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*J. Addison Alexander*

- ART. I.—1. Ernesti Friderici Caroli Rosenmülleri *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum*. 20 vols. 8vo. Leipzig: 1788—1829.
2. *Handbuch der biblischen Alterthumskunde*. Von Ernst Friedrich Karl Rosenmüller Vols. I.—IV. Leipzig: 1828—1830.

THESE are the titles of the two most important works of the late Professor Rosenmüller, neither of which was finished when he died. The name of this writer is at present so familiar to the scholars of America, that a brief sketch of his life and writings cannot be utterly devoid of interest. To those who know what the life of a laborious German scholar is, we need not say that his biography will exhibit little more than a chronological list of his publications.

This distinguished orientalist and biblical critic is often called *the younger Rosenmüller*, in order to distinguish him from his father, who was also an eminent Professor in the same University, and a labourer of note in the same general field, though in another subdivision of it. John George Rosenmüller, the father, born in 1736, was successively Professor of Theology in three Universities, Erlangen, Giessen, Leipzig. His local reputation, as a preacher and an ecclesiastical functionary, was extremely high; but his

doubt that his experience, sobered judgment, and accurate information as to what was wanted, would have made the compendium better than the work at large. But the work exhibits obvious marks of juvenility, and though there is undoubtedly abridgement as to matter, the style is actually more diffuse than in the Scholia themselves. If this is to be charged upon Rosenmüller himself, it can only be ascribed to an increased scrupulosity in Latin composition; and a servile ambition to be classical at all points. The fault which we have mentioned is not equally apparent in all parts of the new work, but so far as we have examined, it exists throughout. Wherever it does appear, it is offensive; for of all possible books, a compendious commentary is the very last place for verbosity and verbiage. Nevertheless, the book is useful, and may well be recommended till we get a better. That this last contingency may speedily be realized, and that German exposition may no longer be inseparable from our Hebrew Bibles, we devoutly pray. We have entered so much into detail respecting Rosenmüller's works, that any general survey would be superfluous. With respect to his life, we have stated what we know. Others who have better or later information can supply our chasms. In person, Rosenmüller was above the common size, with prominent features, and an inexpressive face. Some natural impediment or infirmity of speech is said to have disqualified him, in a great degree, for oral teaching. As a lecturer, therefore, he had little influence; but this very circumstance no doubt contributed to his success as a book-maker, and his general reputation.

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*Samuel Miller*

ART. II.—*Christian Union; or an Argument for the abolition of Sects.* By Abraham Van Dyck, Counsellor at Law. New York: Appleton and Co. 12mo. pp. 227.

THIS appears to be the work of a pious intelligent lawyer, who was removed by death a few weeks before it issued from the press. It is dedicated to "the Reverend *David Abeel*, American missionary to South Eastern Asia;" and breathes, throughout, a spirit of fervent attachment to the honour and kingdom of the Redeemer. No one, we think, can peruse this volume without receiving an impression of profound

respect for the piety and benevolence of the author. And while we suppose it impossible for a judicious mind to adopt all his views and anticipations; we are still willing to believe that what he has written cannot be read without some profit. His apparent soundness in the faith; his zeal for the honour and spread of true religion; and the animating hope which he cherishes of the speedy union of all who bear the Christian name, can scarcely fail of warming the heart of every reader who wishes well to the progress of the religion of Christ in our revolted world.

We do not differ from our author as to the desirableness and importance of "Christian Union." If the *invisible* Church consists of all those, throughout the world, who are united to Christ by faith and love; and if the *visible* Church consists of all those, also in every part of the world, who profess the true religion, together with their children, it must, in the very nature of things, be, that each is *one*. All *real* Christians belong to the former. All *professing* Christians belong to the latter. Now as there is but *one Christ*, and but *one true religion*, it is manifest that the "body of Christ" can be but *one*. We, *being many*, says the apostle, *are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*. Again, he asks, *The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ. For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. Now ye*, adds he, in the same epistle, *are the body of Christ, and members in particular*.

Of course this unity, though in a sad degree marred, is not wholly broken by diversity of denomination. All who profess the true religion, however divided by place, by names, or by form, are to be considered as equally belonging to that great family denominated the Church. The Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Baptist, the Episcopalian, the Independent, who hold the fundamentals of our holy religion, and who, of course, "hold the Head," in whatever part of the globe they may reside, are equally members of the same visible community; and, if they be sincere in their profession, will all finally be made partakers of its eternal blessings. And the more closely they hold the "unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace" and love, the more decidedly they are *ONE*, and one in a sense more richly significant and precious than can be ascribed to millions who boast of a mere external and nominal union. They have one Head, one hope, one baptism; they "all eat the same spiritual meat, they all

drink the same spiritual drink," and will assuredly all meet in the same heavenly family. They cannot all meet together in the same sanctuary here below, even if they were disposed to do so; but this is not the worst. They are not all disposed thus to meet. They are not all *willing to acknowledge one another* as fellow-members of the same body. Yet, in spite of this blindness and infatuation in regard to their own relation to each other, they are still one, in a sense, and to a degree, of which they themselves are not conscious.

We also concur with the author of the work before us in our estimate of the sin and mischief of every measure which is unfriendly to this unity, or which tends to make "a schism in the body." "Nothing," says the eloquent *Robert Hall*, "more abhorrent from the principles and maxims of the sacred oracles can be conceived, than the idea of a plurality of true churches, neither in actual communion with each other, nor in a capacity for such communion. Though this rending of the seamless body of our Saviour, this schism in the members of his mystical body, is by far the greatest calamity which has befallen the Christian interest, and one of the most fatal effects of the great apostacy foretold by the sacred penmen, we have been so long familiarized to it, as to be scarcely sensible of its enormity; nor does it excite surprize or concern in any degree proportioned to what would be felt by one who had contemplated the Church in the first ages. Christian societies regarding each other with the jealousies of rival empires, each aiming to raise itself on the ruin of all others, making extravagant boasts of superior purity, generally in exact proportion to their departures from it, and scarcely deigning to acknowledge the possibility of obtaining salvation out of their pale, is the odious and disgusting spectacle which modern Christianity presents. The evils which result from this state of division are incalculable. It supplies infidels with their most plausible topics of invective; it hardens the consciences of the irreligious; it weakens the hands of the good, impedes the efficacy of prayer, and is, probably, the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of the Spirit which is essential to the renovation of the world."\* In all this we heartily concur, and wish it were duly impressed on every mind in Christendom.

We of course, too, agree with our author in all the earnest wishes expressed by him for the perfect restoration of the unity

\* HALL'S Works. Vol. I. p. 289.

of the Church. To every Christian heart, the anticipation of that blessing is unspeakably delightful. *Behold, how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard; even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.* Yes, when the time shall come, as assuredly it will come—when the followers of Christ shall *all speak the same thing*;—when there shall be *no divisions among them*; but when *they shall be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment*;—then every beholder will be satisfied that it is a blessing worth all the labour and importunate prayer which can be employed for its attainment.

