

of truth on which the understanding must lean, which he must grasp if man is to rise to the destined height of his greatness. Some principles may be called natural. Seeing the difference between right and wrong; recognizing the eternal law of justice and righteousness;—these may be called natural principles; and some belong to grace and are revealed; such as that Jesus Christ our Lord is God, equal with the Father; that Jesus Christ will judge us at the last day; that the Holy Communion is the food of the Christian's soul. The Church Catechism is full of these principles, which ought to be incorporated into our nature, and should be the spring and root of our life and actions. And Christianity must expand by love. A personal love of the Lord Jesus Christ is the central element of the Christian character. Without that personal love, a living Christianity cannot exist. A love of Christ as He is revealed to us in the Gospel, in his humiliation in the manger, in His life of suffering, in His agony and death, in the triumphs of his resurrection and ascension, in his intercessional life of eighteen hundred years, in His presence with the Church and in the Sacraments—the perfect love of Jesus Christ the Lord is the very highest mark of the attainments of the Christian, just as a perfect love of self is the very lowest mark. A third condition of the development of the soul is the discipline of the will. The will is the summit of the character just as the heart is its centre, and the understanding at its base. It is evidently of the highest importance in a religious and moral point of view that the excellence of the will should be maintained. And the will is strengthened and perfected by obedience. Obedience is submission to all authority whose claims are admitted. If man is royal when the rules over nature, and yet more royal when he rules his brother man, he is most imperial when he rules himself,—when he has the kingly power and courage to yield himself in presence of an authority which he ascertains has a right to his obedience. If he obeys not Jesus Christ, he obeys the dictates of his caprice, his imagination, or his passion. But it is Jesus Christ, the Lord, that makes us free from the law of sin and death, and gives us the characteristic liberty with which Christ has made us free;—thus enabling us in that freedom to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

THE SYNOD OF BRECHIN.

WE learn from the *Guardian* that this Synod met on the 8th. The Bishop urged upon the clergy the desirability of weekly Communion in all their charges, as a practice, at least contemplated and intended by the Church as she has laid down her law and given her principles in the Book of Common Prayer. He spoke also of the importance of Sunday schools, and the necessity of a definite system of teaching in them. He said that the fact that 580 persons having been confirmed in the diocese during the past year, showed a steady growth of the Church. His Lordship also referred to the probability of a general Synod being held at no distant date, and suggested that the clergy should be prepared for the discussion of such subjects as the Metropolitan question.

With the Bishop's permission, Dean Nicolson brought before the Synod the subject of Mr. Green's imprisonment, and moved that the Synod should express its sympathy with him and an earnest hope that he might be speedily released from an imprisonment which the character of the offence charged against him did not justify. In ur-

ging the motion the Very Reverend gentleman dwelt upon the startling fact that a clergyman of unblemished character—trusted and beloved by his parishioners, should be thus, as it were, forever severed from his flock, because he regarded his duty to the Church in precisely the same way that thousands of his fellow-clergy did. He said that the punishment was severer than that meted out to the clergy of their own Church, who in the last century destroyed the law by officiating with more than four persons present. When three clergy of the diocese of Brechin lay in prison in 1748, the Bishop of Dunkeld of that day wrote to the Bishop of Aberdeen as follows:—"Three Mearns brethren were sentenced and incarcerated March 5th, and must lie there till the six months be out, for no suspension or mitigation of the penalty, though applied for at Edinburgh, can be obtained. I made a collection of £3. 10s. stg. amongst my particular friends, which I sent them yesterday. There is a more general contribution for them going on, so that they may be sufficiently subsisted, though they have the discomfort of being utterly unserviceable at this time of need." Dean Nicolson's motion was seconded by Mr. Hatt, of Muchalls, and received the general support of the clergy; but, there being some doubt as to the advisability of sending the address as a synodical act, on the suggestion of the Bishop it was put in the form of a personal address, was signed by his Lordship and all the clergy of the diocese, and was transmitted to Mr. Green.

LESSONS OF THE HOUR.

