

THE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

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All communications for the Editorial, News of Churches and Correspondence Columns should be addressed to the Managing Editor, Box 2648, P. O. Toronto.

Pastors and church officers are particularly requested to forward items for "News of the Churches" column.

WILL our correspondents kindly note to address all communications to the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT, Box 2648, as above number of box has been changed through post office re-arrangement, and not to him by name, as otherwise delay may arise. Two or three items which ought to have appeared in our last issue were too late through being delivered at his residence. Also write as early as possible—we should like to receive letters by the Saturday preceding the issue—and in giving items of news be brief; elaborate details, interesting enough to the individuals concerned, are not so to the great body of readers and the Editor has, very reluctantly, to cut down.

UNITY IN LIFE.

UNIFORMITY, unanimity, unity, for each of which the Church has striven, with what success? Uniformity is death as the uniform pebbly shore; unanimity found only when individuality is crushed out, a knotless thread; unity is life, unseen but enduring. And it is *unity* for which the Church is commanded to strive, not uniformity, which is ritual, nor unanimity, which is the gauging of truth by a vote, but unity of spirit, in the bond of peace. In this latter sense the Church is an unit; forgetting this, and struggling after the other two, divisions have been multiplied and persecutions waged. The Church is more truly one in the "world's week of prayer" than when, ere Luther's hammer awoke the echoes of the seven hills, all Europe lay uniformly at the feet of the Roman Pontiff. There is more unity in a home where love is ever interested in the other's weal, than in another home where printed rules and the clock mark every step and voice. Thus the Church is called upon to solve the problem of true unity which at the same time preserves individual interest and integrity. Eph. iv. 13-17 provides the true solution. The Church is not a conglomeration of sects, each striving for their own; but a number of bands, each striving for a definite and unselfish end. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, all for the body, not themselves; and body, not bodies, for Christ. Every joint preserves its own individual form, but the whole are compacted thereby; hence they, who, however well intentioned, set themselves away from the great heart of the Church at large, are disintegrating, not compacting, and thus far are doing the adversary's work. There is a heart to the universal Church of Christ. We scarce feel its unity of pulsation, yet it is there. Many joints, veins, nerves, make up this body of ours, so fearfully, so wonderfully made, yet wherever you touch the artery there is the same throb, giving expression to the heart beat; in every joint and limb, the one great life stream flowing. You can't secure this by supports, bandages, mechanical appliances, but by life. The body may become deformed, covered with accretions, but that remains while life lasts, and it is to the true Church life we must look for unity of purpose and of work. Men may and do subscribe to the same creed, and live apart, far as the north pole from the south; men may and do toil together in a common work with no other bond than sympathy in that work. Thus individuality is respected and unity preserved, each finding his place, and filling it not as an isolated factor, but part, however small, of God's great world, of Christ's one Church.

That wonderful passage already quoted, let it be pressed as affording the true solution of churchly independence and unity. Independent, each one, as responsible direct to God, and God alone, yet animated by the one life which quickens every part to one great end. Freedom from all mechanical bonds—the rudi-

ments of childhood (Gal. iv. 3), yet held together by the common life, "effectually working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love"

DENOMINATIONALISM VS. SECTARIANISM.

IT is frequently supposed by some excellent people that these are one and the same. Yet they are not, as a careful glance at them will reveal. Many of those who are in love with the denomination in whose society they are, and who work along the line of its plans, and deeply prize its fellowships, are often said to be sectarian. But not necessarily so, for a special love of those whose likeness of principles may justify a likeness of name does not go the length of what is properly called sectarianism.

But this leads to a definition. Denominationalism is a spirit which attracts a larger or smaller number of persons, who see matters substantially alike, into a circle of pleasant communion and united effort. While it has more or less respect for those who hold different views—according to the worthiness or unworthiness of those views—it has a natural and defensible preference to associate with those with whom it agrees. We say that this preference is defensible. An example will make it plain. An Episcopalian and a Congregationalist can work better for the cause of Christ alone than united. And for this reason, that they are quite unable to accept each other's views as to the power vested in the church. The one's ideas start from the clerical standpoint, the other's from the people's standpoint. Now if the Episcopalian were to meet a score of others who saw with him, he would be more comfortable in fellowshiping and working with them. And so with the Congregationalist were he to meet with a bevy of fellow-thinkers. This would be quite natural and as justifiable as natural. And while each chose a different circle of associates, they could still cherish a kindly feeling towards each other. Thus denominationalism, while making selections and fellowships, respects the selections and fellowships made by others.

