

Again, he frankly admits that all such coalitions as the Bible Society, the Evangelical Alliance, the S. S. Union, etc., etc., are but "temporary expedients." He says: "The unification of American Churches, if ever it is to come at all, cannot be precipitated by platforms, coalitions, compromises—in short, by any external association of the different denominations which leaves them still without internal modification and vital connexion." To this let us add, it is but justice to ascribe the refusal of the High Anglican party to participate in these schemes, not to their resistance of the desire for Unity, but to the fact which this scholarly and liberal-minded Divine points out, that all these schemes are but makeshifts; they simply cover up the wound and do not heal it. Men are satisfied with these "temporary expedients," instead of seeking to eradicate the evil. It is, in fact, a daubing of the rifted wall with untempered mortar.

With deep insight the Professor adds: "The American Churches, . . . it is inevitable in the long future, will undergo much modification and . . . assimilation to one another or to some divine model toward which they are tending." He proceeds to show where we may "discern these unifying tendencies." He discusses *seriatim* the three bases of Doctrine, Polity, and Worship. On the first of these three (Doctrine) he does not entertain much hope of unity as yet. He is "doubtful if perfect agreement is attainable." To this we would answer: Not only is "perfect agreement" unattainable, but it is most undesirable. The endeavour to enforce perfect agreement on all points has ever been the bane of the Church. As long as men's faces differ, so long will men's opinions, particularly on such metaphysical points as are involved in many of these theological doctrines. There are only two alternatives: either the United Church of the future must have a basis wide enough to allow great diversity of opinion, or we must continue to have, as now, separate sects to reflect each its own special phase of thought. Yet, notwithstanding, some basis of Doctrine the United Churches must have: what one better, or more generally acceptable, could there be than the Nicene Creed?

As to the second basis (Polity), Dr. Shields says, truly, all the larger denominations are assimilating in principle if not in name. The Episcopal Church, by her Congresses and Synods, which freely admit the lay element, is by so much assimilating to the Presbyterian and Congregationalist systems; while, from the other extreme, the Congregationalists, by adopting a "Congregational Union," are so far departing from their old practices and assimilating to the Episcopal system of an Organic Union of parishes. This problem is working itself out.

But what surprises one most in the essay under review is that the learned author places his chief hope on what we should have been inclined to consider the greatest obstacle, viz.: Unity in Worship. Surely one would think the *crux* lay here. How is it possible that the Episcopalian would give up his stately Liturgy, and decorous if "formal" worship, for the long prayer extemporaneously dictated by the one officer? or how on the other hand could Jennie Geddes submit to any curtailment of the "Liberty of Propheying"? Nevertheless, where others would see the greatest obstacle, Prof. Shields finds his clue out of the labyrinth. And, strange to say, that clue is the Prayer Book of the Church of England, to be adopted in its entirety. He does not believe in "new made liturgies or patchwork services": he is even more severe on "incongruous mixtures of liturgical and extempore worship," with "the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Gloria torn from its proper liturgical connection," than he is on the "temporary expedients" of undenominational alliances. We leave our readers to study for themselves the argument of the learned professor, which would be spoiled by piecemeal quotations. Suffice it to say, he draws a distinction between "ritualist" and "revivalist" worship: he thinks each good and necessary in its place; so that while the Prayer Book as a whole should be closely adhered to in the stated assemblies of the "United Churches," much latitude should be allowed for informal revival and prayer meetings, for arousing the careless, and for bringing the irreligious into the fold. To all this we heartily respond "Amen." The Evangelicals in the Anglican Church have long worked on these lines; and so do the Ritualists; their "Missions" give plenty of room for all sorts of unprecedented action. When the guests are assembled at the Banquet of the King, all things should be done "decently and in order"; but when His servants are in the lanes and by-ways compelling men to come in, formalities might be dispensed with. This remarkable paper closes with these pregnant words:—

"The general conclusion is now before us: a doctrinal compact of the American Churches can only be looked for in the distant future: their ecclesiastical confederation may be nearer at hand: but the liturgical fusion is passing before our eyes toward its only logical issue in the Prayer Book."