But when Mr. Van Dyke proceeds to the consideration of the great problem, how the “Union,” for which he pleads, is to be brought about, and how difficulties which stand in the way are to be obviated, we cannot adopt either his confidence, or what we understand to be his plans. He seems indeed, in a great measure to overlook the fact, that although the preservation of peace and harmony among professing Christians is precious, and ought never to have been interrupted; yet that the great interests of *truth and righteousness* are still more indispensably precious. He seems, though he professes the contrary, not to have had an adequate impression of the character of that “wisdom which is from above, which is **FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE.**” If we are not deceived, we desire to see the unity of the church of Christ perfectly realized, in all its beauty and power, as much as our author ever did, and as much as any of his most sanguine friends can do. Yet we could not, in conscience, recommend that all denominations of Christians, who profess to hold the fundamentals of religion, in present circumstances, and with their present views, convictions, habits and feelings, should throw down all the fences which separate them from one another, and unite all their heterogeneous materials under one name, and one organization. Even if that name and organization were our own, the proposal would still be revolting to our judgment. We should regard such an event with entire disapprobation, for the following reasons.

1. If the individuals composing this multifarious, united

mass, came together without any alteration of opinion or conviction; each entertaining his own former sentiments on all the points of doctrine and order which once separated them, and still resolving to unite, at every sacrifice, however vital, for the sake of a nominal and formal union;—what could be expected from such a dishonest coalition, but a curse instead of a blessing? Every attempt to reconcile differences among professing Christians, which involves the relinquishment of truth; or a compromise with important corruption, either in doctrine or worship; or giving countenance to what is deemed an injurious departure from what Christ has commanded, is, undoubtedly, criminal and mischievous. We are commanded to hold “fast the form of sound words” which we have received; nay, to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;” and, no doubt, one great purpose for which a visible church was founded in our world, was that it might preserve pure and entire all such religious truth, worship and ordinances as God hath revealed and appointed in his word; that it might bear a faithful testimony against the introduction of error, by whomsoever attempted, into “the household of faith.” If so, to surrender any essential part of the trust committed to it, for the sake of peace, is to make a sacrifice which the word of God forbids. We are required “*as much as in us lies* to live peaceably with all men.” But there are those with whom we cannot live in peace without offending our Master in heaven.

2. Let us suppose, however, the case to be different; and then an objection equally strong against the union which seems to be contemplated, immediately presents itself. Let us suppose that the members of all the various denominations which agree to come together, do so under the impression that all their diversities of doctrine and order, as long as they do not affect the fundamentals of religion, strictly so called, are of no account, and ought not to forbid the most intimate union. What would be the natural effect of their settling down on this principle? Would it not be to discourage the study of Christian truth; to take away a large part of their interest in “searching the scriptures;” and to terminate, at a stroke, all that “contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,” to which we just referred, as an expressly commanded Christian duty? We can scarcely conceive of any thing more adapted to take off the minds of men from discriminating views of truth, and thus gradually to undermine enlightened piety, than unreserved

union upon such principles. Show us a people, by whatever name they may be called, who, in regard to doctrine, content themselves with vague generalities;—who are equally satisfied with Calvinistic, Arminian, and Pelagian preaching; and who think it wrong to make any difficulty, or even inquiry, respecting the theological opinions of him who is called to minister to them in holy things, and we will engage to show you a people of small and crude knowledge; of superficial piety; and liable to be “carried about by every wind of doctrine,” and the “cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive.” Almost every chapter of our pious author shows, that, while he pleads for union with all who hold truth enough to become instrumental in saving the soul, he would have been himself altogether out of his element in listening to any other instruction than that which accorded with the precious system of free grace through the atoning sacrifice of our divine Redeemer. But, after all,

3. Supposing that such a union of all Christian denominations could be attained, without any dishonest sacrifice, and without any immediate mischief: *what would be the benefit of it?* What *solid good* would result from it, either to the body, or to the individuals who might compose it? Would mere coming together produce genuine Christian affection? Would those who were thus drawn together, necessarily, or even probably, love one another the more? We have no doubt that the profound and pious Dr. *Owen*, the learned Independent, spoke the truth on this subject, when he said, “I should be very sorry that any man living should outgo me in desires that all who fear God, throughout the world, especially in these nations, were of one way, as well as of one heart. I know that I desire it sincerely. But I do verily believe, that when God shall accomplish it, it will be the *effect* of love, not the *cause* of love. It will *proceed from* love, before it *brings forth* love. There is not a greater vanity in the world than to drive men into a particular profession, and then suppose that love will be the necessary consequence of it; to think that if, by sharp rebukes, by cutting, bitter expressions, they can but drive men into such and such practices, love will certainly ensue.” If half a dozen families should be drawn, by ardent attachment to each other, to take up their abode together in the same spacious mansion, they *might* live together in peace and comfort, because the previously existing affection which drew them together, would dispose them to overlook, or, at any

rate, to surmount, many of the difficulties of their new situation. But what man in his senses would think of prevailing on the same number of families, hitherto strangers to each other, and with no decisive congeniality of feeling, to abandon their separate dwellings, and all come under the same roof? If he were a thinking man, and at all instructed by experience, he would expect to find their peace, their real enjoyment, destroyed, instead of increased, by their local and nominal union. The fact is, Christian union in *name* and *outward form* is worthless, unless the spirit of Christian love accompany and pervade it. The nearer different denominations approach to each other without this, the more apt they will be to quarrel and fight. We have no doubt that one great feature of the "latter day glory" will be that the "watchmen on the walls of Zion," and the great mass of the people of God, will all "see eye to eye," and walk together in the love of God, and in the consolations of the Holy Ghost. But this harmony will be produced and maintained by love. Love will pervade the world, binding all its inhabitants together, and, *therefore*, all will "speak the same thing," and walk together in peace and concord. We hope that some now alive will see the day when all the different classes of Presbyterians in the United States, whether of the Dutch Church, the German Reformed, the Associate, the Associate Reformed, and the Reformed Presbyterians, shall be united with those of the General Assembly. In what manner it will be accomplished, whether by our joining *them*, or their joining *us*, we cannot predict; nor do we care; provided the great interests of truth and holiness be secured in the union. But we must say, that if it were now proposed by any one to commence a system of measures for bringing about such an event at once, we should be found in the *opposition*; not, of course, from unfriendliness to the object ultimately aimed at; but from a deep persuasion that none of the parties are yet ready to unite; that if they could be prevailed upon to come together, at present, it would be a calamity instead of a blessing; and that no union worth attaining can ever be formed, until all the parties shall be actuated by such a spirit of love, that they can no longer be kept apart. Then, and not till then, will their union be a real blessing; and *then* arguments and importunity to unite, will be wholly unnecessary.

