

does not hope?—for union among Christians, realize how many difficulties are in the way. It is easy to separate; it is as difficult to reunite as to reconstruct a shattered crystal. The questions which may this year seem insurmountable will in five years' time have probably ceased to worry, and have become ancient history; so it is better to bear evil as patiently as possible. In Canada we have had two instructive unions, those of the Methodist and Presbyterian bodies, which now form two large and compact communities, full of energy and usefulness. But these unions were neither of them unanimous. In both cases the rights of objectors were preserved, and to this day there continue to exist the Free Methodists and the Reformed Presbyterians, and, if we mistake not, one or two congregations which still claim affiliation to the Church of Scotland. But fortunately there is little soreness, or feeling, or claims of unfair dealing. Of recent years, as Dr. Sheldon pointed out, three large bodies which in the States maintained separate organizations have united, and all around us we hear of union. But no union will be happy unless convictions are respected; and what is most desirable is the avoidance of disunion. There is in the Scotch laity an evident revolt against this continual subdivision and a falling off of the sinews of war. The present leader of the United Free Church deplors "the sectarian differences of this sect-ridden country," but apparently fails to realize that the loss to the national religious convictions is far greater than any money could purchase.

A Spirit of Union.

Before leaving the question of separation and the setting up of rival sects we may point out the new spirit in which these divisions are being considered. Why did they originate? They arose, it seems to us, from the passionate love of liberty, which gained sway after the Reformation. Before that convulsion Reformers existed, but within the Church. Then came the claim to purify the Church, that is, each national Church, and where such amendment was refused by a majority there followed the exercise of the right of private judgment, the claim that each individual has the right to subject all religious teaching to the test of Scripture, and to be himself the judge of what that Scripture really was. Thus we have many of the multitude of divisions. A better spirit is growing up. Even where there is no reunion we find bodies of Christians arriving at working agreements to avoid overlapping. Quite an interesting example comes from New Hampshire. The excessive number of churches there makes it difficult to supply the people's spiritual needs; they are too small to pay the pastors adequately. Leading workers of this State have come to the conclusion that "there is no justification for the continuance of several weak churches in the same community at the sacrifice of the minister and his family and at the sacrifice of the missionary resources of the denomination, when, by businesslike and Christian co-operation and readjustment, it would be possible to maintain in each community a strong, self-supporting, and, therefore, self-respecting Church organization."

Neglected Children.

We are pleased to read in the "Church Times" an eulogistic article upon the report of Mr. J. J. Kelso on the care of neglected and dependent children in the Province of Ontario. In the course of an article on the work of Mr. Kelso and the six or seven hundred voluntary workers in this field of usefulness the "Times" says: "There are nearly four thousand children placed by the Department in the charge of foster-parents. As a general rule the greatest care is taken of the children, but the interest of an outsider is desirable. Occasionally there is cause

to remove a child, but generally, anything lacking in the adequate care is merely from want of thought, and is at once rectified on being pointed out by the visitor. It is recognized by the Department that it is an important duty for the parent to send the child to church and Sunday School. It is claimed that the life in a home under such conditions is far superior in its influence to the training in an institution. But, at the same time, it is clearly recognized that either is only suitable as a last resort after every means has been exhausted to improve the children's own homes. Thus the Department encourages the branch societies to take an interest in all movements which may elevate the lives of the children, either in the improvement of the housing conditions, the provision of playgrounds, the assistance of widowed mothers, and the prompt punishment of all who aid or abet children in wrongdoing." In the same number is an appeal by the Waifs' and Strays' Society for aid in the work of an additional home started in Winnipeg. This unexpected article induces us to call attention to doubts cast on the management of the Home at Niagara. There should be none. But the assertion that something was out of joint should be met, as our correspondent suggested, by something else than silence. We shall be glad to publish any explanation.

An Ignorant Insult.

An unhappy suicide of an afflicted elderly clergyman has drawn the usual remark about Doctor Osler. The writers show themselves illiterate and ignorant. The age limit was a theory advanced by the late Anthony Trollope, the novelist, quoted by Doctor Osler. The reporter was a shining example of Mr. Chesterton's essay on reporters, an apt illustration, more appropriate than his imaginary ones. Probably the gibe will never cease in Doctor Osler's case, but the silly people who repeat it show their own stupidity, and worse.

