

# Restoration of Church Unity.

SERMON PREACHED BY THE LORD BISHOP OF  
ALGOMA IN CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL  
MONTREAL, ON THE 8TH SEPT., 1886, AT THE  
OPENING SERVICE OF THE 13TH SESSION  
OF THE PROVINCIAL SYNOD OF THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CANADA.

"For His Body's sake, which is His Church."—Col. ii. 24.

The immediate context of these words, in which St. Paul declares that he "fills up what is behind of the afflictions of Christ in His flesh," has furnished commentators with ample scope for their exegetical ingenuity. I do not propose leading you into the labyrinth of controversy which has grown up round it. One doctrine has been extracted from it by a certain school of theologians, which it assuredly does not, and cannot, teach, viz., the co-ordinate efficacy of Christ's sufferings and those of His people in atoning for human transgression. From any such perversion of the Gospel the Apostle would have shrunk back with instinctive abhorrence, as repugnant to all his feelings, as contradicting all his most cherished conceptions of the truth. No; the thought that dominated every other, as he wrote, was a widely different one: it was that of the mystical union of Christ with His people, by His secret indwelling, through the operation of the Holy Spirit—He in them, and they in Him, by virtue of a profoundly mysterious, yet profoundly real mutual incorporation, binding, nay, as it were, blending them together in a unity and community of present experience and future prospects, and having for its ultimate end their final sanctification. This purpose, however, cannot be consummated till the Church, collectively, and believers, individually, have been perfected through suffering, measured out to each according to God's infinite knowledge of their several needs. Of this