

for the multiplication of regenerating and convecting agencies. Division is not the best state of the Church, but better than dead or monotonous uniformity. Denominations and sects will ultimately give way to a higher unity. But what is good and noble in any portion of Christ's kingdom will be woven as an ornament in his crown. The perfection of the Church does not require an obliteration of the past. History is not a child's play, or "the baseless fabric of a vision, leaving no wreck behind"; but the evolution of God's thoughts and purposes which have an eternal significance and power. No true servant of God has labored in vain. The end of history will be the rich harvest of the preceding growth in Summer and Spring. The temporary scaffolding will be taken down, but the building will remain. The dust of earth will be shaken off, the smoke of battle will disappear, the wounds will be healed. All human imperfections, sins, and errors will be done away, that the work which God has wrought through all these ecclesiastical and denominational agencies may appear in all its purity, grandeur, and beauty. God will, in his own good time, bring cosmos out of chaos, and overrule the discord of Christendom for the deepest concord.

Our present duty is to recognize, to maintain and to promote Christian unity in the midst of ecclesiastical diversity, as far as truth and conscience permit. Christian unity has not to be created; but it already exists as to its basis.

There is now, and always has been, a concord, as well as a discord. Christian unity underlies all denominational diversity, and is consistent with it. Every man is a man, first or last, whatever be his race or nationality; and every Christian is a Christian, no matter what be his ecclesiastical connection. It is of the utmost importance to recognize this general Christianity, which underlies all denominational distinctions.

We all profess to believe "in the communion of saints," as an existing fact and an ever-present reality. It necessarily flows from the living union of believers with Christ. All Christians are one in Christ, and, therefore, one among themselves. They are members of His mystical body; they are redeemed by the same blood, baptized in the same triune name, justified by the same grace through faith, sanctified by the same spirit, animated by the same love to God and men, and they travel on different roads to the same Father's house in Heaven.

We may trace this unity in the various departments of church life.

As to doctrine, all the three great branches of Christendom accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing the inspired Word of God, and the articles of the œcumenical creeds, from the creation down to the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. The Apostles' Creed contains all, and even more, than is necessary for salvation.

Living faith in Christ, as our Lord and Saviour, is enough to make one a Christian. Else the dying thief on the cross could not have been promised a place in Paradise. Peter's creed consisted of only one article: "We believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Nathanael's creed was still shorter: "My Lord and my God." And Paul required no more from the jailor at Philippi, as a condition of baptism and of salvation, than to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." If we examine and compare the most elaborate systems of Greek, Roman and Protestant theology—say, the systems of John of Damascus, Thomas Aquinas, and John Gerhard—we shall find that the heads in which they substantially agree are far more numerous and far more important than those in which they differ. As regards Church polity and worship,

the differences are very considerable, and, practically, divide the denominations more than doctrines. But we should remember that Christ ordained no particular form of Church government and ceremonies, but only the ministry of the Gospel and two sacraments, which are held in common by all. And, notwithstanding the variety of rites and modes of worship, all Christians worship the same Father, through the same Son, in the same Holy Spirit. All use the same Lord's Prayer, the same Psalter, and the same classical hymns. The history of hymnology is a history of Christian life in song, and exhibits, more than any other branch of literature, the communion of saints. The nearer Christians, of whatever name, approach the throne of grace, the more intense their devotion, the nearer they approach each other, whether they know it or not.

If, then, Christian union is a most real and potent fact, beneath or above all differences and varieties of doctrine, polity and worship, why should it not be manifested and strengthened on every proper occasion, not only as a demonstration against superstition and unbelief, but for its own sake, as a thing desirable in itself? The cultivation of fraternal fellowship is essential to the nature of Christianity, as a religion of love to God and man, and is a precious privilege as well as a sacred duty.

The manifestation of Christian union is seriously hindered by differences of language, nationality and custom; but still more by various forms of sectarian exclusiveness. Every Church has the right and duty to defend its own faith and practice; and everybody should belong to that denomination which he conscientiously prefers to any other, and in which he can be most useful. But this is quite consistent with a just and generous recognition of the rights of others. Self-respect implies respect for our equals. Controversy is legitimate and necessary as long as error exists, and no great doctrine or principle has been fully developed and understood without controversy.

