

continue till "the consummation of the age," would at once and forever cease. Else, what could the Apostolic commission be worth, in connection with the promise:—"Lo! I am with you alway?" The commission in connection with the promise surely involves the dogma of Apostolical succession; otherwise the commission would end when St. John, the last of "the Twelve," died. And as for "Sacramental Grace," it must be an entirely new idea to suppose that Christ would require His followers to do anything at all without connecting some blessing with the due and proper performance of the act He Himself required to be done. Such an idea would be a discovery of the nineteenth century worthy of the infidel "Hatch," the chosen theological authority of the "Protestant Divinity School" of Toronto. (May heaven defend us from the poison disseminated by such a school!) In regard to one Sacrament take this text:—"Ye are all the children of God through the faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ," or again:—"Repent ye therefore, and be baptized for the remission of sins." And again:—"We were buried with Him through baptism into death." And especially St. Peter's words: "Baptism now saves" (*Nun sozet Baptisma*) 1 St. Peter iii. 21. As for the other Sacrament, the Holy Eucharist, take the following from the "Evangelical" St. Paul:—"The cup of blessing which we bless is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not a communion of the Body of Christ?" And connect therewith our Saviour's own words:—"Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you."

Supposing that we are allowed to throw the New Testament aside as a book of no authority whatever:—Well, then: we can make our Theology exactly agreeable to our taste—as, in fact, many people do. But, with the New Testament in our hands, we should most unhesitatingly say that the man who repudiates "Apostolical Succession" and "Sacramental Grace" is an infidel. He may call himself Atheist, Agnostic, Deist, Socinian, Unitarian, Colensoite, or anything he likes:—the plain fact remains—He does not believe the Bible.

THE LATEST "ECUMENICAL."

THAT the recent meeting of a number of Methodist delegates from various parts of the world should dignify itself with the title of "Ecumenical" is only one of the many instances of people using fine words without the remotest idea of the meaning of the terms they employ. As an English contemporary remarks:—"The airs of 'ecumenicity' which the speakers gave themselves was what the Americans would term 'a caution.' Not only had they formal debates on the 'catholicity of Methodism' and on 'Methodism as a bond of brotherhood among the nations,' but one enthusiastic speaker went so far as to suggest that our Lord had prayed that Wesleyans might be one! It does not seem to have occurred to anybody, that to apply to a sect, however big, a word which implies the whole habitable globe is something worse than an Irish 'bull.' To Mr. Myers, a United, 'Free Methodist' (!) we are indebted for a new definition of 'catholic,' namely, that it means 'universal and general, liberal and free from bigotry.' This may do very well for the devil's counterfeit of catholicity, but the word really means the whole Church and the whole Truth, without admixture of schism or heresy." "Of course it

is in America where Methodism has made most progress; and in America the Church had to contend against such enormous odds that the wonder is that she survived at all. Fancy an Episcopal Church, whose members could not receive either confirmation or ordination without crossing the Atlantic—and that not in a Cunard liner, but in the old tubs that sometimes took three months to make the voyage. No earnest or thoughtful Churchman ever can, or ever will forgive the State for the difficulties which it placed in the way of creating a Colonial Episcopate," etc.

The "Ecumenical" appears to have received not much attention in England. Its meetings were held in the little meeting house called "City Road Chapel" having room for the "delegates" and about 800 more; but with the exception of the first day, there were many vacant seats. *The Times* speaks of the affair as "a monster class meeting, assembled to confess and hear confessions, and to collect subscriptions for the more speedy distributions of the rest of mankind into weekly classes." The speakers and writers seem to have been sadly cramped in their efforts to spread themselves, by a rule restricting them to twenty minutes each. Accustomed as they are to scatter an infinite number of words in almost every conceivable direction, they found twenty minutes not enough to get through their introductory paragraphs.