One of the great boasts of the Romish Church is that it is *one*. It reproaches Protestants as broken up into sects,



wholly inconsistent with unity; while it claims for itself to be a perfectly united body; and lays great stress on this alleged union, as one of the indubitable marks of the only true Church. But to what, after all, does their union amount? Is there more of real, Christian, scriptural unity among the Papists than among other denominations who bear the Christian name? Nay, is there any thing like as much? We utterly deny it. There may be more verbal, nominal, technical unity among them than among most branches of the Protestant body; that is, there may be more verbal acknowledgement of a kind of deified individual; more general agreement in praising and wondering after a human idol; more fixed staring of all eyes at the great central seat of idolatry, and of unhallowed dispensations. But is there more knowledge of the truth among them? more love of the truth? more love of one another? more love to the Saviour? more holy concurrence in honouring his law, his atoning blood, his justifying righteousness, his life-giving Spirit? Is there more enlightened, spiritual communion of saints, with their living Head, and with one another? Is there more of what the Scriptures denominate, all "eating the same spiritual meat, and all drinking the same spiritual drink?" This is the "unity of the spirit" which the Bible describes, and which alone either deserves the name, or is adapted really to bind the family of Christ together. Have the Papists more of this than the Protestants, whom they so studiously vilify? Let those judge who know what the Papacy is. This claim, like all their other claims, is founded in falsehood and deception. There is far more real Bible unity among many bodies of Protestants, with all their apparent discord, than among the members of that much larger family, who are forever boasting that they exceed all others in Christian unity, because they are all equally related by name to the "man of sin," the "son of perdition," who shall be consumed with the breath of the Saviour's mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming!"

4. But we would go one step further. Not only do we believe that different denominations of Christians would find *no real advantage* in uniting, until they shall be drawn and bound together by such a spirit of love, as will make their union a source of pleasure and edification; but we are persuaded, that, as matters now stand, there are many advantages resulting both to themselves and to the civil community, from their remaining in a state of separation from each other. We

hope that in attempting to maintain this position, we shall not be misunderstood. We consider every schism in the body of Christ as a sin; and of course, can never commend or rejoice in it, in itself considered. But is it a new doctrine that the infinitely wise, and Almighty Governor of the world, continually overrules error, and even atrocious crimes, for good? That what ought never to have happened; yet, having happened, in the adorable providence of God—is often so bounded, controlled and disposed of as to result in much benefit on the whole? *Surely the wrath of man shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain.*

If man were what he ought to be, it would be a great happiness to the world, if all Europe were one mighty monarchy. For then there would be one system of laws; one equitable, consistent mode of treating all mercantile and other sojourners; one uniform circulating medium over the whole continent. But taking man as he is, what a misfortune would it be to the world, if one such great overpowering empire governed that whole quarter of the globe! What systematic and wide-spread oppression would afflict the human family! Every other portion of the world would be held in terror. How the matter actually stood when our supposition was, many centuries ago, in a considerable degree, realized, all know who have any acquaintance with history. As it is, there are *many* powerful monarchies on that continent, which balance each other's power; which keep one another in check; and thus make it the interest of all to be mutually respectful, equitable and accommodating. It is true, these rival monarchies are often involved in painful and offensive conflicts. Their pride, their avarice, and their various hateful passions, lead to scenes of strife and war of the most revolting character. These are highly criminal, no doubt, and deeply to be deplored. But they are less evils than the unquestioned and gloomy reign of a giant tyranny, brooding over a continent; without check or balance;—without any even to say "what doest thou?"

A similar train of thought may be indulged with respect to the actual divisions in the Church of God. They *ought* never to have happened. They *never would* have happened had it not been for the pride, the prejudices, the selfishness, and the ambition of depraved man. They were sinful in the outset. They are sinful still. There is more or less sin in their daily continuance. Yet all this may be so, and it may, notwithstanding, be certain and manifest that the Almighty King

of Zion is continually bringing good out of them. They exercise a watch and care over one another analagous to that which is exercised over each other by the members of the same church. They superintend, and, to a considerable extent, influence the movements of each other. They produce in each other, in various ways, a salutary watchfulness and emulation. Who does not know that the presence and influence of Protestants, when residing in large numbers, and bearing a respectable character, within the bosom of communities predominately Roman Catholic, have been visible, though not often in converting, yet always, in more or less, restraining and purifying the corrupt mass around them? Who can doubt that the Bible is more studied than it would otherwise be when rival denominations search its pages, day and night, to find support for their respective creeds and claims? Who needs to be told that the amicable efforts and struggles of different sects to maintain their peculiar opinions, have served to keep the world awake and active, and to prevent religious society from sinking into a stagnant and pestiferous apathy? There is every reason to believe that the established Church of *Scotland*, ever since the rise of the Secession body in that country, has been materially benefitted, in various ways, by the zeal, the strictness, and the exemplary piety which generally characterized the Seceders. And Dr. *John Edwards*, a learned Divine of the established Church of *England*, expressly declares, that—“If we would but open our eyes, we should see that we are beholden to the Dissenters for the continuance of a great part of our theological principles:—for if the High Churchmen had no checks, they would have brought in Popery before this time by their overvaluing pomp and ceremony in divine worship. So that if there had been no Dissenters, the Church of England had been long since ruined.” *Preacher*, II. p. 133.

Mr. Van Dyck, after urging union among Christians by the usual popular topics, which are, on the whole, well exhibited, and always with pious earnestness and ardour;—proceeds to answer *objections*. Accordingly, he takes up in order, and attempts to dispose of the objections against his scheme drawn from six sources—as “1. That, if the proposed union should take place, the *benefit of emulation* would be lost. 2. That it would involve a *sacrifice of principle* to unite with Christians who have not the same faith. 3. That divers denominations are necessary to *preserve the purity of doctrine*. 4. That divers denominations are necessary to

operate to advantage upon all classes of the people. 5. The danger of uniting church and state. 6. That if sects were abolished, the Church would soon be again divided." In reply to all these objections our author writes with unabated fluency, ardour and confidence; but in several cases, we must say, by no means to our satisfaction. Some of these objections, we acknowledge, are not very formidable in their import; but in regard to others, we are far from being as sanguine as Mr. Van Dyck, that they can be easily set aside. For example, what he says on the *first* objection, viz. that, "if the proposed union of all sects should take place, the benefit of *emulation* would be lost," appears to us of little weight. We are not prepared, with some, to condemn all *emulation* as criminal. If we do not mistake, the inspired *Paul*, in more than one or two places, in his Epistles to the Churches, tries to impel Christians to increased zeal and diligence in duty by setting before them what others had done, and expressing reluctance that others should outdo them in laudable zeal and effort. *Emulation*, we suppose, like *anger*, is *lawful* or *wicked*, according to circumstances, and according to its character. The greater part of the emulation in our world, we take for granted, is unhallowed and utterly indefensible. And even the greater part of that which exists and operates among professing Christians, we feel willing to unite in condemning, as corrupt in its origin, and corrupt in its exercise. But what then? We ask again, Is it a new thing for sin to be overruled for good? Can any man who has eyes to see, and ears to hear, doubt that different denominations of Christians have been impelled to make efforts, and to accomplish an amount of labour which would by no means have been attempted, if the presence and efforts of rival sects had not operated as a continual excitement? Condemn the motive and welcome. You have, in many cases, a right to do so. But we are so happy as to live under the government of Zion's Almighty King, who can bring good out of evil, and light out of darkness. The inspired apostle seems, as we understand him, to have felt and argued thus. *Some indeed, says he, preach Christ, even of envy and strife, and some also of good will. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, I will rejoice.* Now it is evidently no part of our duty to wish that unhallowed tempers may be indulged, because infinite wisdom and power can and does bring good out of them. But if we see

plainly, that one hundred thousand Christians, divided into *four parts*, will accomplish, and are accomplishing, *four*, if not *ten times as much* as the same number *would* accomplish if externally united, supposing the united body to have the same amount of *real piety* with the *best portion* of the divided body; we say, if this be manifest, while we ought to mourn over every thing unhallowed both in the separation and in the exercises of the respective divisions, we may surely rejoice, as the apostle did, in the general result; and pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, that every thing, inconsistent with the will of God, may be taken out of the way.