Sectarianism is denominationalism carried to a foolish and unjustifiable extreme. Eulogy of itself and exclusion of others are the leading tenets of its faith. When standing up to recite its creed, it does not say, "I believe in the churches of Christ," but it somewhat pompously says, "I believe in the church to which I belong." And when it prays, it prays, "Lord, bless our Church," and it does not lift its eyes above its own fence to see whether they may not be Christians on the other side. Sectarianism then is denominationalism *plus* a spirit of exclusiveness. It is the exclusiveness and not the denominationalism which is wrong about sectarianism. Exclusiveness in thought or in effort is absolutely unjustifiable from the Christian standpoint. It is the spirit of the publicans condemned by our Saviour in His sermon on the mount, the spirit which "*salutes your brethren only.*" And the Church where such a spirit prevails has a low type of spiritual life, and a dim glimpse of the mind of Jesus Christ.

A simile will show up the distinction we are endeavouring to explain. Out there in the forest stands a fine tree with stately trunk and spreading boughs, a sample of symmetry and grace. And there is another tree equally large and towering. But a great fungus grows on the side of the trunk, or there is a great rotten knot whose decay is fast eating away the healthy vitality of the tree. The first tree is a likeness of healthy denominationalism. The second is sectarianism, the fungus or knot of exclusiveness marring its beauty and interfering with healthy life.

Denominationalism may exist in company with liberality, and benediction for others. Sectarianism tends to illiberality, to close communion, and to the reservation of its blessing for itself and its friends. And while the first can use the Saviour's prayer "that they all may be one," the latter can only pray "that we may be separate from them." Which of these spirits the Christian mind should favour, should not be a difficult matter for choice!

INDIVIDUAL AND CHURCH DUTIES.

WE have all heard from our pulpits at one time or another strong utterances against the neglect of personal and individual duty, and properly so, for no man has a right to shelter himself behind the Church, and make excuses for neglect of duty because the Church is doing all. Every man has his own responsibilities, and he may not, cannot, shift them on to the Christian body to which he belongs. There is, however, an opposite truth to this; the shield has another side; it is this: no Church can neglect the work God has given it to do because individual members of that church are doing the work. It is a saying that "corporations have no souls," and it would almost appear as if the remark were true of some churches in their corporate capacity. For all practical purposes they might as well not exist.

Let us indicate two or three of the spheres where this is found. Take for instance work for the extension of the Master's kingdom. It would be interesting to find out, if it were possible, how many churches have been called into existence by the deliberate planned efforts of other churches, and how many owe their formation to the labours of individuals working without the countenance and aid of the church to which they belong, nay, sometimes in the teeth of its opposition, misunderstood and misrepresented. Surely this is a work to which our churches should set themselves, to unite for the founding and building up of Christian churches. Again, take Sunday school work. This has been notoriously neglected by churches, a few individual members do the work with such assistance as they can pick up, and with such funds as they can raise, wise or otherwise—more often otherwise—and the church, as such, stands calmly by, as though it was none of its business. Now if there is one work more than another in which the church ought to be interested it is the Sunday school, if from no higher motives than from selfish ones, for the school is the seed ground of the church; it is a part of the church itself. Let a visit be paid to any of the large nursery grounds to be found in the Dominion; do we see the plot containing the first or second year's growth of shrub or tree neglected and uncared for, left to the irregular efforts of any of the garden hands who may feel disposed to give a little labour on that part? Certainly not. It is as carefully tended, dressed and watched as any part of the garden. Why? Because here is the source of future gain. If these were neglected and trodden down then the nursery man might well close his place and go out of business at once, for all hope of success is gone. Just so is it with the school, if it is neglected where is the Church of the next generation to come from? Truly it is only the irregular, individual, unauthorized effort often that saves a church from dying out; but if the Church would give itself as a Church to this—as more are doing than did twenty years ago, we are happy to think—their strength would be increased, their vitality quickened, and we should more rarely hear of weak and dying churches.

Take one more illustration, there is never wanting in churches men and women of large, sympathetic hearts, with hands ready to minister to the wants of the needy and suffering. This is right, but it is not sufficient; every church ought to feel that if one member suffers the whole body suffers, and the church as a body ought to do the work of relief, sympathy and help, in other words, the church should take care of its poor and sick, not in the place of, but working with, individual love and sympathy. Nor, if the church be a true church, filled with the spirit of the Master, need it be feared that this will have the effect of killing out individual effort, it will stimulate it, direct it, and make it more effective and successful.

Let our churches then see to it what they are doing; let our pastors rouse their churches, if needful, to a sense of duty. Every church has its mission, if it has not the sooner it dies the better. We must not rest content with being edified, built up, but collectively as well as individually, work for the Master; we want—to use a common phrase—"a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together."