test to follow would be obedience to His commandments and the reproduction of His principles in the present life as a manifestation of loyalty to Him and belief in Him.

This might suggest an endless discussion and could involve the questions of union of christians to do the will of their God. It certainly does imply and cover a man's life and conduct. It has to do with his personal attitude toward Jesus
Christ and his attitude and conduct toward his fellowmen in fulfilling the commands of Jesus as respects them.

This, however, would require us to do just what we cannot do, that is, to draw lines through the denominations. It is surely doubtful whether any would be missed unless it were the Moravians. The non-evangelical churches would be those who reject the divine sonship of Jesus and follow Him only as a human example.

The only scriptural division appears to be that which is personal, the emphasis ever being placed upon the personal relation. This admits of a personal interpretation of the message of Jesus and obedience to His commandments. It in no wise prevents, but rather encourages the co-operation of individuals or groups of individuals for fulfilling their Lord's purposes.

Our purpose is historical, however, rather than scriptural. Shortly after the Revolutionary War good men were excommunicated from the Presbyterian Church for a too zealous preaching of the gospel as they found it in the scriptures. Men in separate communions showed their love for their own church by hating others fervently. They would have no use for their neighbors who differed from them religiously. Their conduct indicated at least that they not only did not consider their denominational neighbors evangelical but also unchristian and worthy of their scorn and hatred. In illustration of this condition I quote from T. W. Grafton's Life of Alexander Campbell.

"It is related that Alexander Campbell, returning after nightfall from one of his appointments about this time (1813), was overtaken by a violent storm. Calling at the home of a Seceder (Presbyterian) lady, he sought shelter. Before grant-
ing his request she desired to know his name. Being informed that it was Alexander Campbell who sought her hospitality, she promptly refused admittance, giving as a reason her hostility to his religious views; so he was obliged to continue his journey in the face of a furious tempest through an almost trackless forest, until he reached home."

This condition was so changed in 1850 as to make it possible for a movement such as the Young Men's Christian Association to take root and have rapid growth, finding its patronage from all protestant bodies. In 1896 there were 1429 Associations, employing 1251 paid officers, and holding real estate and buildings to the amount of nearly $20,000,000. There were about 250,000 members.

In 1881, American Protestantism had so far surpassed mere toleration as to furnish a ripe field and abundant fruitage for the Christian Endeavor movement, whose membership is found to be in 1900 over 3,000,000 of young people.

In 1890, the doctrine of future punishment had become so modified as to justify a prominent Methodist Episcopal writer in classifying the Universalists among the evangelical denominations.

Referring to the present doctrinal position of various denominations, thirty-four answers representing the ten leading denominations of protestants in the United States may be summarized as follows:--In distinguishing between Evangelical and Non-Evangelical, the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and a personal Savior is the ground given by thirty out of the thirty-four. Two do not recognize the terms historically and two add future punishment and plenary inspiration as tests.
There is not a dissenting voice on the question of co-operation. Two answers modify their consent by stating "in all scriptural things". Disciples, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists are most profuse in their eagerness for co-operation in all things with evangelical bodies and with non-evangelical in civic and moral reforms.

Here is a representative answer as to inter-change of members--two disciples would not send members--all others agree in substance:--"We receive members from all evangelical bodies. We dismiss to all evangelical bodies."--Forrest E. Dager, Re-formed Episcopal, Philadelphia.

Evangelical christianity is the dominant religious force of the United States. This being true, and it growing more and more fraternal, there is every reason for good cheer in thinking of the future relationship of the various bodies.

To illustrate, the present practical relations of evangelical denominations in seeking to be obedient to our Lord's commands, I quote from Dr. H. K. Carroll in "The Religious Forces of the United States":

"The great and absorbing purpose of evangelical christianity seems to me to be the spread of the gospel. There are those living who can remember when a far less exalted idea possessed the church; when it seemed to think its sphere was not in the world, and its main duty not to the world, but to those within its own pale. Now it knows that it is in the world to save the world; that while God loves the saint, He also loves the sinner; that while He has 'more graces for the good', He has messages of love for the bad. It considers itself as commissioned to carry these messages to every heathen land, to every destitute community, to every godless home, to every unconverted
person. Evangelical churches are like bustling camps of spiritual soldiers, who are being told off to go to this country and that, to this destitute section and that, with the gospel of peace, to conquer the whole world for Christ. So thoroughly has this missionary spirit possessed the body of evangelical christians, that the smallest and most obscure divisions feel constrained not only to evangelize home communities; but to have their representatives abroad."

The enlarging spirit of evangelical christians, the disappearance little by little of the arbitrary boundaries between evangelical and non-evangelical communicants, and the melting away of denominational barriers seem at least to herald the approach of a more glorious day for American Protestants.
CHAPTER V.

