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FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

CAUSES OF DIVISION IN THE CHURCH
AND PROSPECTS OF UNITY.

Sacred history makes known to us that at a very early period of the church, and even when it was under apostolic superintendence, it began to be agitated with discordant sentiments, and violent contentions. Strife and debate arose even within those sacred precincts where the gospel of peace had shed its light and soothing influence on the darkened understandings and warring passions of such as owned obedience to the faith, and who were united in the bands of a love that never faileth. It would appear, at least in reference to the Christian community in Corinth,* that these disputes originated from an undue partiality in different parties each to

their favorite teacher—a too frequent cause of schism in the body of Christ during all its subsequent history. “One admired the plainness and the purity of Paul’s doctrine; another was charmed with the eloquence of Apollos: one professed adherence to Cephas on account of his greater veneration for Jewish ceremonies; and another prided himself on his superiority to human teachers, and professed to be a follower of Christ alone, perhaps because he belonged to the church of Jerusalem, and had seen Christ in the flesh.” These were certainly in themselves harmless partialities. Such predilections seem to be unavoidable, constituted as human nature is, in a society of persons whose capacities, acquirements and tastes are unequal and various. We cannot perceive that there was aught morally wrong in one man, who perhaps

*See Epistles to the Corinthians, passim.