

If, upon such pretences, the government of a country could be altered, and new laws and authorities set up at pleasure in its room, how lamentable would be the result? If the relation of husband and wife could, on such grounds, be severed, what terrible calamities would ensue? These are very analogous cases; and we could not, without inconsistency, draw a line between them.

We have, in fact, positive proofs before our eyes every day of the evils and misfortunes which contempt of this great principle of the Divine organization of the Church brings about. It leads a large body of men into actual infidelity; because, they argue, a Divine institution could hardly present so many contradictions, so much division, so much strife. Again, when Christians are mainly intent upon their divisions; when rival bodies are engaged in watching each other; while they are seeking and striving how they may best guard their separate interests against the encroachments of others; little time is left, and little inclination, for the cultivation of practical religion. The contest, therefore, is no longer one with acknowledged and common adversaries, but a strife between Christian bodies. It is not how the common enemy of the faith may be subdued, but how an ambitious and encroaching Christian rival may be put down. It is not how the Lord's kingdom may be advanced, but how a religious sect or party may be built up.

Such dissensions, my brethren, are in every point of view most sad; and it is a blessed thing that we have a refuge from them in that which we can safely and truthfully call the Church of the Apostles, the Church of the living God. It was, no doubt, in foresight of their mischievous effects, that St. Paul said, "Mark them which cause divisions among you, and avoid them;" and that a greater than St. Paul, even our Lord Jesus Christ, prayed that His followers might be "all one."