DOCTRINAL INTOLERANCE AND THE PRACTICAL RESULTS.

THE RELIGIOUS FAMILIES.

It is somewhat difficult again to draw hard and fast lines and say that this division was wholly due to differences in doctrine and that to a difference in practical administration or to political questions.

The Lutheran Church now divided into twenty separate denominations imported some of their divisions from Europe. The Presbyterians as well, brought many divisions from Scotland. They are now divided into twelve distinct bodies. The Baptist family has thirteen, the Methodist has seventeen, and the Mennonite has twelve divisions.

These five families with seventy-four separate bodies constitute over one-half of the divisions of the religious forces in America, and include more than one-half of the total number of communicants.

Toleration is attitude of spirit or disposition as well as of mind. Intolerance is the negative side of the same attitude with the natural additions of hatred, envy, and jealousy. Thus when divisions occur, there is usually manifested much lack of the unity of spirit and bond of peace so scriptural and needful.

I. The Presbyterians.

There are twelve divisions as follows:—(1) The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; (2) The Cumberland Presbyterian Church; (3) The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Colored; (4) The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church; (5) The United Presbyterians; (6) The Presbyterian Church in the
United States, Southern; (7) The Associate Church of North America; (8) The Associate Reformed Synod of the South; (9) The Reformed Presbyterian Church (Synod); (10) The General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; (11) The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Covenanted; (12) The Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States and Canada.

The first is usually considered the parent church. In 1810 the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was formed owing to the intolerance of the parent body of what they deemed excessive evangelistic fervor. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church also held to the principle that a classic education was not essential for ministers when there was such great need of pastors. They also adopted a half-way line between Calvinism and Arminianism.

The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists came from Wales and maintained their separate identity on this side. They agree substantially in doctrine with the general body of Presbyterians.

The United Presbyterians are the result of Scotch immigration with all their divisions. In 1858 the Associate Presbyterians, including Burghers and Seceders, united with the Associate Reformed Presbyterians--made up of Associate and Reformed--to make the United Presbyterians. They also agree largely with the general body of Presbyterians, though they maintain a stricter Calvinism and have specific views of psalmody and the use of the organ in church worship.

The Presbyterian Church, South, separated from the Northern body in 1858 on account of differences on the slavery question. The Associate Church of North America is made up of those Associate Presbyterians who did not enter the union of 1858.
The Associate Reformed Synod of the South separated themselves into a new organization in 1822 owing to their intolerant opinions as to psalmody and the communion. All others, save the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States and Canada, are divisions on political questions and will be treated in the next chapter. The last named became a separate body from the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on account of discipline.

II. The Baptists.

There are thirteen in the Baptist family. The dates of the divisions can scarcely be given since a congregational polity makes it difficult to mark the exact time of division. This is especially true as respects doctrine. The Regular Baptists, North, the Regular Baptists, South, and the Colored Baptist Churches, comprise numerically seven-eighths of the entire Baptist family. The Southern branch is much more conservative than the Northern and more Calvinistic. The Regular (North), The Free Will, Original Free Will, the General, and United (Missionary) Baptists are so closely related that there seems little need for the divisions. In fact, the smaller bodies are being rapidly assimilated into the Regular Baptists, North. To these might also be added the Baptist Church of Christ which holds to a modified Calvinism.

In 1866-1869 the Colored Baptist Church was formed. Color formed the chief basis of this separate organization. They are somewhat more conservative than the Northern body, and more numerous.

The Six Principle Baptists derive their name from their adherence to the six principles named in Hebrews 6: 1, 2. They date their beginning back as far as 1690.
The Seventh Day Baptists date their beginning in 1818 and hold to the Seventh Day, as their name indicates, as being the day to be kept sacred.

The Separate, the Primitive, and the Old-two-seed-in-the-spirit-predestinarian, all hold to a strong predestinarian doctrine. The Primitive body began their work in the United States in 1835.

III. The Methodists.

The Methodist family numbers seventeen. The parent body dates its beginning in the United States as a well defined organization in 1786. Eight of these divisions are owing to the color line being drawn. There is some variety of doctrinal difference but it is not significant enough to give special mention.

The Methodist Protestants became a separate denomination in 1830. Their specific contention was for recognition of equal rights of lay members in the Conference. The parent body refused, hence the separation.

In 1843 the Wesleyan Methodists thought best to stand alone owing to their difference with the Methodist Episcopal Church on slavery and governmental (church) questions.

In 1845 the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, became a separate organization owing to the slavery agitation. The Congregational Methodists separated from the Northern body in 1852 on the question of polity, and the New Congregational Methodists separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on account of their arbitrary government.