But we are, if possible, still less satisfied with the manner in which our author disposes of the *second* objection, viz: "That it would involve a *sacrifice of principle* to unite with Christians who have not the *same faith*." We are quite ready to concede that there are doctrinal differences among Christians which ought not to keep them apart; and that even some doctrinal differences not destitute of *importance*, but short of *fundamental*, are entirely consistent with affectionate ecclesiastical communion. But still, when we find Mr. Van Dyck, after insisting on this—appearing to find no further difficulty, and to consider his argument as triumphantly made out, we must say, that thereat we do greatly marvel. The consideration of a single case, we think, demolishes all that he has advanced in support of this theory, and demonstrates that his plan is not feasible. A pious, conscientious *Baptist* fully coincides in his doctrinal belief with a pious, orthodox Presbyterian. They can listen to the same public instruction with cordial pleasure, and unite in the same prayers with unmingled fervour of devotion. In regard to all these things they are one in spirit, and could, without any sacrifice, be one in name and form. But the Baptist conscientiously believes that no baptism is valid but that which is administered to adults, and by immersion. He would be glad to be united with his Presbyterian brother whom he "loves in the truth," and to sit down with him at the same sacramental table. But he is prevented by a conscientious scruple which he can by no means dismiss. He verily believes that the Presbyterian is not a baptised man; and, of course, according to his view of truth and duty, he cannot commune with him. On the other hand, the Presbyterian has equally serious and immoveable scruples. For although he has no doubt that his Baptist friend is a truly

baptized man, and can, therefore, without hesitation, admit him to occasional communion at his sacramental table; yet he is deeply persuaded that the Baptist doctrine and practice by which infants are shut out from all membership and privileges in the Church of Christ, are not merely unscriptural, and, of course, wrong; but amount to a most serious and mischievous error. He is honestly convinced not only that the Baptist system in relation to this point is contrary to Scripture; but also that its native tendency is to place children, who are the hope of the Church, in a situation less friendly to the welfare of Zion, and less favourable, by far, to their own salvation, than that in which they are placed by the Poedo-baptist system; and that its ultimate influence on the rising generation, on family religion, and on the growth and purity of the Church, must be deeply injurious. We ask, what is to be done in this case? It is evident there can be no compromise here, if the sincere and solemn convictions of each party be such as we have supposed. And yet such cases exist in great numbers, at the present hour. What would be the consequence if large bodies of Christian professors, thus differing, were to attempt to unite in a church-state! Could they commune together? Every one sees that it would be impossible. The Baptist could not indulge, however strongly his inclination might plead for it, even in occasional communion, with his Presbyterian friend, without relinquishing a deeply conscientious conviction, not about a speculative, but a practical matter. And even the Presbyterian, though not restrained from occasional communion with his Baptist friend, could not possibly unite with him in a regular church-state, without abandoning principles which he regarded as vitally important to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. Upon the plan of Mr. Van Dyck, we should be utterly non-plussed by such a difficulty. And yet we see not but that such difficulties must present themselves at every turn, in attempting to carry into execution the plan for which our author so earnestly pleads. But we have not room further to pursue the train of his reasoning.

When we first heard of the publication and character of the work before us, we were forcibly reminded of a hero in the same vocation, who flourished about a hundred and seventy or eighty years ago; who devoted more than half his life assiduously to the benevolent enterprize; and whose want of success, we fear, is destined to be again exemplified in the case of the benevolent American, labouring in the same

field. We refer to the celebrated *John Dury*, a native of *Scotland*, who was born about the beginning of the seventeenth century, and who, from 1631 to 1674, was constantly and laboriously engaged in bringing about a general pacification and union throughout the Protestant world. He devoted himself to this object with an ardour and a perseverance altogether without a parallel. He seems to have been an honest, amiable, pious, and learned man; but by no means remarkable for the soundness of his judgment. He conceived the plan of uniting all the Lutherans and Reformed in one great body. For this purpose he laboriously travelled through every Protestant country of Europe; wrote letters; personally addressed the clergy and the people of both communions; persuaded, entreated, warned, and, by every variety of means, exerted himself to terminate the strife and conflicts of Protestants, and to bring them all together under one general name and form. He took unwearied pains to engage in this enterprize, kings, princes and magistrates, as well as ecclesiastical dignitaries, and all others whom he could approach. Archbishop *Laud* at first approved and recommended his plan; but afterwards threw difficulties in his way; intending, it would appear, to use him only as far, and as long, as he thought he could employ him as an instrument for promoting prelacy. Bishop *Hall* also, and bishop *Beddell*, gave him and his enterprize their countenance and recommendation, in the beginning of his career; but how long they continued to encourage him is not known. Mr. *Dury* was bred a Presbyterian, and received, in early life, Presbyterian ordination. He was a member of the *Westminster* Assembly of Divines, and signed the *Solemn League and Covenant*. But was prevailed upon, on the principle that it might facilitate the attainment of his grand object, to submit to a re-ordination in the Church of England. He spent more than forty years in this benevolent enterprize; travelled again and again, with wonderful perseverance, throughout Great Britain and Ireland, and from one end to the other of the continent of Europe; consulted Universities, and when their answers were favourable, communicated them to the public. He published himself more than twenty books; some in Latin, for circulation throughout the continent, and others in English. After making, for many years, the union of all the Reformed and the Lutheran Churches his professed object, he extended his views, and seemed to think the union of *all professing Christians* practicable! He alleged, and

endeavoured to convince those whom he addressed, that all who could agree to receive the *Apostle's Creed*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Ten Commandments*, ought to be united in one family. And finally, appearing to adopt the opinion, that all religion consisted in certain mystical feelings, which might be found in connection with almost any and every form of doctrinal belief, he seemed to consider scarcely any diversity of opinion as a sufficient ground for separation.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that Mr. *Dury*, in this enthusiasm of liberality, found few enlightened and respectable adherents. The majority of those who favoured his plan belonged to the Reformed Churches. The great mass of the Lutheran body opposed him throughout, and many of them with warmth and even violence. *John Matthiæ* and *George Calixtus* were almost the only conspicuous Lutheran divines who fell in with his plan, and appeared as its advocates. On the whole, there can be no doubt that *Dury's* enterprize rather increased alienation than promoted unity. He wore out his days in unprofitable toil; bore rebuffs, insults, and multiplied troubles with wonderful patience; until he finally died in obscurity and poverty, neglected by those who had once encouraged him to go forward in the prosecution of his utopian scheme. Nor was this all. The influence of what was done, on the Lutheran Church, was peculiarly unhappy. The publications of *Matthiæ*, under the title of the *Olive Branch*, were publicly condemned, as pestiferous, and, by a royal edict, excluded from *Sweden*, in which kingdom the author lived. And with regard to *Calixtus*, while he endeavoured, as *Mosheim* remarks, to free the Church from all sects, he was considered by great numbers of his brethren as being the father of a *new sect*, that of the *Syncretists*;—a sect which was considered as pursuing peace and union at the expense of divine truth. He became instrumental in throwing the whole Lutheran body into a most unhappy commotion, which was a long time in passing away.

