

partyism in the abstract may be disliked and considered objectionable, the question arises whether it should be always so regarded—should it be disapproved and discouraged in any particular case in which the adoption of this method seems to be unavoidable? History furnishes examples of movements which, in their first beginnings assumed the shape of party movements—at least they were so regarded at the time of their occurrence—and yet they afterwards proved to be of the highest importance to the civilized world. The first beginnings of Christianity itself were so regarded: it is written, “the sect was called the sect of the Nazarenes,” Acts xxiv. 5. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was also regarded at first in the same light, and if justly so regarded it furnishes distinct evidence of the value of party movements at certain times and under certain circumstances, viz. when great abuses exist and when fundamental principles are at stake.

It will probably be said this is a very faulty classification. Surely the institution of the Christian Church cannot be regarded as a party movement. Let it be fully admitted, and what do we learn? Is it not clear from this that it is not always wise to visit with condemnation a movement which bears all the appearance of a purely party movement, lest we should be found condemning a divine movement and one which is the operation of the Eternal Spirit, e.g., a movement for the creation and maintenance of an institution like the Diocesan College, might be regarded in the light, and yet it might be the expression of the presence and power of the spirit of God, as we trust it is.

But, can the same be said of party spirit? No. By no means. Party spirit is always to be condemned in whatever form it may appear. It is the spirit which not only works by means of parties, but which delights in doing so, whereas if the formation of a party be adopted it should be done as a last resort. It should be done with great reluctance and regret as the choice of the lesser of two evils, and as an abnormal arrangement rather than a normal. Party spirit tends to division and not to union, whereas the object of party action should be union and not division—the restoration of healthy action and not the reverse—the propagation of truth and not the diffusion of error. It may seem paradoxical to say that the object of party is union; but not more so than to say, that the object of a surgical operation on the human body is health and strength: surgery is good, but the surgical spirit which would prompt a man to perform a surgical operation on every one indiscriminately should not be cultivated, and would not be endured; so also party spirit should not be cultivated, it should always be condemned. Party spirit implies an absence of humility and the presence of a self sufficiency which is scarcely compatible with true Christianity or rather with that exalted type of Chris-