The Primitive Methodists were primarily a body of English Methodists and are closely akin to the Wesleyan Methodists. They date their beginning in the United States in 1843.
The Free Methodists became a separate organization in 1860 and their ground of division from the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, was their opposition to secret societies and their own over emphasis of the doctrine of sanctification.

Independent Methodists are simply what their name signifies, Methodist congregations who are wholly independent of the jurisdiction of any Conference.

IV. The Lutherans.

This is the largest family. It numbers twenty. The General Synod was organized in 1820. In 1862 the United Synod of the South was organized, having withdrawn from the General Synod owing to offensive resolutions which were adopted concerning the war.

The General Council is made up of those synods which withdrew from the General Synod because their confessional basis was too liberal.

The Synodical Conference was organized in 1872. They desired a stricter adherence to the old Lutheran doctrines than the General Council adopted.

There are twelve Independent Synods and four Independent bodies of Lutherans. Six of the former are separate for linguistic and national reasons. The four Independent bodies for reasons of polity. The Norwegian Church in America is strongly predestinarian. The Buffalo Synod has hierarchical views of the ministry. Hauge’s Synod is intensely evangelistic.

The Joint Synod of Ohio and other States, and the Michigan Synod, hold pecular views of ministerial and altar fellowship.

The Menonite family, while it has twelve divisions, yet it has scarcely 50,000 communicants and they do not require separate treatment. Most of the divisions are due to conformation or non-conformation to a prescribed custom of dress.
The large number of the other divisions in American Protestantism have been due largely to the personal following of some intensely fervent advocate of peculiar individualistic notions of different portions of scripture. Others have been due to the lack of even a tolerant spirit in local congregations, and the multiplication of these divisions.

The human spirit ever craves liberty. Wherever there is oppression there will be divisions and strife. Through these struggles for liberty, however, will be developed a larger forbearance on the part of all and eventually, liberty, fraternity and union will prevail.
CHAPTER VI.

POLITICAL QUESTIONS AND DIVISIONS.

The two questions of a political significance which have created denominational divisions in the Christian Church are:--
(1) The Relation of the Christian Church to civil government; and (2) Slavery.

I. The first has been prominent, ever, with the Reformed Presbyterians. "They occupy an attitude of protest against civil governments which do not recognize the headship of Christ and the authority of God and His law." They differ in the extent to which this protest should be carried and thus the divisions among the Reformed Presbyterians are accounted for. "Some refuse, because the Constitution of the United States does not acknowledge the existence of Almighty God, the supremacy of Christ, and the authority of the Scriptures, to 'incorporate with the political body', and hence do not participate in elections and certain other political rights and duties." Others make their protest against "a godless government", but do not refrain from voting.

The Reformed Presbyterians (Synodical) do not take part in state or national elections. They neither hold office nor vote. Their covenant of 1871 declares that those accepting it are pledged to labor for "a constitutional recognition of God as the source of all power, of Jesus Christ as the Ruler of nations, of the Holy Scriptures as the supreme rule, and of the true Christian religion," and to refuse to "incorporate by any act with the political body until this blessed reformation is secured".

(Quoted from H. K. Carroll in Religious Forces in the United States.)
The General Synod Reformed Presbyterians are allowed to decide for themselves whether the government of this country should be regarded as an immoral institution and thus determine what duties of citizenship devolve upon them.

The Reformed Presbyterians (Covenanted) withdrew from the Synod or "Old Lights" on the basis that it maintained sinful and ecclesiastical relations and patronized or indorsed moral reform societies with which persons of any religion or no religion were connected. The total membership of these bodies is less than 15,000.

II. The question having the most far reaching effect in dividing the American Church was that of slavery. It did not produce a large number of denominations, but the bitterness created was intense.

The denominations affected most largely were the Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Christian Connection. Of the last named it is said that the schism is entirely healed.

The Methodists in the Conference of 1780 declared "that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not that others should do to us and ours."

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, then undivided, in 1818 passed a long resolution in condemnation of the institution of slavery, of which this is part of the concluding statement: "It is manifestly the duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day, to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavors to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion and to obtain the complete abolition of
slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible, throughout the world”.

In the west a movement of slavery extension politicos, who were successful in Missouri, to introduce slavery into Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, was defeated largely by the efforts of Baptist and Methodist clergy who had lived in the South and were familiar with the evils of the system. The anti-slavery movement in Kentucky and Tennessee was led more distinctly by Quakers and Presbyterians.

The difficulties in the way of the churches in dealing with the question were many. Persons undeniably Christian in their characters found themselves in possession of slaves with no fault of their own.

