

The Bible is indestructible. It cannot be holden of death. Buried a thousand times beneath the accumulated heaps of hostile criticism, it rises again to newness of life. It is absolutely insuppressible. The continuity of the Bible as a spiritual and ethical force in the life of the world is one of the outstanding marvels of history. Recall its story. Reckon up the number, the strength, the malignity of the open and avowed enemies it has encountered, and whose extinction it has survived. Look at the character and power of the schools of criticism, and note the way in which they have come and gone whilst it has kept on forever. Each had found the mystic key for its explanation. Each knew more than its predecessor. Each had the newest fact to supply, and each did its critical work; some rendering real service, others none. But the Bible abides, attracts, conquers. Add to this the greatest wonder of all—that it has lived through the inconceivably foolish and misguided behaviour of its friends. No book was ever more unwisely loved, no book ever suffered more from its admirers. The crude interpretations of its message, the wild theories preached in its name and backed by perversions of its texts, the absence of sense and method in the exposition of its statements, the preposterous schemes and movements undertaken for its defence, convince us that if the Book had not an absolutely indestructible centre, it would have disappeared long ago. But He lives, and is its life; therefore it endures, and shall endure for evermore.

#### Church Union.

Because the question of the Union of the Protestant Churches has not been much discussed of late in Canada it is not to be supposed that the idea has been abandoned or that it has become to be regarded as utterly hopeless. It is probable that its at one time most sanguine advocates would hope for no more than a modified form of the United Church they have pictured to themselves, but with many the hope is a strong one that the time may not be far distant when a common basis for church work shall be accepted by the leading Churches. In England the question has assumed a new phase since the Pope and Archbishop Benson have spoken. The following note from the Christian commonwealth reveals a curious incident in the movement and points out the course which opinion is taking in the old land:—The idea of Christian Union has become popular. It receives more or less attention in nearly every religious conference. Popularity always brings with it danger, and there is just now an imminent danger with respect to Christian Union. That danger may be stated as follows:—A spurious union may usurp the real thing. Some are already talking about the union of Christendom, and others the union of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. At the recent Roman Catholic Conference the union question was much to the front. The Pope's encyclical letter and the Archbishop of Canterbury's reply thereto were strongly in evidence with the Catholic attendants; but by far the most remarkable utterances were made by the Rev. J. H. Bondier, an Anglican from Clutton, who said he "had for many years been most interested and most anxious regarding this subject of reunion. The letter of the Pope touched the hearts of everyone, whether Roman or Anglican, and contained an invitation, in answer to which he had asked the permission of the Bishop of Clifton to attend the conference that day. With every single word which had been said he, as an Anglican clergyman, heartily agreed." We have no heart to quote any more

of this remarkable deliverance. The whole speech was a distinct overture to Cardinal Vaughan and his followers without even an intimation of protest against a single doctrine or practice of the Roman Catholic Church. Now, when this kind of union becomes popular it is certainly time to call a halt until we clearly understand what we mean when we are pleading for a reunion of the churches. More and more it becomes evident that we must place the emphasis on the first term, when we are contending for Christian union. Any union that is worth contending for at all must first of all be unmistakably Christian. A union of ecclesiasticisms or of distinctly sectarian organizations would probably indefinitely postpone the union of God's elect. Hence, we have reached a stage in the discussion of the question when the terms we use must be clearly defined. The time for sentimentalism is passed, but we must not substitute for it something which will make Christian union only another name for a conglomeration of discordant elements, which may be fitly named the confederacy of evil.

#### The Church Lottery.

The Church bazaar and lottery have their advocates and apologists, but there are those, and their number is not few, who sincerely, on principle, take a strong stand against even a "Sale of Work." In Australia there is being waged a harrassing war on the lottery. "Behold the origin of the church lottery!" exclaims the Australian Weekly. "First. Ambitious to have a church, either too grand or superfluous. Second. Unwillingness to pay for it. Third. Debt. Fourth. The Bazaar and the raffle. And the sequel is a church weakened in its inner life, weakened, too, in its testimony against the evils of the world." What has brought forth this particular utterance—a sensible utterance indeed—is the return which has been laid on the table of the New Zealand House of Representatives showing the number of lottery permits granted to religious bodies during the year 1894. The Church of Rome is found to have promoted 22 church sweeps; the Presbyterian Church 11; the Anglican 9; Methodists, Baptists and all the other religious bodies have a clean record. Some of the inconsistencies shown, says our contemporary, are of a very glaring character. Wellington Presbytery passed a strongly condemnatory resolution against bank lotteries, and the Government return shows that two Presbyterian Churches within the bounds of that Presbytery have run lotteries within the year.

Endorsement of The Sunday-school Chronicle, London, the Y.P.S.C.E. recently propounded to its readers the questions: "Does the Y.P.S.C.E. hurt the church?" As a result the columns of the Chronicle were filled for four weeks with letters from pastors and Sunday-school workers of all denominations all over England giving an almost unanimous indorsement of the Christian Endeavor Society. Out of the several hundred letters published, only three were averse to the movement. Summing up the testimony given by its correspondents, the Chronicle says: "With three exceptions the testimony has been unanimous as to the marvellous results it has effected in churches that, before its advent, were sinking into apathy and lifelessness. Wherever the magical letters have been, so to speak, nailed to the church door, a marvellous change has taken place. The church which formerly could not keep the young people after they had left the Sunday-school, has become the focus and centre of eager young hearts, panting to be of service. The prayer-meeting, formerly cold and lifeless, because of the lack of persons able to take part, has received immediate stimulus by the presence of earnest young Christians.