

Symposium.

WHAT MAY BE DONE FOR THE MUTUAL APPROACH OF CHRISTIANS OF DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS.

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A careful reading of Dr. Scrimger's able article in the November number of THE JOURNAL awakened the unpleasant consciousness that he had so thoroughly covered the ground proposed in the question before us, that whatever I have to say must largely be a repetition of his wisely taken position. He has anticipated nearly everything which I had intended to suggest. And when I remember that a second contribution to this symposium will be made before my article appears, I feel entitled to the patient forbearance of my readers, if they find little that is fresh in the line of thought now pursued. The very terms of this symposium suggest an exceedingly unpalatable truth. That the Church of Christ is to-day separated into fragments, and that a mutual approach is most desirable, will be denied by no one who possesses the most elementary acquaintance with facts. How far the Church has departed, in consequence, from the New Testament ideal, it is unnecessary to indicate at length. One may say in the words of a recent article in the *Christian Union*:

"Christ taught nothing more clearly than that his Church was to be one—not a set of *dissecta membra*, but a true spiritual organism: a vine with branches, a body with head and arms and feet, a husband and wife joined together in a mystical unity—these are the figures by which the New Testament represents the Church of Christ." Contrast the facts, as they come under our daily observation, with the Saviour's prayer in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel according to John, and one must be humiliated and pained.

I have had the honor to serve as a village pastor. One of the results of my experience in small places, is the development of an intense dislike for sectarianism. Six Protestant churches, in a town of 2,000, did not stand for Christian life and growth only, but also for bitterness, mutual distrust, and the retarding of the progress of the Master's kingdom. To have a work of grace suddenly arrested, in its glorious development, by reason of the jealousy of smaller churches of the probably large accession to the membership of