The attitude of the extreme anti-slavery agitators of the North, the rise in price of cotton due to the success of the cotton gin, the natural difficulties of extrication from the condition, the Southampton insurrection, the inflammatory publications from northern sources, with other indefinable reasons brought about in a short time a thorough change of sentiment in the South on the slavery question. The fear of the Southerners of the negroes may have contributed largely to this end.

In 1833 Rev. James Smylie, a Presbyterian minister, discovered that American slavery was in harmony with the Scriptures. In but a few months southern people in all churches looked upon slavery as an added evidence of christianity. The clergy and religious bodies were summoned to the patriotic duty of committing themselves to the side of “Southern Institutions”.

In 1844 the agitation resulted in the deliberate division of the Methodist Church into the Northern and Southern Churches. The complete arrangements were brought about for the division
the next year.

In the case of the Baptists it was the South that forced the issue, in that of the Methodists, the North. "The Alabama Baptist convention, without waiting for a concrete case, demanded of the National Missionary Boards 'the distinct, explicit avowal that slave-holders are eligible and entitled equally with non-slave-holders to all the privileges and immunities of their several unions'. The answer of the Foreign Mission Board was perfectly kind, but on the main point, perfectly unequivocal; 'We can never be party to any arrangement which would imply the approbation of slavery". The Southern Convention of Baptists was organized in May 1845, and the division was complete.

The Presbyterians divided in 1858 and 1861. The New School division first and the Old School division later.

The Christian Connection was divided in 1854 in the convention held in Cincinnati. When a resolution was passed condemning slavery, the Southern members withdrew.

The United Synod of the South (Lutheran) was organized in 1862. It was made up of those who withdrew from the General Synod of Lutherans because they passed an offensive resolution concerning the war.

The Catholics would not permit the discussion of slavery in their bodies. The Episcopal Church likewise overcame the division which would otherwise have taken place. The Congregationalists had no membership in the South and thus were they saved from division. Fortunately the Disciples would not permit slavery to be a test of fellowship and they too were saved from division on this subject.
CHAPTER VII.

EFFORTS TOWARD FAMILY REUNION.

The religious families have begun to learn the truth, uttered long ago by Jovinian in these words: -- "There is but one divine element of life, which all believers share in common; but one fellowship with Christ, which proceeds from faith in Him; but one new birth. All who possess this in common with each other have the same calling, the same dignity, the same heavenly blessings; the diversity of outward circumstances creating no difference in this respect."

I. In 1837 the Presbyterian Church of the United States was broken into two divisions -- commonly called the Old School and the New School. But these not being divided by any sectional or political feeling, it was impossible that they could remain forever apart. They had the same creed and discipline. A new generation came that knew not the old cause of division. In 1862 commissioners were interchanged, at the suggestion of the Old School Assembly and the hearty response from the New School Assembly. They began to consider organic union. Through much effort on the part of Dr. Henry B. Smith and others the union was effected in May 1870.

In 1876 the Presbyterians organized their Pan-Presbyterian Alliance. The first of their triennial General Councils was held in Edinburg, Scotland, in 1877, representing forty-nine separate churches holding the Presbyterian polity. The second Council was held in Philadelphia and the third at Belfast, and another not long since at Buffalo, N. Y. The most conservative of these churches enter into this work today with the utmost heartiness.
At the respective General Assemblies held last month (May, 1904), of the Presbyterian Church, North, at Buffalo, N.Y., and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Dallas, Texas, each body after some opposition voted to recommend to their respective presbyteries that the former division lines should be effaced and organic union between them be accomplished.

The Northern and Southern Churches have forgotten their past differences and bid fair ere long to be again reunited. This not only decreases the divisions in American Presbyterianism but heralds the coming of better things. Toleration is rapidly being outdone in real organic union.

II. The All-Presbyterian Council of the Presbyterian Church at once suggested the idea of an All-Methodist Conference. At the suggestion of the General Conference of the United States, a Pan-Methodist Council was held in London in 1881. This was the first Ecumenical Methodist Conference. It consisted of four hundred delegates, representing twenty-eight branches of Methodism, ten in the eastern and eighteen in the western hemisphere. Ten years later, in 1891 a second Ecumenical Methodist Conference was held in Washington. We have learned, however, of no organic union having been effected among the Methodists by this work, except in Canada.

These things point at least to the fact that members of the same religious family have learned not to fear each other and that there is an immensity of power and impetus wasted in a further continuance of their divisions. In 1876 fraternal relations were established between the Northern and Southern branches of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The common bond of brotherhood must ever be stronger than the petty differences long counted as of no essential value.
EFFORTS TOWARD PROTESTANT UNION.

