

done better had she not broken away at '43, but fought her battle in the Church. Now she has made a place and history for herself. "She has," as one of her orators put it not long ago, "established herself." She has made work and responsibility during these long years, and now her younger sons should not let the flag unfurled by their fathers be drawn down an inch from the masthead. The more all Churches wish well to each other the better for all. "In things essential, unity; in things non-essential, liberty; in all things, charity."

C.

[This letter is from a former Editor of our RECORD, as our skillful readers will see, and appreciate accordingly.]

APOSTOLIC STUDIES, ON THE PRIMITIVE OR INFANT CHURCH OF CHRIST.

9.) CHRISTIAN COURAGE: Acts 4: 15-37.

AFTER the Council had conferred upon what course to take, they threatened Peter and John, commanding them not to speak to any man nor teach in the name of Jesus. In refusing to obey the priests, Peter and John evinced true Christian courage. Although they were Apostles filled with the Spirit, yet they were only men. They had sensibilities common to human nature; they did not love pain, imprisonment nor death; they preferred, no doubt, peace and safety. They knew that this very Council had been instrumental in causing Christ to be put to death, and might fatally persecute them. They, however, manfully stood by their principles, and told them that they must speak the things they had seen and heard.

For fear of the people the Council decided to let them go; as no charge was proved against them; and the Apostles' answer was such that even they must have admired it, for it was neither defiant nor bitter, nor complaining; neither was it timid nor equivocal. It was frank, fearless, manly, and they made no concealment of their purpose. Their very candor proved their safety. Their sense of right was their support. They felt, too, that they had human sympathy, for all men glorified God for that which was done.

Having obtained their liberty, they joined their own company and made their report; then, lifting up their voice in prayer, the place was shaken as with an earthquake, shewing that God was present; and they were all filled

with the Holy Spirit, and spake the Word of God with boldness. To be filled with the Spirit gives the Christian true courage.

Here we have a picture of the blessed state of the Infant Church; all being of one heart and one soul, they held all things in common. Those who had lands or houses sold them, and put the prices realized into a common fund; and thus distribution was made unto all who were in need. These sacrifices for the common good were voluntary acts, and not compulsory obligations.

Thus did also Joses, surnamed Barnabas, who was afterwards a chosen companion of St. Paul, until they separated on account of John Mark, as recorded in Acts 15: 36-39; by means of which the blessings of salvation were, in the good Providence of God, more widely diffused.

10.) ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA: Acts 5: 1-11.

A dark shadow was to fall on the Infant Church, not from without, but from backsliders within the pale. The sins of Ananias and Sapphira were a sad instance of evil in the human heart. This man and this woman having become members of the Church in Jerusalem, sold a possession, showing outwardly a willingness to make a sacrifice for the present necessity of the poorer disciples. In place, however, of giving the whole price, they kept back a part of it, and only brought the balance to the Apostles; apparently not willing to trust entirely to the bounty of Divine Providence, as the others had done. It does not appear clear from the context that Ananias told a lie, but he acted a lie, not merely to men, but to God; and the one is as bad as the other in God's sight. This was an attempt to give a false impression of piety and zeal; being really an act of hypocrisy; a semblance of faith and love and self-sacrifice that did not exist in the heart. It was deliberate and preconcerted between the man and his wife; a culmination of false pretences, shamming, and deceit.

Their motives might have been, 1st, vanity, to get the praise of men; 2d, love of money, or covetousness, to keep back a part of the price; 3d, want of faith, or unbelief, dreading lest the common fund might fail them at last; and 4th, the suggestion of Satan.

Peter must have received the power to make the discovery of Ananias's sin, otherwise he could not have charged him with lying to the Holy Spirit. Hearing this, and being self-convicted and self-condemned, the unfortunate man fell down, died, and was buried.

About three hours afterwards, Sapphira, all unconscious of what had happened to her hus-

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