

That which gives life to churches is not their diversities of government, of worship, or of discipline, but that "most holy faith" which is common to them all. Their life and their vigour are not in their garb, whether black or white, but in the heart that lies beneath it. The vitality of a church comes not from below, but from above, from heaven, and from the throne on which the Saviour reigns. If there are many members in a church who esteem the things beneath, in respect to which Christians differ, more than the things above, in which they agree, this disregard of heavenly things cannot but be avenged: the spirit of life in Christ Jesus will be dissipated; it will vanish, and leave but the lifeless body,—the form alone will remain. To contribute to such a state of things is a transgression against the Church.

Often already in Christendom has a too exclusive attachment to some point of doctrine, or of worship, caused serious injury to the church. The controversy on the period of Easter began this sad series of disputes. The question on the words "*Filioque*" separated the Eastern and Western Churches. The doctrine of the Ubiquity of the Christ, and of the Real Presence in the Supper, rent in two the Church of the Reformation. Doubtless, there exist in the Church certain divergent tendencies, which are salutary; and it is even desirable, that these divergent influences should have a certain development within it. But the time approaches when these contrary tendencies should cease. To a divergent march a convergent march should succeed. If the host deploys beyond what is necessary, weakness must be the consequence. It may be right that the ships of a fleet, in the day of battle, should remove a little from each other, and take open order, that they may have sea-room for their movements, and occupy their proper appointed posi-

tion; but they ought not to move off without limitation, and scatter themselves north and south at random. They should concentrate at last for the crisis of the fight, and direct all their fire in combination on the common enemy.

When two old friends, or brothers, have been long alienated about some small matter, is it not their duty to acknowledge, that it was a miserable trifle that separated them, and that it behoves them to renounce their folly, and their ridiculous irritability, and fall again into each other's arms? In purblindness of their anger, the petty cause of it looked like a mountain; now it is but a mouse.

*Parturiunt montes; nascetur ridiculus mus.*

You are aware that we have in Switzerland a sad civil war. Brothers war with brothers; and *we* weep and pray. It has been said more than once, that, if other Powers should interfere, as France or Austria, it would soon end the civil war; for that then all the Swiss would unite against the common enemy, to save their common country. I know not that this would be the case, but I am sure that it ought to be. Well, then, should it not be so with Christians, and with Christian Churches? In the face of a two-fold enemy, Popery on the one hand, and Infidelity on the other, should not Evangelical Christians abandon the *casus belli* which has previously existed between them, in order to preserve the common faith? Let each establish himself afresh on the one foundation, which is Christ. Let each replunge himself in the baptism of his regeneration. Let each drink again of that spiritual Rock, which is Christ. Let each appreciate, with a more rigid equity, the differences which separate him from his brethren. I am avowedly an enemy of indifference in religion. But there is a holy, a sublime indifference about trifles, which is approved of God.