The whole of christendom has come to recognize the evils of divisions, and from many quarters come doctrinal and practical suggestions for re-uniting the hosts of christian believers.

Perhaps the most important of the suggested bases of union may be limited to the following, which may be termed respectively as; "submission", "confederation", "consolidation", and "restoration".

I. The first suggested is the plan of union offered by the Roman Catholic Church. It is very simple. It involves complete submission of all others to itself.

II. The second plan had its earlier advocates among the Presbyterians. The movement has had many supporters from numerous protestant bodies. The Federation of Churches for economical purposes, and for doing the necessary work with the least waste of both energy and resources is appealing with much emphasis to large numbers of practical people. This need not be accepted as a final outcome but as a needful step in the right direction. The spirit of toleration must become ever more prevalent than is denoted in some bodies of christians today before federation can be an accomplished fact.

This plan recognizes the equality of all christians, no matter what the denominational affiliation.

It might be well to mention here the practical federation—or relations of comity which existed between the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the early part of the nineteenth century. This relation bade fair to accomplish great things until doctrinal intolerance, stirred up by jealousy on the part
of the "hereditary Presbyterians", forced a division in 1837 into the Old School and New School respectively. It succeeded as well in drawing sharp denominational lines. The breach was healed in the Presbyterian body in 1870.

III. The third plan, that termed consolidation, is that which is presented by the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Chicago-Lambeth Articles, 1886-1888. It presents the following basis for union and sent accompanying communications to the numerous Assemblies of christians in the United States, asking for future action and conferences to bring about the desired end.

1. "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation", and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith;

2. "The Apostles' Creed as being the baptismal symbol, and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement, of the Christian faith;

3. "The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself—baptism and the Supper of the Lord, ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by Him;

4. "The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church."

These propositions were sent to the annual Convention of the disciples held in Indianapolis, Ind., in October 1887. To these propositions a most fraternal answer was sent together with further propositions giving the fourth basis of unity as advocated by the Disciples of Christ. It is significant that a standing committee for christian union was appointed by
the General Convention of Disciples in Des Moines, Ia. in 1890.

IV. The fourth basis is that advocated by the Disciples. Their existence as a religious body may be traced to this purpose of restoring the lost unity of the Church for the greater purpose of evangelization of the world. This is unfortunately lost sight of by many who "earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints".

1. The original creed of Christ’s Church;
2. The ordinances of his appointment;
3. The life which has Jesus for its exemplification.

The original creed of the church is declared to be; Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God. The ordinances are baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The life is to be a reproduction of the principles in life, manifested and taught by Jesus Christ.

Of the Disciples and their plea for union, Dr. George C. Lorimer (Baptist) says:--"The value of their testimony is not to be depreciated. It meant something to have this large number of intelligent people join together in a protest against the strife and discord of Christian churches. And the seeming impossibility of their escaping from the entanglement they condemned only added pathos and power to their plea. It indicated that even where there is no sectarianism in the heart, we are obliged to affiliate with a sect to gain a fulcrum for our spiritual leverage. Hardly anything more than this is needed to demonstrate that the Disciples are right in their contention, and that some measures looking toward unification should be adopted. They are entitled to commendation for their devotion to a vital principle, and one that is destined to exert an incalculable influence on the Christianity of the immediate future."
Mention has already been made of the recent arrangements for organic union between the Methodist, Protestant, the United Brethren, and the Congregational Churches. This demonstrates that polity need not be a barrier, especially when the love of co-operation is greater than the love of an established custom.

In the words of Bishop John F. Hurst of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we can join heartily in saying:—"The spirit of union is in the air we breathe, and throbs in the tides over which we float from the nineteenth century into the calmer and sweeter waters of the twentieth."
CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION.

Christian co-operation has become so prevalent in the past few years that its influence permeates society. Locally there is one union meeting after another in rapid succession. Ministers of various denominations are exchanging pulpits and assisting each other in evangelistic meetings. He who will not co-operate with his religious neighbor today in any worthy work is liable to the charges of narrowness and selfishness.

I. For civic betterment many organizations have been effected both local and general in their application. Connected with these organizations as patrons, organizers, supporters, and workers, have been clergy and laymen from all protestant denominations.

The Anti-Saloon League, national in its significance, has accomplished splendid results in opposing the progress of the saloon and insisting that it complies with present laws. It seeks better laws where they are poor.

The National Reform Bureau, with the untiring Wilbur F. Crafts at the helm, is accomplishing much good along the line of reform agitation and laws.

Societies, both local and general have been organized for charity organization and distribution. Commissions have been provided that the unfortunate and criminal classes may have the better care.

