

UNITY THROUGH MUTUAL SUFFERING.

ONE of the most remarkable as it is one of the least known of books, one that Sir Walter Scott said should alone for its genius give immortality to the fame of its authors, is Defoe's *Journal of the Plague of London*. Whether this is, as some think, a work of imagination like Robinson Crusoe, or a skillful blending into narrative form of materials collected from contemporaneous records, as we believe, matters little for the purpose we have now in view. That community in suffering by those who are widely separated by religious differences, and by social conventionalities, breaks down these barriers, has had innumerable illustrations. Providence seem now and again to inflict a sharp rebuke to those who are so living as to promote division and discord amongst those who ought to live in sympathy. The aristocracy of France brought down the vengeance of God by their inhuman selfishness and class isolation. There are mutterings in the air of a storm coming upon modern society because of its avarice, luxurious living, and social vanities hardening the heart and dividing society into classes as contrasted in circumstances and as severed in sympathy as the French noble of the last century was from the tax ridden peasant. The blow would have come before now had not there been in society a sufficient leaven of Christian principle and feeling to keep the mass from corruption. When that catastrophe comes, as come it will, there will be seen a similar unity of classes and of religious communities through mutual suffering, as is described by Defoe when the inhabitants of London were all terrified by the plague. Why then should men wait for some terrible judgment of God to bring them to a recognition of unity? Death and judgment are very near to every one of us, viewed in association with the tremendous verities of eternity, how inexpressibly vain and trivial are the pleas upon which Christians stand apart! Why should barriers be erected that vanish when men are shaken into solemnity and sympathy by some great suffering that is a common grief? How with the intuition of genius Defoe strikes at the root cause of divisions, when he attributes reconciliation to an outburst of charity and the return of division to the abatement of the spirit of charity! The passage is as follows,—in reading it the fact should be borne in mind that Defoe was a born and bred dissenter—and is describing a time when feeling ran very high against the Church amongst the sectaries. Elsewhere in this remarkable work there are strikingly eloquent descriptions of the effect of the plague in bringing the people generally to frequent attendance at the services of the Church.

"It was indeed a time of very unhappy breaches among us in matters of religion. Innumerable sects, and divisions, and separate opinions, prevailed among the people. The Church of England was restored, indeed, with the restoration of the monarchy, about four years before; but the ministers and preachers of the Presbyterians and Independents, and of all the other sorts of professions, had begun to

gather separate societies, and erect altar against altar; and all those had their meeting for worship apart, as they have now, but not so many then, the Dissenters being not thoroughly formed into a body as they are since; and those congregations which were thus gathered together were yet but few. And even those that were, the government did not allow, but endeavored to suppress them and shut up their meetings. *But the visitation reconciled them again*, at least for a time, and many of the best and most valuable ministers and preachers of the Dissenters were suffered to go into the churches where the incumbents were fled away, as many were, not being able to stand it, and people flocked without distinction to hear them preach, not much inquiring who or what opinion they were of; but *after sickness was over, that spirit of charity abated*, and every Church being again supplied with its own ministers or others presented where the ministers was dead, things returned to their own channel again."

DEATH OF DEAN BOOMER.

WITH sorrow we record the death of the Very Reverend M. Boomer, L.L.D., Dean of Huron, sorrow not for the dead but the living, he is beyond the touch of grief, they, we, live on to mourn one whom to know was to love. The late Dean, for some years, has been physically prostrated by partial paralysis, which by God's goodness left his mind clear to the last. We who enjoyed his personal friendship and, for a brief term, were of his flock, learnt to honour him for his abilities, and to be drawn in heart towards him in affectionate respect. Dr. Boomer was a very manly character, his very aspect was enough to exorcise evil thoughts, and to win confidence. He had not a trace of that phase of "clericalism" or jealousy which offends laymen, he was hearty, frank, genial, and ever appreciative of any sympathy or help given him in his parish work. Attached to one school of thought by tradition and training, he had no bigotry, nor love of party divisions. Mrs. Boomer and the family have our sincerest condolence in their bereavement. The following is from the *London Free Press*.

The Very Reverend Michael Boomer, M.A., LL.D., was of Huguenot descent and was born at Hill Hall, near Lisburn, in County Down, Ireland, in the year 1810. He was educated at the Belfast Royal Academical Institution, of which he was Foundation Scholar for five years. Graduated at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1838, and took the Degree of LL.D. in 1860. Was ordained Deacon in 1840 and Priest in 1841, as a Missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, by the Right Reverend Dr. Strachan, Lord Bishop of Toronto, and was appointed to the charge of Trinity Church, Galt, Ont., which position he retained with much acceptance for thirty-two years. In 1872 he removed to London, Ont., at the request of the Right Rev. Bishop Hellmuth, then Bishop of Huron, and was appointed Dean of Huron and Principal and Divinity Professor of Huron College, which position he retained until October, 1885. When Huron College was affiliated to the Western University, the Venerable Dean was appointed Vice-Chancellor and Provost, and in this position gained the respect of all connected with the institution. It may seem superfluous to add anything concerning the character and attainments of one so widely known. A man far

above the type of mediocrity, he had gained a high reputation as a scholar and a preacher, his sermons being ever marked by extensive learning and research, and his reading universally admired. As a gifted worker in the fair domain of knowledge also, he was successful in imparting instruction, and the many young men who had the privilege of being under him at college, learned to respect and revere him as a father. He carried into his several spheres the same high aim of serving truth, of serving his fellow creatures, and serving God. Devout in soul and fixed in faith, he won the hearts of all by his unassuming and unselfish gentleness. His loss will be deeply deplored by the community at large, and his memory long be honored, not only by his brethren in the ministry, but by all of every denomination with whom he came in contact. The Dean leaves a widow, who ministered to him with unceasing devotion, and two daughters, Mrs. A. Cleghorn, of this city, and Mrs. Mackenzie, of Brantford.

THE FIFTY-FIRST PSALM AND ITS AUTHOR.

THE *Church Eclectic* for March contains a highly interesting article written for its columns by the Rev. Henry R. Pyne, the larger portion of which we give below. The author commences by an earnest protest against "the criticism that devotes itself to the task of taking the Sacred Scriptures apart, and putting the pieces together in accordance with literary and religious theories of its own." He does not feel called upon to prove that David is the author of the 51st Psalm until the contrary has been shown. A brief examination is made of one argument against David's authorship, which he effectually upsets. The article proceeds as follows:

The following criticism seems superficial: "The feelings expressed are not such as are natural to a ceremonial religion in the time of its vigorous life, still less in its period of dead formalism. They contain too subtle a conception of the nature of sin too earnest a desire for spiritual purification." This assumes that Judaism ever was a merely ceremonial religion. All the evidences of history and tradition are against it, and there is nothing for it except the theory that all religion has its purely ceremonial stage. As to the practical incompatibility of elaborate ceremonial, with spiritual depth and fervor, were there ever times of fuller-developed ceremonial than those which produced Francis of Assisi, Carlo Barromeo, and Frances de Sales? Have there not been well-sustained charges of dead formalism against the age of John Tauler and Thomas a Kempis? Was not the same accusation made against the Church in which Bishop Andrews learned to pray, and holy George Herbert to sing? This very critic admits that the Psalmist's mind was formed under the influence of an active ceremonial system, since his metaphors are drawn from the rites of the law. Is it not the legitimate inference that his religious spirit is that which the ceremonial system was designed to cherish, and actually did produce? Is not this psalm one of the many proofs that the object-teaching of the elaborate ceremonial system had those who learned its lessons,

March 15,

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