But one thought seems to have escaped our author. If this line of

action becomes general, as he anticipates, the "United Churches" of the future will have a "Doctrinal compact" in the Nicene Creed, which all will then confess. Certainly, even this basis will exclude some; but a line must be drawn somewhere. The Nicene Creed makes us draw it at the Divine character, not only of the mission, but of the *Person* of Jesus Christ. The objective doctrine of the Incarnation would thus become the "Articulus Ecclesie," instead of Justification by subjective faith, or any of the other metaphysical abstractions of—well, let us say ecclesiarchs.

Assuming, then, the correctness of Dr. Shields' prognosis (and he is no mean authority), American Christianity is now rapidly recovering from her fever of Sectarianism; and if she takes faithfully the remedies he prescribes, we may see the day when all Trinitarian Protestants will "with one mouth glorify God." The Evolution of American Christianity is toward Order, Strength, and Beauty, and not toward further decay.

Two great parties have hitherto been left out of consideration, one the Church of Rome and the other Unitarian Protestants. The former—the Church of Rome—we *must* leave out of the question: there is no compromise with her; there is no parleying. She must be left alone in her glory to carry out, if she can, her design of making all Christians submit to her sway. Professing herself to be the sole embodiment of all true religion, she sings the song of Vivien:—

"Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:
So trust me not at all, or all in all."

Still, we fancy, in spite of her blandishments, she will never entrap the Merlin of American Christian Thought. In her worship and her philosophy she is an exotic which will scarcely thrive in American soil; in her autocratic government and her despotic rule she is an anachronism. Only imagine all the Christians of America, some fine day, submissively banishing from all their homes and clubs and reading-rooms some magazine—say the *Century*—because an order to that effect had just been telegraphed from Italy! In such case it could, indeed, be said that Merlin

Lay as dead,
And lost to life and use and name and fame.

Mons. de Tocqueville, it is true, predicted that the Church of Rome in America would ultimately reign supreme, "because the regular army always in the end overcomes guerillas and volunteers." But Mons. de T. lived too long ago. He had not seen how readily the American character could adapt itself to circumstances; how speedily the citizen soldiery develop into a well-drilled army. No doubt, if this multiplication of sects were to go on much longer, the end would be that Rome and Agnosticism would divide the prey between them. But it will be another thing when Prof. Shields' grand idea shall have been realized.

The other class which has been hitherto omitted from consideration is at the other extreme of religious faith, viz., those who hold Unitarian views. They, too, would be excluded by the platform proposed. No scheme can be framed to include every possible shade of belief, from Rome's excessive demands on our faith, through all the diminutions until we reach the vanishing point. Nevertheless, a great deal—a vast deal—will be effected if all Trinitarian Protestants unite. The Unitarians must be left to work out their own development; for among them, too, is much commotion. There are Unitarians and Unitarians; there is an immense gulf between the Unitarianism of Channing and that of Theodore Parker. At this day the "High" Unitarian, who believes that Jesus Christ was "divine" (whatever that term may mean to him), has very little in common with the "Low" Unitarian, who looks upon Christ as a mere man, and a more or less mistaken one at that. The High Unitarian, repelled from the "low" doctrines, is much nearer the Trinitarian faith than he is to the faith of his "low" brethren. He is just verging on "Orthodoxy"; but he cannot accept it because to him "Orthodoxy" is tantamount to Tritheism, which he cannot endure. Now here Mr. Fiske's essay, alluded to above, is very useful. We cannot endorse all his sentiments in that paper upon "The Idea of God," but it is right to remember he approaches the subject as a Philosopher and Evolutionist rather than as a Theologian. His whole essay is very suggestive; but there is one point to which we would call special attention. He insists upon it that to form a correct idea of God we should dismiss the teachings of St. Augustine (which, he says, have too much coloured the theology of both Rome and Protestantism), and revert to the philosophical divinity of St. Clement of Alexandria and St. Athanasius. Now, here again we would heartily respond "Amen." The distinction between the Greek and Latin ideas of God is too intricate a question to be taken up here; we must refer our readers to the essay in Anglican, the Greek, and the Old Catholic Churches, the point of concord was not the works of any Latin Father, but of the Greek St. John Damascene. Here is a clue: perhaps it will be to the advantage of the