Local organizations for the enforcement of laws against vice and crime, the protection of the American Sunday, and to assist the officers of the law in bringing to justice the offenders, have been formed. Sabbath Associations, Christian Leagues,
Reform Societies, all have organized with the assistance and sympathy of the various protestant bodies represented in the respective communities where such organizations have been effected. One hundred per cent of the answers to the list of questions sent out in preparation for this thesis not only favor co-operation for civic betterment but would vie with one another seeking to be outdone by none.

II. In evangelistic work, the work of Moody and Sankey is well known. The influence of these great spirited men in bringing the denominations into a closer fellowship can scarcely be estimated on this side of eternity.

Other work of large importance is the movement led by the Presbyterians for city evangelization. In the summer of 1902 their committee spent $50,000 in Philadelphia alone for tent meetings. Something over 3,000 conversions represented the sum total of those reported. More than half of these united with the Methodist Episcopal Church. The committee had the cooperation of all pastors in the neighborhoods in which the meetings were held and to do this work the Presbyterians furnished the funds. They appropriated a like sum to be spent in like manner in Philadelphia in 1903.

Inter-change of preachers and co-operation in evangelistic work is the spirit of the day and it is growing more and more.

One Baptist minister was exhorting in a meeting held by a Disciple minister in Hinton, W. Va. The result of his exhortation was that two members of his own church took fellowship with the Disciples at the same service. He was not in the least disconcerted.

A Disciple and a Congregationalist preacher exchanged pulpits for one evening service in Philadelphia. The Disciple
took three confessions at his meeting. They became members of
the Congregationalist Church.

Another Disciple minister was invited to preach the sermon
preparatory for communion in the United Presbyterian Church
and later to preach for another church of the same order during
a series of evangelistic meetings. He accepted both invitations.

Christian co-operation is not absent in evangelistic ser-
vice. Tolerance of differences is surely come. The movement
is onward, not backward.

III. The Ecumenical Conferences for Missionary agitation
and discussion, with their suggestions and immature plans for
comity in mission fields looking toward unity is a splendid
index of the growth of not only a tolerant but a fraternal spir-
it. They are learning more and more that it is more pleasing
the to our Lord to be about our Father's business in sending gos-
pel message "to the uttermost" than to sit in councils and sift
theological rubbish.

The Student Volunteer movement has influenced the whole of
Protestantism to a more active consideration of world-wide
evangelization and it is not important what the denominational
name of the student may be so that he volunteer for his Mas-
ter's service at the front.

IV. The Evangelical Alliance, an organization comprising
the large majority of Protestant bodies in the United States,
is seeking a basis for co-operative work which will help in
the greatly desired end of evangelizing the world. The Uni-
versalists have not yet been admitted to membership in this
organization. It is naturally more conservative than those
organizations which have before them the practical work.
It deals with the doctrinal bases for union, while others, "forgetting the things which are behind, strive to attain unto the excellency" of a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed", because they have accomplished something for the benefit of brother man and thus brought honor to our Father.

These considerations only show us that wherever there is presented to men a work to do that is practical and they are left free from theological hinderances, they will do their Lord's bidding with the utmost haste and in the broad spirit of fraternity, regardless of the denominational distinctions.
CHAPTER X.

OTHER INFLUENCES TOWARD UNION.

No comprehensive view of the growth of toleration and union in the religious life of the United States can over-look the auxiliary societies and influences, organized and used in the interest of Christianity, yet quite distinct from the churches, but bringing them all into a closer bond of fellowship in doing Christian work.

I. The American Bible Society was organized in 1816. Of all the societies organized in the superficial movement in the first years of the nineteenth century by enlisting the evangelistic bodies, this one alone remains. It has branches in every state in the Union and in the largest cities. It publishes the Scriptures in many languages and sells them at cost. It makes possible that a Bible can be in every home, however humble, by furnishing Bibles free of cost to those unable to pay for them. All evangelical bodies and some not thus classed, are enthusiastic supporters of this good work. The American Tract Society sends out tons of tracts and publications of all religious phases and on all topics calculated to add growth and strength to American Christianity.

II. The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations call for especial mention.

1. The purpose of the Young Men's Christian Association is to band together Christian young men, stimulate their spiritual life, strengthen them to meet the temptations of city life, and set them to doing Christian work for their companions who are not Christian. Their membership is not limited to church members. The special aim of the Associations is to provide a
wholesome environment for young men. Great corporations of
of railroads, colleges, and business men recognize the great
value of this institution and establish local associations
for their employes.

2. The Y. W. C. A. work does the work for young women
which is peculiarly needful to them as the Y. M. C. A. is to
young men.

III. The Women's Christian Temperance Union has also had
a large influence upon the life of American christians. Under
the marvelous leadership of the late Frances E. Willard a
stronger temperance sentiment has been created and the leading
women of all creeds have been brought into a sympathetic feel-
ing of union in this great work.