Before taking leave of this work, we cannot forbear to speak of another review of it published in the month of September last, in a contemporary and highly respected periodical,\* from the pen of the Right Rev. *B. B. Smith*,

\* *The Literary and Theological Review*, conducted by the Rev. *Leonard Woods, Junior*.



Episcopal Bishop of *Kentucky*.<sup>\*</sup> Before reading the article we felt some curiosity to see how a gentleman, once somewhat known as a *low-churchman*, but since advanced to the prelacy, would speak of a work by a pious Dutch Presbyterian, pleading for the union of all Christians. We had not read far, however, before we perceived that the scope and evident purpose of the whole, though ostensibly liberal, and conducted throughout with great respectfulness and delicacy, is as purely *sectarian* as possible; and contains, though not in so many words, yet in spirit, a kind invitation of the whole world into the Episcopal Church. On the character of this article we take the freedom to make a few remarks, not in the polemical spirit; but that the imperfectly disclosed purpose of Bishop *Smith* may be distinctly understood; and especially as the periodical work which contains it circulates extensively among Presbyterians.

1. Our first remark in relation to the article in question is, that one of the most striking ecclesiastical incongruities we can think of, is to find a thorough-going "*high-churchman*" speaking with complacency, and with raised expectation, of "Christian union." By *high-churchmen* every one will understand us to mean, those members of the Episcopal Church who make high and exclusive claims in favour of their own sect; who maintain confidently that the power of ordination to the gospel ministry is *confined* to prelatial bishops; that ministers, not ordained by them, have no valid commission, and, of course, no right to administer gospel ordinances; and that, out of the Episcopal denomination, there can be no lawful ministers; no valid sacraments; in fact, no church, but all out of the appointed way of salvation, and given over to the "uncovenanted mercy" of God. That this doctrine is really held by considerable numbers, both of the clergy and laity of that denomination, will appear from the following distinct avowal, found in a manual extensively used and admired among American Episcopalians.

"The Judge of all the earth will indeed do right. The grace of God quickens and animates all the degenerate children of Adam. The mercy of the Saviour is co-extensive with the ruin into which sin has plunged mankind. And, 'in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.' But where the gospel is proclaimed, communion with the Church by

\* We are aware that commenting on an *anonymous* review might be considered as unusual, and of questionable delicacy. But, in the present case, as the writer gives his name to the public, we suppose there is no more impropriety in referring to it, than in animadverting on any other publication made under the author's name.

the participation of its ordinances, at the hands of its *duly authorized priesthood*, is the *indispensable condition of salvation*. Separation from the prescribed government, and regular priesthood of the Church, when it proceeds from involuntary and unavoidable ignorance or error, we have reason to trust, will not intercept from the humble, the penitent and obedient, the blessings of God's favour. But when we humbly submit to that priesthood which Christ and his apostles constituted; when, in the lively exercise of penitence and faith, we partake of the ordinances administered by them, we maintain our communion with that Church which the Redeemer purifies by his blood, which he quickens by his Spirit, and whose faithful members he will finally crown with the most exalted glories of his heavenly kingdom. The important truth which the universal Church has uniformly maintained, that, to experience the full and exalted efficacy of the sacraments, we must receive them from a *valid authority*, is not inconsistent with that charity which extends mercy to all who labour under involuntary error. But *great is the guilt*, and *eminent the danger*, of those who, professing the means of arriving at the knowledge of the truth, negligently or wilfully continue in a state of separation from the *authorized ministry of the Church*, and partake of ordinances administered by an *irregular and invalid authority*. Wilfully rending the peace and unity of the Church, by separating from the ministrations of its authorized priesthood; obstinately contemning the means which God, in his sovereign pleasure, hath prescribed for their salvation, they are guilty of *rebellion against their Almighty Lawgiver and Judge*; they expose themselves to the awful displeasure of that Almighty Jehovah, who will not permit his institutions to be contemned, or his authority violated with impunity.\*

In plain English, the scope of these, and similar passages in writings of acknowledged authority in that denomination, is, that the Episcopal "*priesthood*" is *the only authorized ministry*;—that their sacraments are *the only valid sacraments*;—that those who are out of the Episcopal body, are no part of the Christian Church; that they have no hope founded on "*covenanted mercy*;" but, however penitent, humble, and deeply spiritual they may be, the fact, that they are not in communion with the Episcopal Church, proves that they are "*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise.*"

In full accordance with this representation, Mr. *Grant*, the Episcopal high-church historian, of England, does not scruple to avow the doctrine which has been stated, in all its length and breadth. "*This opinion,*" says he, "*supposes a charm, a secret virtue, by which—to state an extreme case—a vicious minister of the Church of England can confer something necessary to salvation, as a sacrament is; while the same office performed by a pious sectary, who has in his heart devoted himself to God, is an absolute nullity.*" After stating the case in this strong and unequivocal manner, he

\* *Companion for the Altar*, by J. H. HOBART, afterwards Bishop HOBART. 1804. p. 202—204.

does not hesitate to declare that, in his opinion, the fact is really so. "*Truth* is sacred and immutable," says he, "and must be received, whatever inconvenience may attend its reception."<sup>\*</sup>

There are, indeed, some high-churchmen whose mode of stating their opinions in reference to this subject, is somewhat less offensive in terms. They do not undertake decisively to exclude all others but themselves and the Romanists from the "covenanted mercies of God;" but they refuse to *acknowledge* any others. Their language is, "we *know* that *we* are right, and on safe ground; but we do *not know* that others are. We do not positively deny that they are true churches; but we cannot see our way clear to *recognize* them as such." There is still a third portion of the general class of high-churchmen, who, maintaining the Popish doctrine that lay-baptism is valid, and that any body of baptized persons may properly be called *a church*, do not deny the title of churches to Presbyterian assemblies. But while they concede this—on most erroneous ground as we suppose—they deny that these churches have any *authorized ministers*, and contend that all the claims and acts of such ministers are usurpation and rebellion.

These are the opinions to which popular parlance has assigned the title of *high-church*. The title is just. They are not only revolting, but really schismatic in their character. We do not pretend to know how extensively such opinions are cherished by the ministers and members of the Episcopal Church in the United States. We have no doubt that many of the best of both, cordially reject them, and cultivate toward other churches a fraternal spirit. Nor do we intend, at present, to enter into an inquiry whether these revolting opinions are correct or not. We, of course, believe them to be both absurd and unscriptural. But that is not, at present, the question. The question is, can it be considered as congruous for a man who holds these opinions to talk or think of promoting "Christian union;" of holding out the olive branch, in any intelligible sense, to other denominations, when he regards them all as out of the way of salvation? Now we happen to know that Bishop *Smith*, freely states it as his opinion, that *non-episcopal ministers have no commission*; no authority whatever to administer gospel ordi-

\* GRANT'S History of the Church of England, and the Sects dissenting from her. Vol. II. 7, 8.

nances. *His* plan of union, then, is, that all other denominations are at liberty, if they please, to turn Episcopalians; and that, if they do, he will *then*, and *not till then* regard them favourably, and acknowledge them as Christians. This is surely a wonderful sacrifice at the shrine of "Christian union!" The Papist could say this; and he could say no more.