On the Conference generally a recent number of the *Guardian* has some interesting remarks. The writer says:—"The first thing that strikes us on examination is that Wesleyanism at the present moment is mainly an American rather than a British communion. Of its members, nearly four-fifths are found in the United States and Canada. It is clearly therefore a system which adapts itself better to American, and Colonial, than to English society, and flourishes most where it is not brought into juxtaposition with the Church of England, from which it sprang. Next we notice that those who are under what is called an Episcopal form of government—starting from the men whom Wesley, against the remonstrance of his brother Charles, ordained reluctantly as 'Bishops,' only when he found refusal to consecrate from the Episcopal authorities at home—are more than eleven-twelfths of the American body, and little less than three-fourths of the whole Wesleyan communion. Moreover we observe that while in 'British' Methodism, the proportion of local (or lay) preachers to the itinerant ministers is nearly ten to one, in the American bodies it is about ten to nine, and in Episcopal Methodism the two bodies nearly approach equality. We gather also, from a speech of Dr. Buckley, an American delegate, that the admission of members in his country is conducted on a different system from that which prevails here, and apparently on principles of somewhat greater freedom. All these things seem to show that where Wesleyanism has chiefly flourished it has, in organizing itself as a communion, borrowed more than at home—in the name of Episcopacy and the recognition of authority in its Bishops, in the greater prominence of a regular ministry, and perhaps in a more comprehensive system of membership—from the Church in which the Wesleyan society first arose. Its itinerant ministry, while we observe that its fatal defect as a pastoral agency is beginning to be felt, is obviously excellent, if made complementary to a parochial system, as Wesley hoped that it would be. The 'class' system, whatever modifications it may need, especially in the recital of 'spiritual experiences' has an extraordinary power as an organization for church unity, and the creation or maintenance of spiritual

earnestness. But yet we fail to see that Wesleyanism can do much in these critical times to guide the thought of the world, to solve the great questions of the Church of the future, and to justify its own isolated position and claims of authority as a great Christian communion. In theology it claims no originality; it is contented with the 'Evangelical Arminianism' of Wesley, and, unlike other religious bodies, professes to be guided, not by carefully drawn Creeds or Articles, but by accordance with the doctrine of his sermons. In thought and practice, we do not find anywhere a marked impress of either intellectual or spiritual leadership; we cannot gain any better grasp of ultimate principles; we cannot point to any great attempt to deal with the terrible problems of faith in our own time, or to strike out any new line of Christian progress and victory. We see in Wesleyanism a powerful subordinate agency in the Church of Christ, but none of the nobler and grander features of a Church in itself."

"The extent and strength of the Wesleyan communion considered as a whole, preclude at once the sanguine hopes of an easy reabsorption in the Anglican Church, in which some have too lightly indulged. But the fact nevertheless remains, that there is, in the abstract, little to forbid reunion with the Church, and that, in practice, such reunion would supply the very things in which both bodies are deficient. We should gain greater play of religious emotion and popular power. Wesleyans would gain a true ecclesiastical position, and union with the higher elements of religious thought and ecclesiastical life."

CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

No. 36.

LOP-SIDED LIBERTY.

THE well known aphorism which declares that only to be "a choleric word" in an officer which in a private "is rank blasphemy," may be fairly rendered: "That which is lawful in the city clergy is a gross offence in a country parson."

At the opening of the Baptist College in Toronto last week, the Rev. J. P. Sheraton, Principal of the so-called "Divinity School," was present and spoke, also the Revs. Septimus Jones and W. S. Rainsford. Now "we do not interfere with these men's consciences," nor propose, in Cromwellian style, to brain them in the name of Christ with a musket, but we do protest against their enjoying the liberty to thus dishonour their own Church, turn their backs upon their solemn oaths and duty, and disturb the minds of the young, while another clergyman, who at the worst according to his accusers, is only going a step too far in another direction, but who, as a matter of notorious palpable fact is simply obeying the laws of the Church as he has sworn to do, is denounced to the Bishop, held up to public obloquy, and driven to renounce the exercise of his unpaid ministrations.

If it is right for our Clergy to give aid and countenance to the Baptist body, then it must be right for them to be false to their vow "to drive away erroneous doctrine;" or, they must think the Baptist theory on baptism to be the truth, and each of these clergy must be ready as Shakespear says, "to renounce his own baptism." Those clergy applauded the name of one Baptist preacher whom we heard say, "The Church of England has damned more souls than it has saved," and who