

no divided churches. The churches were Roman, Corinthian, Galatian, Ephesian, Thessalonian, &c., but not Calvinistic or Armenian or Socinian or Episcopalian or Presbyterian or Baptist. The apostles never taught the possibility of any number of people being of one opinion or set of opinions, or of founding a church upon such an absurd supposition. It would be as absurd as to raise an orchard upon the condition that the trees should be the same size, or sow a field and expect the stalks to grow to the same height. The exercise of private judgment—the necessary condition of enlightenment and the glory and the safe-guard of our Protestant liberties—must always lead to diversity of opinion, and so there were parties *within* the primitive churches established in various countries. These produced, however, not separations, but *disputation*, for the proper management of which the Scripture makes ample provision and supplies manifold counsel. But the Scripture makes no specific provision for the removing of separation; for that implies a state which it does not recognize as consistent with Christianity. [Puseyite and Romish Unity, and non-recognition of any church but one, contain in them a true notion and preach to the reflecting mind a noble and a true ideal.] We must, then, invent a word, and “Union” means making into one churches which have become improperly separated. It means the separation of an unlawful branch. It means making churches one in administration, which have been so separated as to have lost that common instinct and sympathy which are akin to Christianity; and the new word cherishes a modern disgrace, and the thing denotes a new remedy for a new disease. The only scriptural remedy for dis-union is the same as for any other crime—natural repentance and reformation.

Who should repent? Those who have sinned. But who have sinned in such a case? This is a question which would require more casuistry than it would be profitable now to bestow upon it. As respects the causes which have led to modern separations, it has been with parties as it usually is with persons. There have invariably been faults on both sides—either upon the main dis-

pute or upon the mode of conducting the dispute, and generally upon both. In the case of long quarrels between individuals, it is well known how difficult it often is to devolve the blame upon the proper party. The history of the quarrel is generally a labyrinth in which it is neither pleasant nor safe to wander. The truth is often as hard to reach as the way out. If the parties were to make reconciliation rest upon an accurate re-measurement of responsibility, upon an exact apportionment of blame, peace would become a moral impossibility. Society would be torn to pieces and strife perpetual. Frowns in the world would take the place of smiles, and the waters of Marah flow forever. The general mode of adjustment is to wait an auspicious moment when sorrow or calamity has wept the fire down to cold ashes, and, upon the ground of common frailty, common suffering, and common sins, bury the past, and upon the fresh earth of its new made grave grow the sweet olive of peace.

If it be difficult to settle the merits of disputes between persons—even with a court for the purpose, it is impossible between parties, where there is no court for the purpose. Among bodies of men there are all diversities of responsibility. Some are more and some less culpable. As to the general question in dispute, and the merits of contending parties and individuals composing them, public opinion is the only judge. Nations appeal to arms and the sword decides by power. At first the best fighter is supposed to have the best case till time takes its revenges and the wheel of Providence comes full circle. This was once the fashion in civil disputes, and desolating civil wars were the consequence, till in civilized nations men learned that wisdom which they are only now learning in the church—the wisdom of reforming, not overturning constitutions—of not dividing into hostile camps, but of working together until the efforts of both produce a state in which the evils of which both complain shall have been removed. No doubt there is a right and a wrong in the general question between two church parties; but God only can adjust the beam accurately, and who art thou that judgest another man's servant? Public opinion will make the attempt.