IV. The Y. P. S. C. E., an organization within the church,
but whose motto is "For Christ and the Church", can not be
lost sight of in estimating the forces contributing to the clos-
er fellowship among American believers. It has bound the young
people of all churches together with ties stronger than those
of denominational manufacture. This modern religious move-
ment of the young people is the promise of a new period in
church history. Denominational rallies are discontinued in
their larger gatherings and are useless and harmless in the
smaller ones. Sentiments of fraternity and union are cheered
to the echo in their great meetings. They have brought vigor
and inspiration to the church. The church today which does
not recognize the value of and use the material in these splen-
did union organizations is doomed to failure in the near future.

V. The Sunday Schools are to the whole church what the
local school is to the local church. But their work is suf-
fi ciently well known to need no elaboration here. However, it
is of no small significance that the same portion of scripture
is studied throughout the whole world on the Lord's Day and
that all protestants are represented in the great abundance
of sunday school publications which are sent forth weekly to
be read by eager pupils.

VI. Mention should also be made of the great publishing
houses which are sending out from their presses millions of
pages of christian literature every day. Besides the publica-
tion societies of the great denominations, with all their
branch houses, there are many great union or non-sectarian
houses that are wielding a large influence on American life.
The American Sunday School Union, David C. Cook, of Chicago,
The Sunday School Times, The Christian Endeavor World, The
Christian Herald—all these are doing much to bring the minds
of men closer and closer together and to concentrate them upon
christian activity. Charles Scribner's Sons, Funk & Wagnalls,
The Baker & Taylor Co., and Fleming H. Revell, are all worthy
of mention in the influential forces molding American Chris-
tianity. All these societies and influences are made possi-
bile and are the outcome of a rapid growth of toleration and
fraternity and unity on the part of American Protestantism.
CHAPTER XI.
SOME OBSTACLES TO UNION.

The marvelous growth of the tolerant spirit and the union sentiment during the last century of American Protestantism has not entirely eliminated the obstacles in the way of a complete manifestation of unity of spirit.

There are doctrinal positions yet held so firmly by several denominations and insisted upon so strongly as to lead one to believe that these are considered by them as thoroughly essential at least to the growth of the Church on earth.

Besides doctrinal difficulties there are yet practical difficulties to overcome. Denominational machinery holds a vast place in the church life of today. Speculate however we may, the cost of this machinery has been great, both in money and in the energy of men. It cannot be cast aside without severe and determined protest from many who have become devoted to its methods and forms.

It is among these doctrinal barriers at the present time may be considered Trinitarian Theology. To many, particularly Episcopalians and the conservative portions of the Presbyterian family, it does not seem sufficient that the prospective member be a devoted follower of Jesus, upright in life, and with character beyond reproach. There is required an acquiescence to, if not an acceptance, of a particular form of opinion with reference to the Trinity. The meta-physical is pressed beyond the line of real importance. These things can scarcely have any vital connection with a man's Christian life and experience. And what does not have a vital bearing here, can never be pressed upon all men as a basis for fellowship in Christianity.

Personal liberty of interpretation of scriptures bearing upon these questions as upon all others must be allowed before this difficulty can hope to be removed. And since religion is a
personal matter why shall a man's theological opinions be made
to conform to any particular mould, if his life be in keeping
with Christly principles, "in tune with the Infinite"?

(2) The freedom of the will has long been a matter of con-
troversy in christian denominations. Calvinistic bodies con-
tend for Predestination and Arminian theologians contend for
Freedom. Neither can nor will, give way ultimately to the
other. In an absolute sense each brings the man to the same
dilemma, that of utter irresponsibility for human conduct.
This position is too absurd to be held for a moment in any
practical way.

(3) Many have made the very sad mistake of thinking that
in case of ultimate christian unity, there would be uniformity,
and have worked along the latter line to the detriment of the
end in view. The same form of service does not appeal to the
uncultured man that appeals to the cultured and more refined.
The aesthetic and the intensely practical are most likely to
be very widely apart. A congregation in China, India or Per-
sia, must not be required to conform to the localisms of a few
Americans, else there can never be real unity.

(4) Baptism is a very definite barrier to the closer union
of believers in Jesus Christ. Immersionists all insist upon
immersion in order to membership in their churches. The stren-
uousness of that insistence has aroused very active advocacy
of sprinkling and pouring as a fulfillment of the baptismal
command. Pedo-baptists claim that immersionists are narrow.
Immersionists on the other hand make the charge that scripture
warrants no such thing as pouring or sprinkling as christian
baptism. It is to be noted with interest that immersionists
are gaining much more rapidly in the United States than any
others from the converts which are made from a proclamation of
the gospel message.

