

Christendom are yielding to the centripetal attractions which are bringing together and strengthening the hearts of earnest men in all the Churches who are yearning to unite in common Christian endeavour. The following utterances of the Hon. Edward Blake, of the Church of England, express, we believe, the convictions of many thoughtful minds:—"There is, I think," he said, "no more hopeful sign than the degree of charity following the unity which exists in these latter days amongst the Christian Churches, and though I believe there are points of difference between us and sister Churches, we are falling more and more into the spirit of the Gospel, and there is a tendency to dwell more upon those points on which we agree than on those on which we agree to differ." While this spirit is growing among the laity of all the Churches, may we not hope that their religious teachers and guides shall foster the same generous spirit, and be their leaders in this great movement toward Christian unity and co-operation?

HOW SHALL CHRISTIAN UNITY BE PROMOTED?

In the first place by cultivating more and more the crowning grace of Christian charity—the divine and heavenly principle of love—love toward God and love toward the brethren—that charity that suffereth long and is kind; that rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Let us recognize the excellences in each other. Let us broaden our horizon, enlarge our sympathies, and dwell more and more on the blessed thought of the true fellowship of saints and their spiritual unity in the great essentials of saving faith and holy lives. Let us dwell less upon our mutual differences, and more upon our common agreements.

We can surely find much to admire in those great historic Churches which have been for centuries the conservators of truth and bulwarks

against popery, infidelity, ignorance and sin? May we not admire in the Anglican Church that comely and pious liturgy, from which Methodism the world over has so largely borrowed; and those prayers which sustained the hearts of the martyrs amid the fires of Smithfield? In the grand old Presbyterian Church—heroic daughter of the Reformation—can we not, forgetting the Five Points of Calvinism, be touched to reverence by the sublime definitions of Christian doctrine in the Westminster Confession?

Why should we cut ourselves off from the historic past? Through all the ages God has been building up His spiritual Church—the great "City of God," of which Augustine wrote. Its citizens are the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, the holy Church throughout all the world. That Church—the type on earth of the Church of the redeemed in heaven—is a grander, wider, nobler thing than any of the many isms into which it is divided.

That, therefore, the Church on earth may become more like the Church in heaven, let us hail with joy every sign of its approaching unification; let us reciprocate heartily every overture toward Christian unity. "The time for controversy," says Bishop Cox, "is past, the time for conferences has come." Let us hear what our brethren of other Churches, who earnestly desire Christian union, have to suggest. It is no proof of strength of conviction to refuse to listen to the convictions of others. "Strike, but hear me!" said the Grecian sage; and it is only just to hear what an adversary has to say before prejudging and condemning him. And let us hear with candour, without attributing motives other than those which are expressed, or reading into his utterances a meaning other than that which is avowed, or affixing a stigma which may not only be uncharitable but unjust.

Methodism can well afford to hold out the olive branch to other Churches. Almost alone of the