

both these assumptions are incorrect. Not all rivalries are evil. If the rivalries between the churches were governed by a purely Christian spirit, they would be a help and not a hindrance. And the consolidation or the federation of the existing ecclesiastical bodies would not necessarily either extinguish or purify all rivalries. The emulations between the different congregations or the different parties in the same Church are just as likely to be mischievous as those between different churches.

In fine, the present lack of the perfect manifestation of the unity of the Church is a reason why we should be ashamed, and a reason why we should study the problem, and seek a remedy; but we gain nothing by exaggerating the evil, and we gain nothing by urging haphazard remedies. Even the stock instance of the multiplying of small churches in a community, though bad enough, is not entirely one-sided. The cases are not few in which the planting of an additional church in a neighborhood develops and strengthens, instead of weakening, the local religious resources. And on any theory, federation is not to be urged as a remedy for existing evils, except in such directions and so far as it is really likely to prove to be indeed a remedy, and not an aggravation.

II. The problem of unity by federation is but a part of a larger problem, and should be considered in its connection with the other parts. If we treat it as though it were altogether a new and separate question, we shall be misled.

Protestantism had its origin in a state of things in which men were compelled to choose between loyalty to the truth and loyalty to existing church organizations. The inevitable result was external separation not into two organizations, merely, but into many organizations. But loyalty to the truth is a centripetal force, as well as a centrifugal. Whenever, under the stress of this force, an old unity is broken up, it is that a better unity may be formed. The pull toward the better unity begins the instant the old unity is broken. From the beginning, the Protestant bodies, even when their conflicts were most violent, have regretted their divisions, and made efforts to realize the higher unity that comes from common loyalty to the truth. There has been much of this in Europe, and perhaps more of it in America. The early persecutions in New England owe their celebrity to the fact that they were exceptional; the truly representative fact in the case is the fact that Independents, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and others went together into the New England Congregational churches. In the eighteenth century, the Presbyterians of Great Britain were doing much missionary work in America, largely through the churches that centred around Boston. All such favors Congregationalism repaid with interest, early in the nineteenth century, when it turned over its churches in central and western New York to the Presbyte-