AFTER the Pan-Methodist conference is over and the Pan-Islam affair has taken place the civilized world is threatened to be regaled with a Pan-Lutheran arrangement in the not very distant future. There is no doubt that a number of most important lessons may be learnt and ought to be learnt too, from the gathering together of large bodies of men assembled together to discuss religious questions—whether the gentlemen who compose the meetings belong to the Church or not, each of the three bodies we have mentioned will of course furnish its own peculiar class of lessons.

"This Conference" which recently met in Liverpool revealed a mass of facts, of seething and unexpected facts, that will no doubt alarm a vast number of the adherents of that "denomination" who have hitherto not been made aware of the fact, that there are still existing in their own communion, men, and men of position among them too, who adhere to the High Church opinions—that is to the sacerdotal and sacramentarian teachings—of John Wesley.

We have just seen an account of some of their discussions in the "Methodist Recorder,"—so that our information comes from original sources. In the discussion on a Revision of the Liturgy originally compiled by John Wesley, from the Offices of the Church, it became very evident that in their body, as perhaps in every other, there exist two sections, tolerably well answering to our ritualists and Church (?) Associationists—the one adhering pretty much to the teaching of the author of their religion, John Wesley, and being as thoroughly sacerdotal and sacramentarian as the highest Churchmen among us (with the exception of the absence of Apostolical Succession); and the other, strictly termed a party, just as revolutionary and as diametrically opposed to the true principles of the Methodist body, as the extreme section of the

so-called Low-Church party among ourselves are determined if possible to root up and destroy the pure teaching of the Church, as we find that teaching in the New Testament and in the Prayer Book.

One remarkable feature of the discussion was that, throughout, both sections of the "Conference" unanimously agreed in the fact of the sacerdotal and sacramentarian teaching as well in the Church Prayer Book as in Wesley's abridgment of it. There does not appear to be a dissenting voice on that question as a matter of fact. We confess however that we were startled when we read the confession of some of the speakers on the revolutionary side. Their admissions certainly convey the impression that the morality of their "party" is much of the same character as the morality of certain notorious "associationists" in the Church, who have recently made an "open avowal of their dishonesty." A Mr. Arthur said that whenever he read a certain sacerdotal sentence in their abridgment of the Liturgy, "to this day he read it with a burden on his soul!" A Dr. Rigg spoke in pretty much the same terms. He said: "He had himself borne a burden upon his conscience for more than thirty years." We can only remark that this gentleman must have been dishonest enough, for those same thirty years, to occupy a high position in a "P. E. Divinity School." He went on to say:—"As long as he had power to speak or influence with his brethren he would never remain content with the forms as they were. What did Mr. Bradford say on this subject two years ago? He said these unrevised offices were a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. And so it had been and so it was." It certainly does appear very strange that so dishonest a system should have been believed in and practised by so many.

On the other side a Mr. F. W. Macdonald "ventured to protest against any revision of formularies which manifested an undisguised contempt for sacraments as sacraments." Mr. Oliver said:—"He was one of those who believed that in the two Christian sacraments he had the two services which his Lord and Master had especially appointed, and especially consecrated. . . . As to the absolution, he was prepared to defend it against all comers; and as long as he held that he was a Christian minister he held that he had a power and authority in virtue of his office which his people had not, or else his office meant nothing. . . . He did not believe in regeneration by baptism, but he was not ashamed to say he did not believe in the possibility of regeneration in baptism; and the man who told him that regeneration was not possible closed heaven against his babe. Was he to be told that a man could not enter into heaven without regeneration, and that a child could? . . . He took his stand by Mr. Wesley's sermons and notes, from which he had never departed, and he never would. He took his stand there, and did any one tell him that, as a Methodist preacher, with these sermons and notes, he was not within the limits of his freedom when he believed that when he brought his child to Almighty God in that ordinance, God would not then and there give his child His Holy Spirit? He held his right to believe in the possibility of grace being bestowed in the very moment of baptism. He did believe it, and his fathers taught him to believe it. He was trained by Dr. Hannah to believe it, and their brethren that knew the generations that were past knew the doctrine was one which had been taught from the platform of the Conference in the generations gone. The parties making the present proposals were the parties that had changed. "A Dr. Pope advocated something like Mr. Gorham's