

Dominion Churchman.

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"VIEWS."

When a great work has to be done, and the urgency is extreme, minor details of the manner of doing it are usually supposed to be of comparatively little consequence. There may be a manifest fitness and propriety belonging to one mode rather than another; but when the great principles of the object desired are adhered to, those whose hearts are most intent on the attainment of that object will naturally hail with delight every means that may be adopted for the purpose, within the limits of those principles. The Church is an institution of Divine origin, with Divine authority, having a Divine commission to disciple all nations. Within this Church as constituted by her Head, and by those whom He especially appointed for the purpose, we find the "one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world;" we find the Holy Spirit as the agent for securing Christian light, life and consolation; we find the means of grace ordained by Christ Himself, the two sacraments for the soul's health,—one as an introduction to the Church and for the commencement of our spiritual life, and another for the continued communion of the faithful and for further growth in grace, and also the common prayers of the Church, with the access of the soul in private to the throne of propitiation; and we find the three-fold ministry, an appointment equally divine with all the other arrangements of the Christian system, in order to bring the nations into subjection to Messiah, and to minister the gospel of reconciliation to those who consent to come within the pale of the Church. To carry out the designs of the author of Christianity, an immense amount of unceasing work is requisite, a vast application of labor in the use of all the means and instrumentalities the Church contains, year after year, and from one age to another, until the Redeemer shall appear on earth the second time. With more or less of zeal and faithfulness, with more or less of success, the Church has been pursuing her vocation for many centuries, with sometimes, though rarely, a heaven above, calm, serene, and lovely; at other times, with storm and tempest all around, and strife and discord raging within. Much of the Church's work has, however, been left undone; and the most lamentable sight of all is, when, instead of pursuing their blessed avocation, her various parties turn aside to dwell on their own differences, and appear to think they are doing God service by magnifying their own divergences and intensifying their own party lines, even when they are members of precisely the same external organization. There is certainly no body of men

on the face of the earth where one party so obstinately refuses to work with the other, as we sometimes find in our own branch of the Church. It appears to be of no use to ask the question so often asked:—are our differences so great as to require or even to sanction so strange an alienation? If so, why are we members of the same body? Why are we "wearing the livery of the Church" when rather than work heart and soul in the cause of Christ and His Kingdom with our brethren, we prefer to connect ourselves, for religious objects, with those bodies which have gone out from us because they were not of us, and whose great object it is to pull down what it is our duty to endeavour to build up? Where is our honesty, while this is our practice? Can anything concern us so much as the extension over the world of the Church, established, not by this man or that man possessed of independent mind, and of intractable will, but inaugurated by that august Being, who came down from Heaven to give His life a ransom for the world? and should anything concern us more than the ministration of the blessings of the Gospel to the Church of the Lord which He hath purchased with His own blood? These are surely the two great branches of the Church's work; and we gladly hail, in any section which has hitherto abandoned itself to party, its return to the real work of the Church, even though it should not be done exactly in agreement with the lines drawn by some other section of our Church. We worship the same Divine Trinity, rely on the same Redeemer, have the same sacred Comforter, study the same oracles of truth, have the same magnificent Liturgy, claim the same glorious ancestry of apostles, prophets, martyrs and confessors, possess the same divinely appointed and providentially transmitted ministry, and have the same blessed hope of an immortality beyond the skies when this painful life shall be ended. But yet our bickerings and suspicions of each other, our refusals to work in harness, are in no way more aptly indicated than by a reference to the talismanic word at the head of this article. It is a term which was more frequently met with half a century ago in the mother country, and acquired so much of a *cant* significance, that after a time men became ashamed of it, and it was pretty well laid aside, until recently some efforts have been made to revive it. Before we can work with any feeling of contentedness in connection with our brethren in any association for the good of the church, it is not enough to find that they have been baptized into our one body, that they have the same fellowship of the saints, that they believe the same formularies of faith, the same truths once for all revealed to the Church, and that they are ready to work, and to spend their lives in the cause of Christ's Church

and the spread of His Gospel, the most important thing of all appears to be to ascertain what are their "views," and whether they have the authorized shibboleths of the party. If they are clergymen, in order to ascertain their "views," a regular system of *espionage* is carried on, every trifling movement is watched, the least turning of the head is noted—the direction in which the body is placed during particular parts of the service being supposed to indicate the widest possible theological divergencies. The length of the surplice, whether it covers the ankles or not, has been supposed to present a most important indication of the "views" entertained. Phraseology, of course, as well as accent and modulation of voice, are also regarded as so many touchstones—those who have been initiated into the watchwords and tones of the party. The adoption of one such conventional party expression as "finished righteousness," (if any body knows what that can mean), would ensure a safe conduct through all the ramifications of the party. But woe to the unlucky aspirant for preferment who fails to pass the ordeal to the satisfaction of his critics. Two such instances have recently occurred in Toronto. They are simply later exemplifications of the same prejudices which animated the people of Scotland in the last century, when they refused to listen to Whitfield, because he lacked the *holy tone*! And if it should happen to be a religious periodical that is to be taken into consideration, it is not enough that the claims of the Church of Christ are urged, and her progress is chronicled, irrespective of party; unless it have the watchwords of a narrow coterie unequivocally and unmistakably enunciated, it will not further the interests of the party. We are warned by public announcement that, to such an extreme are these narrow prejudices carried, considerable lamentation is indulged in when even the advertisements of religious journals are carefully examined, and no trace is discernible of the aforesaid party "views." But is it so that the Church of Christ has received her noble mission, and has carried on her grand machinery during century after century, and all this merely that the splendour of her achievements should dwindle down to such miserable twaddle as this? Is this the great platform on which the battle of the church is to be fought against the increasing infidelity, the rank and undisguised atheism of the age? God forbid! It is surely high time that something should occur to arouse us to a sense of the magnitude of the enterprise in which we are engaged, and of the immense importance of the final result of all our endeavours. Nor is it of less consequence that we should be deeply impressed with the fact that where contention and strife exist, the love of God must be wanting—that all