2. Our second remark is, that Bishop *Smith's* views of "Christian union" are such, that he is constrained to regret that the reformers ever separated from the Church of Rome. He is such a worshipper of the *form* of ecclesiastical communion, without its *power*, that he seriously asks, "whether one of the grand mistakes of the Reformation, was not separation *from* the Church, instead of reformation *in* the Church?" As if effort after effort to reform the Church, without going out of it, had not been actually made by one noble minded man after another, for nearly two hundred years before that time, without success. As if hundreds of men, some of them among the best on earth, had not been hurried to the stake, for daring to whisper a doubt concerning the pure and scriptural character of the dominant Church. As if most of the Reformers had not been violently *cast out* of the Church, instead of first *departing* themselves. Nay, as if, when Christ the Lord, had been virtually taken away from the Headship of his Church, there was any scriptural object to be gained by continued "union" with such a body. We have no doubt that Bishop *Smith*, in the multitude of his yearnings towards what appears to be his idol—the Episcopal succession—wishes there never had been a severance of connection with the Church of *Rome*. He feels probably a little as Archbishop *Laud* did, when he said, "I do believe the Church of Rome to be a true Church. Were she *not* a true Church, it were hard with the Church of England, since from her the English bishops derive their apostolic succession." For our part, we think the Reformers did wisely in "coming out from among the Romanists, and being separate." We cannot doubt, that, in abandoning the habitations of gross superstition and idolatry, they took the only feasible course. Necessity impelled them to it. Duty required it. The Church of Rome, not the Reformers, was the *real schismatic*, since she required the friends of the reformation to obey man rather than God, or go to the stake or gibbet, or go out from her pale. In this case, we may say of "union" as our blessed Lord does of the holy sabbath. Union was made

for man, not man for union. It ought to be sacredly and inviolably maintained as long as it can be made subservient to the great purpose for which it was appointed; mutual edification in faith and holiness. But when it becomes an alliance to corruption, idolatry, and misery, it has lost both its purpose and its value. It is, undoubtedly, a sin to sacrifice every thing to the *name*, when the *substance* is gone.

3. Our third remark on Bishop *Smith's* Review, is, that he seems to hold a doctrine in regard to the *essential nature* of the "union" for which he pleads, in which we can by no means concur with him. "What sort of union" he asks, amongst the followers of Christ, should be proposed? Shall they be called upon to unite in some way or other, as they now stand divided; or are they bound to agree in one outward form of Christianity? Mr. *Van Dyck*, and multitudes with him, appear to entertain no other idea of union amongst Christians, than an agreement that they shall not bite and devour one another. For our part, we most explicitly avow our conviction, that every attempt to put a stop to the dissensions and subdivisions which distract the Church, must forever prove futile, until Christians are agreed IN ONE OUTWARD FORM OF CHRISTIANITY. To talk about union in feeling and spirit, whilst there is disunion in fact, is about as wise as to exhort those to love one another, between whom occasion of deadly feud actually exists."

We acknowledge that we do not take exactly this view of the subject. Conscientious and firm as our persuasion is, that the Presbyterian form of government and of worship, was the form actually adopted in the apostolic Church, and which *ought* to be the universal form;—yet we are very far from thinking the adoption of this form, or of any other single form, by the different existing denominations, as essential to Christian union in its best sense. We think "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT," the most important part of this whole matter. We confess, indeed, that we love to see union among the followers of Christ complete in all its parts, external as well as internal. We love to find large communities of Christians all "speaking the same thing," and walking by the same rule and order. But we cannot doubt that there may be much love, much of the real precious communion of saints, where there is considerable diversity of external order. We are perfectly persuaded that there was more scriptural, practical "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," between the Church of *England*, and the Presbyterian Churches of

France, Holland, Germany, Geneva, and Switzerland, in the days of *Bucer, Martyr, Bullinger, Calvin, Cranmer*, &c. than there is, at this hour, between the different portions of the English establishment. What pious Presbyterian would find the least difficulty in cherishing the most delightful Christian fellowship with such men as the late Mr. *John Newton*, Dr. *Scott*, and other similar worthies of the Church of England? He would certainly take more pleasure in the conversation and ministry of such men, than in those of some men belonging to his own nominal communion, of less zeal and spirituality. We do, indeed, anticipate that when the Millenium shall open on the world, there will be greater uniformity in the outward aspect, as well as in the interior of the Church of God, than has ever yet been seen. But we do not feel quite sure that the uniformity, with regard to external order, will be perfect and universal. However this may be, we are perfectly satisfied in cherishing the assurance that the favoured believers of that age will be "of one heart and of one way," in love to the Saviour; in love to one another; in bearing one another's burdens and infirmities; and in seeking to promote their common happiness, and to glorify their common God. We do not believe that a conflict or a thought will ever arise in the minds of the Christians of that generation respecting ecclesiastical *rank* or *succession*. Let any one glance at the Apocalyptic delineations of that happy period, and say whether a single stroke of the pencil of inspiration appears to point to matters of that kind. The glory of the blessed Redeemer, and the affection of his people to him and to one another, evidently occupy and adorn the whole picture.

4. Again, Bishop *Smith* asks, "whether effacing the scriptural and primitive distinctions between *clerical* and *lay* officers in the church, has not, by lessening the respect for the sacred order, and fostering a spirit of misrule and insubordination, greatly tended to the multiplication of sects?" Whatever influence this thing may have had in affecting either the peace or unity of the church, we can think of no sect to which the query more strikingly applies, than to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. We know of scarcely any other denomination than theirs, in which the ecclesiastical assemblies of which, *laymen* are permitted to sit and give votes, which may be absolutely controlling, without the least semblance or plea, even on their own showing, for divine authority in the case. It is well known that

the ruling elders of the Presbyterian Church occupy a place in all their ecclesiastical assemblies. But, then, they are not, strictly speaking, in our estimation, *laymen*; that is, we consider them as spiritual officers, appointed by Christ to bear rule, and, therefore, just as much authorized to sit and act in the place assigned to them, as any minister in the whole Church.\* But our Episcopal brethren, if we understand their system, introduce into all their assemblies, from the Vestry to the General Convention, numbers of mere laymen, invested with high authority, and yet in whose behalf they do not pretend to plead any divine appointment or institution. We cannot but think, therefore, that it is with a very ill grace that Bishop *Smith* singles out this feature in modern times, as favourable to the multiplication of sects, and the production of insubordination and disorder in the Church. If he be deliberately of this opinion, he ought to exert himself to alter, as soon as possible, the constitution of his own Church. But we have no such apprehension from this source as he appears to entertain. We cannot think of any prominent sect in our land that was commenced, or even planned, by *laymen*. No, the *clergy*—we repeat it—the *clergy* have been, in almost all cases, the disturbers and corruptors of the Church; and we verily believe that the greatest danger is now to be apprehended from *them*. If the *leaders* and *guides* of all denominations were all deeply imbued with the humble, charitable, disinterested, and truly benevolent spirit of their Master, we cannot doubt that the greatest obstacle to “Christian union” would be taken out of the way.

