

though so rich, became poor that man through His poverty might be rich, that is needed to change this disposition. He uses all things for blessing, and sets an example worthy to be followed by those whom He entrusts with any portion of these, be it large or small. Especially

ought Christian men of wealth to see to it that their use of possession shall be such as shall tend to the allaying and not the increase of the popular discontent and bitterness. Let judgment in this particular begin in the household of God.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Heretics and Heresy.

MORE, perhaps, to-day than at any time for a generation are these two words to be heard and seen upon every side; heard in churches, in ecclesiastical assemblages, in private circles, and in public gatherings; seen in the pages or columns of reviews, journals, and newspapers, secular and religious. Many a man charges his neighbor with heresy who could give no comprehensive or comprehensible definition of what heresy is; and many another lightly arrogates to himself the title of heretic who has not sense enough to be one. For heresy involves the holding of a creed. It demands deliberate choice, more or less intelligent choice. By its very etymology it signifies a selection and, by implication, a rejection. There are not a few who seek to dignify their irrational scepticism by claiming for it the title of heresy. But not all unbelief is heretical. Nor is heresy the absence of belief in one or more of the dogmas of a particular theological system on the part of a professed adherent of that system. But it is the rejection of one or more of the fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture, and the substitution of something else in its place. By fundamental doctrine we are to understand one that is set forth in the Scriptures themselves, either directly or inferentially, as vital. Jeremy Taylor well says, in his famous "Liberty of Prophesying," "It is observable that no heresies are noted *signanter* (with distinct particularity) in Scripture, but such as are great errors practical, *in materia pietatis*, such whose doctrines taught impiety, . . . and,

therefore, in the code *De Sancta Trinitate et Fide Catholica*, heresy is called . . . 'a wicked opinion and an ungodly doctrine.'"

It is a sad commentary on the weakness and fallibility of human nature that there have been times—and they are not altogether past times—when a disposition has been manifested to visit every divergence of opinion, even in non-essentials, with the meed due to heresy in its scriptural sense. The sniffing out of so-called heresies and the snuffing out of so-called heretics have ever characterized the darker ages in the history of the church, or those who have represented the spirit of the darker ages. There have been, and there are, men so thoroughly convinced of their possession of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that the slightest divergence from their individual views is, to their minds, most dangerous heterodoxy, and not to be tolerated. They have seemed to regard themselves as peculiarly set apart and qualified to guard the faith once delivered to the saints. They have forgotten the Master's own declaration: "He that is not against us is on our part," and have substituted, "He who does not adopt our views of truth is against Christ and His cause." They have ignored the statement of that Master's leading Apostle, that charity is a greater grace than faith; and so, in their false zeal for uniformity of creed, have been ready, with the assistance of thumb-screw, rack, gibbet, or their ecclesiastical equivalent, excision, to violate that liberty which the same Apostle enunciated in the sentence: "He that