One of the most positive of all things is, that there will never be any union upon any elaborate statement. It must be a basis broad enough for there to be the widest diversity of form and method and opinion. Toleration must come to pass in such way that men will not be examined as to the minutest details of their faith. If men believe in Jesus Christ; trust in Him to lead them through ways unknown so far as future life is concerned; yield obedience to Him as a personal Lord and Savior and King; with eagerness to co-operate heartily with all who love Him and seek to do His will; and manifest this faith and obedience day by day in consistent upright lives, who is there who of right may demand more?

II. In addition to these doctrinal difficulties, there is a large amount of machinery to be combined and re-arranged in enlarged plants before union can be complete.

Each important denomination has its own publishing house or houses for its peculiar sort of literature for Bible Schools, Young People's Societies, and for the membership of the church. This might not be such an important obstacle were it not for the fact that the different denominations are geographically appealing to the same constituency. In the organization and location of local congregations there has been an enormous waste of money. On important streets we see the pitiful sight of from two to a half dozen magnificent church buildings within half as many blocks of each other. To change the whole network and weave of society is a task which only long lapse of time and careful education can bring about. In practical Federation how can the territory be divided geographically in such cases as the above? How would it be possible for these, each representing the denominational emphasis upon some infinitesimal idea
by the large expenditures in equipments, to show a united front against sin and strife and for the common meal and a common Master under such conditions?

Denominational colleges and seminaries might also be suggested as a possible barrier, but conditions do not seem to justify such a conclusion. But few cases may be found where all the ministerial candidates are trained in their own denominational colleges.

Neither the doctrinal nor practical obstacles suggested are necessarily insurmountable. It is the purpose of this thesis, however, not to solve the problem of Christian union, but to trace the growth of the tolerant spirit in American Protestantism. In these doctrinal and practical obstacles there is certainly room for the exercise of toleration in the search for the fundamentals of Christianity and in the disposition of her forces to accomplish her task.
CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

It scarcely needs to be remarked, that, in one hundred years of American Christianity, unhampered by being bound up with the State institutionally, and free to reach her truest end, her progress man-ward and God-ward has been marvelous.

The Calvinistic creeds have been so modified as to make them hardly objectionable to any, and furthermore, a large liberty of personal interpretation of these creeds is given.

Instead of the continuous warfare and bitterness and hatred of the early part of the century just past, we see the warmest feelings of brotherliness and the sentiment of union pervading all Christian people.

In former times Christianity’s progress has been impeded by harsh criticisms, by senseless caricature, by heartless ridicule, and ungenerous insinuations; but in the present more tolerant, less barbarous and more enlightened, such treatment is out of date.

Christians generally seem to have learned that when they are intensely in earnest about serving Jesus Christ, they do not all need to be placed in the lead but can take the humbler positions of followers, acknowledging ability of leadership wherever it may be found and waiting and working until the message shall be heard “come up higher” or “well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord”.

They are more and more placing less emphasis upon a careful doctrinal statement of belief, but looking for a practical administrative and working basis for all the hosts of Christians.

The greatest problem today of the church is to find something practical and helpful for each Christian to do.
More and more the emphasis is placed upon the personal in Christianity. The personal Christ is the center of the system. Personal faith in Him, personal obedience to Him, personal living unto Him, personal following of His teachings and directions in all things. And the church cannot stand still—it must go forward.

Gradually she is approximating toward the realization of a sublime ideal. Differences will cease in this ideal to be tolerated in the welcome they will receive by the church conscious that in this liberty and diversity will be her highest development and her most rapid progress. And, when from all denominations in America there shall emerge the final Christianity, the Church of God, holding to the universal Fatherhood of God, the universal brotherhood of man, the universal reconciling office of Christ, all wrought together through the universal Eternal Spirit into the universal Kingdom, on whose boundaries the sun shall never set, and against whose power the gates of hell shall never more prevail, then shall toleration have wrought her work and will have been lost in the larger brotherhood.

Yes, it is coming. Through all these decades of growth in American Christianity we can hear the footsteps of the Almighty in the corridors of time leading His hosts on to victory.

"I hear a song
Vivid as the day itself; and clear and strong
As of a lark—young prophet of the noon—Pouring in sunlight his seraphic tune.

"He prophesies—his heart is full—his lay
Tells of the brightness of the peaceful day!
A day not cloudless, nor devoid of storm,
But sunny for the most and clear and warm.

"He sings of brotherhood, of joy, and peace,
Of days when jealousies and hate shall cease;
When war shall die, and Man's progressive mind
Soar unfettered as its God designed."