5. We have but one more remark, or rather query, to offer on the view which Bishop *Smith* appears to take of the subject. Assuming that there can be no valuable or effectual unity, without a concurrence *in some one external form of organization*;—that this is not only important, but essential; he professes, in one place, the most entire indifference “in what *direction* these principles may guide him.” “With us,” says he, “it would *matter nothing* to which of the existing denominations they would conduct; or what modifications they would demand of each.” Yet he, evidently, in another place, gives us to understand what denomination he thinks ought to be adopted, and would be adopted, if proper principles presided over the choice. At this partiality to

\* It is well known that in the early Church, soon after the apostle's days, all Church officers, from the highest to the lowest, were called *clergymen*, to distinguish them from the body of the people.

his own sect, we are not surprised; nor should we be disposed to criminate him for it, had his declaration in its favour been much more pointed and positive. The leading principle which he supposes ought to regulate the choice of this universal denomination, is that which he quotes from *Tertulian*—"whatever is first is true; whatever is more recent is spurious." We accede to the general principle; and have no more doubt that the most faithful "induction" of historical, and every other kind of testimony, would show that Presbyterian doctrine, government and worship was "first,"—was the truly primitive and apostolic form, than we have that the same "inductive" testimony would show that in the first century, there were Christian Churches planted in *Jerusalem*, *Antioch*, *Rome*, and *Philippi*. On this, however, we shall not insist. We will suppose, for argument's sake, that the Episcopal form of Church order were universally adopted in our country in all its parts; that all the denominations in the United States were prevailed upon, without one perverse "dissenter" interposing his veto, to assume the name, and adopt the government and formularies of that denomination. Suppose this to be done; and suppose the whole body, when thus united, to bear the very same character, as to piety, zeal, humility, and diffusive Christian benevolence, which the body actually distinguished by that denomination *now* bears. Would our country be the better for it? Would the interests of "pure and undefiled religion" be really promoted? Would a greater amount of evangelical labour be likely to be accomplished? Would the poor neglected wanderers "in the highways and hedges" be more likely to be brought in? Would the conversion of the whole world to God be likely to be more speedily effected? What would be its probable influence on the civil government of the country; on the rights of conscience; and on all the privileges of the citizens? Would such a community, judging from all experience, be wakeful, active and enterprising in its religious character; or sunk in the torpor and formality which usually characterize those bodies from which emulation is gone, and where there are none to call in question the course pursued? We should have no fear, as to any of these points, if the "latter day glory" had begun. The universal prevalence of true religion would be the best universal conservative. But the supposition is, that all sects were merged in one, and the whole remaining, in every other respect, just as they are. Would the country be safe



under such a transformation? Would religion be safe? Would the interests of the world be safe? We trow not. If the denomination in question were our own, we should say—By no means!

Bishop *Smith*, in sketching the union, which he seems to contemplate, speaks of each denomination giving up something for the sake of harmony. It may excite a smile in some of our non-presbyterian readers, when we say, that, in casting about, in our own minds, what peculiarity Presbyterians might reasonably be called upon, and feel willing to surrender, as a tribute to “Christian union,” we felt deeply at a loss to specify a single particular. There is not, we will confidently affirm, a denomination of Christians in the United States, or in the world, more free from offensive claims; more ready to unite with all other denominations in communion or in effort; or having fewer peculiarities to keep us asunder from our neighbours. We freely acknowledge the Church character, and the validity of the ministrations of Congregationalists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Baptists, Lutherans, and, in short, of all sects who hold the fundamentals of Christianity. We repel none of them from our communion; and in all our private and public ministrations we insist, almost exclusively, on the great duties of “repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and holiness of heart and of life, in which all evangelical Protestants profess substantially to agree. Where one sectarian claim or statement is made in our pulpits, we may safely venture to say, that fifty are made in the pulpits and writings of our Baptist, Episcopal, and Methodist brethren. What then, in the proposed mutual concession for the sake of “union,” shall we give up? Our exclusive claims? We have none. Our abuse of other denominations? We have none. We are every where loaded with calumny; but have never yet engaged in any other warfare than that of the purest *self-defence*. Even our most mild and respectful self-defence, we know, is made matter of accusation and reproach; but be it so. We cannot surrender this right. Shall we give up our endeavours to maintain a *learned ministry*—which was, for a long time, matter of accusation with more than one sister denomination? We cannot consent to do this. As it is, our ministry has far too little learning; and those very churches which once reproached us for our requisitions in regard to this matter, are now adopting similar plans, and are following close at our heels, in the maintenance of the same system. Shall

we consent, for the sake of universal ecclesiastical amalgamation, to give up all our rules and efforts for maintaining *purity of doctrine*? Here again we must demur. We contend only for that precious system of grace and truth, which all the leading Reformers, both in Great Britain, and on the continent of Europe, uniformly maintained. In struggling to defend and propagate the pure doctrines set forth in our venerated Confession, we contend for no new or doubtful theories. We contend for the same system of doctrine which was taught by the *Cranmers*, the *Hoopers*, the *Lattimers*, and the *Whitgifts*, as well as the *Luthers* of the sixteenth century, and for which several of them laid down their lives. We believe that, important as the government of the Church may and ought to be considered, the maintenance of pure gospel truth is a thousand fold more important; and that to compromise its interests out of regard to any question of ecclesiastical order, would be a high offence against our Master in heaven, and against all the interests of his kingdom.

We think we do no injustice to any other portion of Protestant Christendom, when we say, that we are confident no denomination of Christians exceeds the Presbyterian Church in genuine Christian liberality, and in a readiness to unite in Christian effort with all classes of credible professors of Christianity. Our system is absolutely less exclusive, and more pacific than any other in our country, which admits the importance of truth at all. We are really almost the only denomination of Christians in the United States whose views of truth, of the gospel ministry, and of ecclesiastical order, present no obstacle to our communing and co-operating with any and every denomination who hold fast the essentials of true religion. Nor can we hesitate to assert, that the most conspicuous and edifying examples of such union and co-operation, within the last twenty years, have been actually presented by the Presbyterian Church. Why, then, it is, that we are every where calumniated as eminently *sectarian* in our character; why the most mild and respectful attempts to defend our own opinions, and to show to our members our reasons for differing from sister denominations around us, are stigmatized as violent and unprovoked attacks; and why these charges happen to be most clamorously urged by those of our neighbours whose *sectarism* is acknowledged on all hands to be the most rampant and exclusive in the land; are questions, the responsibility of answering which, we are glad does not lie at our door.