Christian Socialism.

The Bishop of Birmingham makes an interesting announcement, to the effect that he will shortly form a standing social service committee, presumably for his diocese. Its object, His Lordship says, will be "to encourage the general study of social and industrial problems from the Christian point of view, and to assist in creating and strengthening an enlightened public opinion in regard to such problems, and generally to promote a more active spirit of social service as a part of individual Christian duty." Bishop Gore has the courage of his convictions, and, being satisfied that the ordinary conventional way of looking at and dealing with the hardships and inequalities of social life is not as effective to their remedy as it ought to be, he has decided to break new ground. The result will be watched with interest.

"THE SIN OF SCHISM."

The correspondence recently carried on in our columns under the caption, "What is the Church?" has suggested to us this ever-burning question of our "unhappy divisions." To whose charge must be laid this greatest of all evils, this most prolific source of our failures in the past, this ever-open wound on the Body of Christ? We reply, to everyone in general and to no one in particular. Schism is the sin of no sect, individual, age or race. It is the sin of human nature. Every Christian body in existence is equally implicated. No one can claim even comparative immunity; for there are two kinds of schism, active and passive. There is the schism which is the result of a blind, stubborn determination to yield not one inch, to

make no concessions, to compromise no points, whose motto is, "Take it or leave it. If you don't like it you can lump it." This we would call passive schism, the outcome of a hard, intolerant, unsympathetic spirit that goes its own way at every cost. Then there is another form of passive schism, which is the result of pure, spiritual apathy and indifference, which simply won't take the trouble to make concessions, much less advances, and so lets things drift. On the other hand, there is the active schism that makes fierce and sweeping demands and will brook no denial or compromise, whose motto is, "If you don't satisfy my demand to the letter I won't walk another step with you." Of either or both of these forms of schism every religious communion in Christendom has at some time in its history been guilty. Our own Church can claim no exemption. Her especial form of schism has been of the passive kind, as anyone who has candidly studied her history, and who, moreover, has had a personal knowledge of prevailing conditions half a century and less ago, can testify. That the schism of our separated dissenting brethren was of the active and aggressive kind does not in the smallest degree relieve the Church from her share of the blame. It must, of course, be borne in mind that blame in this matter, so far as it affects ourselves, rests on systems rather than on individuals; for how many hundreds of thousands of dissenters has the rigid and inelastic system of our Church been, and it may be added is still, to some extent responsible. Consider the attitude of the Church in bygone days in England towards its humbler members who felt a call to the more active ministries of religion, and who demanded enrollment in the ranks of the organized workers. How much "dissent" is due to neglected, unutilized, and, it must be confessed, to deliberately spurned enthusiasm! People were passively "driven out of the Church" by thousands because the Church had nothing for them to do. Matters have during the lifetime of many of us, of course, vastly improved, and the evil, if it exists to-day, does so in a greatly modified form. But that up to within the last thirty or forty years ago it did exist in a most acutely disastrous form, and that it was mainly responsible for the great bulk of dissent hardly any candid-minded student of Church history will, we think, attempt to deny. Earnest, God-fearing, well-intentioned men and women have, during the past couple of centuries, left us by the hundreds of thousands, not from any objection to our polity or teaching, but simply because they were denied the work for God and humanity that their souls hungered after. Later on it was easy to "muster up" objections against the doctrine, polity and practices of the Church. But this, in the vast majority of cases, was not the primary cause of English dissent. It was the attitude of the Church towards a certain class of its own awakened members. The schism of the Church of England has been, therefore, mainly of the passive kind. Tolerant and comprehensive to a fault, and never an actively persecuting Church, her share in the blame is of a negative kind. She has driven no one out of her communion, but she has apathetically allowed them to fall away by thousands. In view of all this the attitude of Churchmen towards "schism" should be one of great forbearance. As long as the world and human nature endures it will take two to make a quarrel. In the nineteen centuries of the Christian era there has never been a schism wherein, were the facts of the case impartially examined, the faults would not appear about equally balanced on each side. This, no doubt, will appear a sweeping statement, but we firmly believe that it is borne out by the facts of history. Under the circumstances which of us can afford to indulge in any contemptuous talk on the subject? Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.