

THE ORGANIC UNION DILEMMA.*

THE work by Dean Carmichael on "Organic Union" has already been noticed by us, but as a second copy has been sent we draw attention to it again, as it is always a pleasure to show our respect for its author. It is stated that two schemes are now proposed for Church unity; "one for the union of Christendom, the other for the union of Protestant Churches." The Dean presents eight reasons for union as given by Protestants: 1st, our Lord's desire; 2nd, the heathen difficulty caused by divisions; 3rd, the injury to spiritual life caused by party spirit; 4th, the actual unity in fundamentals; 5th, the sin of division; 6th, the practicability of union; 7th, the force of precedents in the Temperance movement, &c.; 8th, the general sympathy with this movement. It seems to us that those who fight for their sectarian interests in the teeth of the first of these reasons, the express wish of our Lord, will regard the others as literally of no account. "If they believe not Moses and the Prophets," &c., &c.

Besides these, the Dean gives five reasons why Canada is a good field in which to test this movement. 1st. There have been expressions of a desire for union by the Church authoritative bodies; 2nd, here is no State Church; 3rd, there is before us an example in the union of Presbyterians and of Wesleyans; 4th, Church government here is akin in most bodies; 5th, the common sentiment is favorable. We do not discuss these points, they each demand an article to be fairly treated. We must, however, say this, that what the Church Synods of Canada do is a small matter in this movement so far as the Church of England is concerned, as we are not, thank God, a Canadian sect, but an integral part of the Catholic Church. The author passes on to give us a short chapter to show that in the days in which the New Testament was written, "the Church of God was one great, undivided Church, and that there is nothing in the New Testament analogous to the denominational system." In that one statement the Dean puts his finger on the core of the whole question. There is nothing whatever in the Scriptures to justify Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists or Baptists, forming themselves into a denomination—their separation from the Church which was and is in a direct line of historic succession from the Apostolic Church is utterly without warrant in the Word of God. That this oneness of organism, this realisation that the Church is "One Body" of which "Christ is the Head," prevailed through the "Patristic Age," is shown, as is also, that "the testimony of the Fathers to the oneness of the Church is undeviating." The Dean goes on in brief chapters to outline the "Earliest breaches of Unity," then, "The rupture between the East and the West," on, "From the great rupture to the Protestant Reformation," which is treated

in several sections as it affects the several parts of Great Britain, and developed the sects named, Independents and Methodists. We are glad to see the words "The English Church, previous to, and after the Reformation, was just as much the same Church, as Naaman was Naaman after he had washed his leprosy in the Jordan! the Church was reformed, but did not re-organize." That being so *we cannot now re-organize* even for the sake of unity. To do so would be to break loose from the Apostolic order we have maintained, and to admit that the Church of the early days before divisions came was not divinely commissioned, and founded, but was, as a human organisation, free to be re-cast in a modern mould.

Dean Carmichael draws an analogy between the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Methodist systems, as each "perpetuate their Church life from within," in sharp contrast to "Congregationalism which perpetuates its life from without. We fully admit with the author that the separated bodies teach Apostolic doctrine—but only in a partial and modified way however, for *part of the doctrines of the Apostles was unity in organism, whereas the very opposite is the doctrine of the Presbyterian and other religious organisations.* Strict, loyal obedience to Apostolic injunctions would leave the tents of these denominations tenantless. A very painful dilemma faces these bodies. The Spirit of God condemns divisions, the whole New Testament is a protest against denominational separations. There is as direct an obligation to keep the Church in unity, as to believe in Jesus Christ. Scriptural commands cannot be graded into what is obligatory and what is optional. Now to observe this obligation, to obey God, to regard Apostolic order, we submit that it is necessary to have and for all to recognise One Church. Pray what are the sects going to do when the Spirit moves them to cast off their denominational prejudices, and when they being so moved, wish to observe and display the unity of the Body of Christ? If they refuse to recognise the historic claims based upon the Apostolicity of the Church of England, they have absolutely no other Church to rally round, so *God cannot be obeyed*, so God's Word has become void, so God's Apostles taught as a duty that which cannot be followed—so the gates of hell have prevailed against His Church! The dilemma is a severe one, either unity will bring these separated bodies into union with the Church of England, or there will be a new Church created, manufactured to meet the crisis. Imagine the Spirit of God moving men to create a Church other than that of which Jesus Christ is now Head! The Dean of Montreal closes his treatise by suggesting in the form of a prayer for unity that we and all the sects may "strike out anew in this new country as a branch of The Holy Catholic Church." We should like to see a scheme formulated more definite than this aspiration. We need hardly say that the work breathes throughout a broad, loving spirit.

The church of England has everything to hope from those separated from her. No religious body ever was so shamefully maligned

misrepresented, and unjustly abused as the Church has been for generations by those whose perversity of self-will first inspired them to found other so-called Churches, and by those who have inherited anti-church feelings without anything been done to justify such animosity. We have not dealt with Dean Carmichael's chapters showing how large is the common ground of doctrine held by all those bodies who stand apart from us. We commend this section of his valuable treatise especially to the study of Churchmen, who will thank us, if they secure the Dean's book and study it, for having called attention to its most interesting and suggestive pages.

THE ANTI-JESUIT BILL AGITATION.

TWO great meetings have been held to give those who voted for the disallowance of the Jesuit Bill an opportunity of more fully defending their vote, and to afford the public an opportunity of passing judgment upon the decision of the historic Thirteen.

The one in Toronto held on Easter Monday night, excluded the whole of the parochial clergy, all the Church lay officials, and all laymen who wished to attend the Vestries. The members present could have been secured for a meeting two weeks later, after the House was prorogued. There was no such urgency as to justify a deliberate exclusion of representatives of the Church of England. It was just the kind of folly which we might expect from those who put at the head of a movement which demands a broad-minded, statesmanlike leader, one whose public career can be traced by the graves of enterprises he has killed. A capacity for gauging public sentiment, great educative powers, diplomatic skill, conciliatory manners are essential to the successful leadership and conducting of a popular movement. It is only a few months ago since Mr. W. H. Howland styled all who opposed the Scott Act as criminals. The answer of the people has been recorded—it is, that the Act must die.

It seems anomalous that while the Church of England is at this moment furnishing by her historic records, almost every weapon used against the Jesuit aggression, so many who are the leaders of that Church to-day seem to care not one jot about the great controversy which is one of the chief glories of the old Church for whose independence our forefathers made for centuries so splendid a struggle! Had the apathy now manifested prevailed four or more centuries ago, the Church of England would not now be in existence. Men are saying, and saying with contemptuous severity, that the Church of England may talk as it likes, it is after all in sympathy with Rome. This is now the common talk of non-conformists, and we cannot deny that this most injurious slander has some justification. The meeting at Montreal seems to have been a more earnest protest than the one in Toronto. The mouth of Montreal is woefully gagged by Rome. Let a Protestant settle in that city and he soon bows his knee in the house of Rimmon.

*Organic union of Canadian Churches with a comparison of authorised standards, by the Very Rev. James Carmichael, M.A., D.C.L., Dean of Montreal. Dawson Bros., Montreal.

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