We agree with Bishop *Smith* in the opinion, that the spirit of sect is more rife and more powerful at this time than it was some years ago. We think this has grown out of some of the very measures prematurely and unwisely adopted to produce the diametrically opposite effect. And we are persuaded that much that is now written and done, with the intention of promoting union, is adapted to retard, rather than promote, the great object recommended in the volume before us. We lament that such should be the case, but we cannot close our eyes against the fact. Were we to attempt to offer a set of counsels as to the best means of promoting "Christian union"—we should say—"Be much more engaged in cherishing a spirit of charity and concord, than in urging different denominations to come together. Let the strain of preaching be practical, affectionate and strictly scriptural, rather than controversial. Be more intent on describing and inculcating the religion of the heart, than on pleading the cause of a particular form of external organization and order. Let each denomination maintain its own peculiar opinions, with regard to doctrine and discipline, meekly, and candidly, but with firmness, without compromising a single dictate of conscience. Study to cultivate intercourse with other denominations, to converse and pray together, and co-operate in every pious and benevolent enterprise, as far as may not be forbidden by conscientious peculiarities. Be very sure that what is made a term of communion be something distinctly and clearly taught in the word of God. Let none imagine that the "Christian union," so much sought after, and so truly desirable, can be reached at once, or by rapid movements; it must be the work of time, and brought about by gentle means; just as the gradual change of a nation's character or language is effected by almost insensible degrees. And, in the mean while, it is not wise to be forever harping on the duty of "union." All the world knows that, if we wish to produce in any mind strong emotions, either of love or hatred, the true way to succeed is not to employ our time in directly exhorting to the exercise of this emotion; but in presenting such views of the object in question, as are adapted favorably to excite and impress. No one was ever induced to love an object by being scolded and reproached for *not* loving it. And they are surely the worst enemies to "Christian union," who, while they declaim against *sectarism*, and paint in strong colours the sin and mischief of multiplied religious denominations, are constantly "compassing sea and land"

to make proselytes to their own sect, and representing all others as "aliens from the covenant of God."

That our views in relation to this interesting subject may not be misapprehended, we will close our protracted remarks by the following brief summary of the conclusions, in relation to it, to which we have come, and which we regard as most scriptural, rational, and safe.

1. All who profess the true religion, in its essential characteristics, belong to the visible Church catholic, notwithstanding the diversity of forms and names by which they are externally separated; and ought to be so regarded by all who believe that Christ is one, and his religion one. Of course,

2. Entire concurrence in the same outward form of Christianity is not essential to Christian union, or to the real communion of saints.

3. Yet every thing that tends to divide the body of Christ, or to interfere with entire harmony among the members of his body, is sinful, and ought to be avoided.

4. The day is coming, and is probably not far distant, when all the professing people of God will be so united, if not in every point of external form, yet in spirit, in cordial affection, as to feel that they are "one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

5. The *mere* quiet, formal *coalition* of all sects into one body, and under one name, would not be "Christian union."

6. We cannot look for the consummation of this desirable outward union, nor even reasonably *wish* it to take place, unless and until the *spirit* of sectarianism shall be *previously* slain, and the spirit of universal charity shall become triumphant in every part of the Church. Were the union contemplated to come *before* the establishment of this, it could not live, much less diffuse its appropriate blessings. Therefore,

7. All attempts to break down the barriers which now divide professing Christians into different denominations, anterior to the pouring out upon them the *spirit of love*. will be of little or no efficacy in promoting the great object contemplated; perhaps may even retard its approach. *A community of goods* once existed in the Christian Church, and may, possibly, exist again, when the spirit of pure and fervent love shall pervade the Church; but if a proposal were made to restore that community *now*, when the prevailing spirit of Christendom is so remote from it, it would be

considered as doing discredit, rather than honour to the cause and the proposer.

8. Those denominations of Christians which stand aloof from other Christian Churches, or which refuse, on grounds not supported by the word of God, to commune with them, are chargeable with schism. The dominant powers in the Church of England, in *ejecting two thousand of the very best ministers of that Church*, in 1662, because they refused to conform to unscriptural ceremonies, were the real schismatics, and not the ejected ministers themselves. Mr. *Locke* pronounces that event "fatal to the Church and religion of England, in *throwing out* a very great number of worthy, learned, pious and orthodox divines." *Letter from a person of quality.* Works. Vol. IX. 202.

9. The volume before us has appeared a number of years *too soon* for the prompt adoption of its principles. We are not yet prepared for the "abolition of sects." When this precious blessing shall be vouchsafed to the Church, we have no expectation that it will be brought about by some great man, by discovering the *causes* of the opposite evil, and proposing some new and wonderful *remedy*. It will be the result of the same power, which, when the disciples were tossed on the heaving sea, and filled with fear, said to the raging winds and waves, "Peace, be still;" and there was a great calm. There will probably, however, be no miracle, in the common sense of that word; but the same gracious agency which blesses the Church now, given in a much larger measure. Before the Christian community can be ready for a movement of this kind, the Holy Spirit of sanctification and love must be poured out upon churches to an extent, and with a power, hitherto unknown, since the day of Pentecost. The spirit of those who are constantly "scrambling for proselytes;" who are far more anxious to convert men to their own denomination, than to the knowledge and love of holiness; and especially the spirit of those who "HATE THE GOSPEL, while they LOVE THE CHURCH," must be brought to yield to the genuine spirit of Christian charity. The miseries of a perishing world must bear with a hundred fold more weight than they now do, on the hearts of Christians; and they must feel, with a force and tenderness of which they at present know little, their supreme obligation to send the simple, pure gospel to every creature. They must be absorbed in the great work of converting the world to God. Then, and not till then, will sectarianism gradually expire. Then, and not till then, will

the exclamation of the early ages be renewed, "BEHOLD HOW THESE CHRISTIANS LOVE ONE ANOTHER!" The Lord hasten in his time a consummation so devoutly to be wished! Every Christian heart will say—Amen!

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*Charles Hodge*

ART. III.—*Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer. Von L. J. Rückert. Leipzig: 1831.*

Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. By L. J. Rückert. Leipzig: 1831.

THIS is, on the whole, one of the best German commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans. The author is, or was, as we understand, a teacher in the Gymnasium at Zittau; a circumstance to which he owes much of his excellence, and some of his faults, as a commentator. The qualifications for a good commentator are so numerous, that it is perhaps vain to expect to find them all united. We must be content to have the deficiencies of one supplied by the excellencies of another. Rückert has given a very good view of the requisites for an accomplished exegete. He should, in the first place, be a philologist, possessing not only a knowledge of languages, but of history; he should be a logician, and a man of imagination. This last demand, though rather startling, is still reasonable in the sense in which he uses the term. It is now acknowledged that the only safe foundation of scriptural interpretation is grammar; a knowledge of the force of the several words, and of the laws which regulate their connexion. In reference to the New Testament writers, the first question is, what the simple Greek, agreeably to the usage of classic writers, means? and then what is the usage of the Hellenistic writers, especially those of the New Testament itself? It is a difficult question how far the classic usage should be allowed to predominate over the Hellenistic. Rückert complains that commentators give the apostle far too little credit for a knowledge of pure Greek, and, consequently, resort to the usage of the Hebrew where it is altogether unnecessary. His principle is to adhere to the usage of pure Greek, except in cases of absolute necessity. It must be admitted that the Hebraic character of the Greek of the New Testament was a long time allowed to give a latitude and looseness to the interpretation especially of the