But war is carried on for the sake of peace, and polemics must look to irenics. St. Paul, that fearless gospel-lion, opposed with all his might the tenets of false teachers, and withstood even St. Peter to his face, at Antioch, when he betrayed his better conviction by complying with Judaizing practices; yet he praised love in language of unearthly eloquence and beauty, as the queen of Christian graces; and, rising above all bigotry and party spirit, he proclaimed, in his most polemic epistle, the great principle: "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision." May we not add in the same spirit, neither immersion nor pouring nor sprinkling, neither episcopacy nor presbytery, neither Lutheranism nor Calvinism, neither Calvinism nor Arminianism, neither Romanism nor Protestantism, nor any other ism of human invention, "availeth anything, but anew creature in Christ Jesus. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." If we only love our own, we do no more than the heathen. If we take into our sympathy and affection the members of other denominations, we increase our happiness, and become more Christlike and Godlike. Love, instead of being weakened, is strengthened and deepened by being widened. The sun in heaven sends the same rays of light and heat upon all objects within his reach.

"The quality of mercy is not strained.
"It droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven.

"It is twice blessed.
"It blesses him that gives and him that takes."

To conclude the whole matter: *Let our theology and charity be as broad and as deep as God's truth and God's love.* Then we shall be Christ-

ians after the pattern of Christ, and best promote the work for which he came into the world, and for which he established his Church

British & Foreign News.

ENGLAND.

The stool of Jenny Geddes is still preserved in the Antiquarian Museum in Edinburgh. Its place in the collections of that establishment is on the wall just above the old pulpit of John Knox.

Dean Howson is reported to have said recently in reply to Bishop Wordsworth, of Scotland, that it was a very much less scandalous thing to take communion with "the Kirk" in Scotland than to hold fellowship, as some "Churchmen" did, with the Ultramontane Church in Italy.

Five hundred Roman Catholic priests recently made a devotional pilgrimage to Westminster Abbey, London, on the Feast of St. Edward the Confessor. It was a somewhat surprising spectacle to see a band of Roman Catholics praying for the restoration in England of Roman Catholicism, but the Abbey authorities had no thought of hindering them, and London newspapers spoke of it as an interesting illustration of religious liberty.

Last month the London Mission in connection with the Church of England was most energetically carried on. Some months ago the Bishop of London decided to have a parochial mission throughout his crowded diocese, and steps were immediately taken to so organize and arrange the mission as to secure the co-operation of most of the metropolitan clergy, and to make the effort as general as possible. Upwards of 150 clergymen, some of them of great experience, were engaged as missionaries, and a constant series of services are held all the week from seven o'clock in the morning until eight at night. In addition to many volunteers and the usual lay helpers of the various parishes, the London Diocesan Lay Helpers' Association, the Church of England Working Men's Society, and the Church Penitentiary Society supplied quite an army of Church workers, and most strenuous efforts were made to reach and interest the many thousands who are living in the metropolis unattached to any religious body, and practically as heathen in a Christian land. A house-to-house visitation from Temple Bar to the East India Docks one way, and from London Bridge to Hackney Downs on the other, was most energetically carried out. The Christian Evidence Society arranged for a series of lectures at various centres, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel contributed no fewer than nine millions of tracts, leaflets, hymns, &c., for gratuitous distribution. In all the parish churches there was an elaborate succession of services. The Bishop of Bedford, at the close of the first afternoon service at St. Paul's Cathedral, addressed a few words of counsel and advice to the missionaries engaged in the mission. He reminded them that the great multitude of their hearers would be ignorant of the simplest truths of Christianity, and they must not forget that thousands of the London poor were surrounded by circumstances produced by poverty and overcrowding, which made even an endeavour to lead pure and Christian lives very difficult. They must teach the people that religion was a thing that should affect their daily lives, and that it was an advantage from a social point of view as well as hereafter, because it would make their lives brighter and purer and happier. There would be many sick persons in the different parishes, and they must be sought out and visited. The Bishop also urged the missionaries to devote themselves to temperance work on the lines of the Church of England Temperance Society wherever they could, and he was still more anxious that they should do their utmost to promote purity and to rescue the fallen. One great object of their work should be to leave behind them amongst the men with whom they came into contact a chivalric respect towards the weaker sex and an earnest desire to lead hereafter pure and stainless lives.

FOREIGN.

The tireless, sleepless policy of aggression which Russia has steadily maintained in Asia receives another illustration in the practical annexation of Khiva to the Empire. This result has long been only a question of time, and is now accomplished on the ground of