

whilst the people are left in the background? Or shall it be the Presbyterian, or Congregational, in which all the members stand as brethren, with common rights and privileges, of one "Household of Faith"? If it is to be the former, the history of the past is not very re-assuring as to the results. We live in the immediate presence of an ecclesiastical organisation, which boasts of its vast numbers, its completeness and its far-reaching power over the life and conscience of men; and, as we all know, it is not an empty boast. Centuries ago, this church sought by methods we do not like to dwell upon, to make organic union a living, palpable thing, but failed in the attempt. This Sacerdotalism has not been confined to the Church of Rome in its manifestations and efforts; but its temper is the same everywhere and at all times. Claiming to stand between God and man, it unchurches godly men whose life and works bear witness to the purity of their faith, and it discredits their ministry and assemblies as things schismatic and unlawful, and therefore to be placed under the ban of condemnation. I need not say, that there are difficulties insuperable to very many of us in the way of union with such a spirit as this. On the other hand, did time permit, it would not be difficult to show that there are difficulties in the way of conformity to the type of any one single form of church organisation, and hence I regard organic union as an *impracticable* thing.

I regard it, further, as an *undesirable* thing. For, suppose it to be accomplished, with all the completeness its most sanguine advocates desire, and in no long time we should see a repetition of the history of the past, in ecclesiastical despotism, in corruption, and in ultimate decay of all true and saving power. In the nature of the case, it must be so; for the largest machine is not necessarily the most efficient; indeed, its unwieldy bulk only detracts from its strength and usefulness. It is with church organisations as with individuals:—external growth and development beyond a certain point, means weakness rather than power. But apart from all this, there have been from the beginning of the Church's life, differences of gifts and of operations, which are the outgrowth of divers types of thought and feeling, and these have found their embodiment in various forms of organisations and thus the variety of systems corresponds with the variety found in the minds, hearts and temperaments of men; and the attempt to force all spiritual life and activity into one common mould would destroy many of its most valuable elements.

Much is said and written about *Denominationalism*, as if it were, *per*