

exception of the last clause, which requires submission to the Roman Pontiff. They even teach that the undivided Church was infallible, or practically infallible, until it became fallible by committing ecclesiastical suicide, when it divided itself into its Eastern and Western sections. There are also not a few Protestants who, when they deal with the re-union of Christendom, appear to halt between two opinions. They see clearly that the Church is no longer to be found in any one visible organization. The visible Church is divided. But when they reason about re-union, they seem insensibly to slide into the Romish conception of the Church, and argue as if the body, which is divided, is identical with that whose unity is proclaimed in the Word of God, to which pertain the promises. These varying conceptions of the Church and its unity, affect very directly the views which we cherish in reference to Church unions.

II.—CHURCH UNIONS IN RELATION TO THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH.

1. The Romish idea of the Church clearly bars, so far as Roman Catholics are concerned, all thought of union with other Churches. The Church is held to be one and indivisible: and there can be no union, because the unity of the Church has never been broken. Rome is compelled to take this position, because she predicates of a visible society, made up of saints and reprobates, what is true only of the real body of Christ, the *coetus fidelium*. Cardinal Manning declares, "the union of the Holy Ghost with the Church is not conditional, but absolute, depending upon no finite will, but upon the Divine Will alone, and, therefore indissoluble to all eternity." (Temp. Mission etc., p. 73.) If the Church, which Jesus Christ founded upon a rock, is a visible corporation, made up of all sorts of men, reprobates included, it exists somewhere in tangible form. Its unity is unquestionable, and its perpetuity sure. It is the one Church of Christ. Separated religious communities are only branches broken off from the living tree. The tree retains the life, and the separated branches are withered and dead. A union of Churches is an absurdity. Individual members of separated Christian societies