

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

By Rev. J. P. Treacy.

At no time more than at present have greater efforts been made by the leaders of religious thought in the Catholic Church to encourage and promote Christian unity amongst the various religious denominations. That such a union is necessary is apparent to the most casual observer; its importance not only from a religious, but even from a social aspect cannot be too strongly emphasized, especially in a country where bitter animosities arising from religious disunion have had the lamentable effect of separating men who are otherwise united by the social bonds of language, race and country. When men are diametrically opposed in religious matters and carry with them into daily life the practical result of religious antagonism, it will not appear strange that peace and harmony should be banished from our midst. Men are usually governed in all the various details of life by certain fixed and well-determined principles of conduct. From these as from a cause all their actions emanate. The thoughts men have, says Carlyle, are the parents of the actions they do; their feelings determine the outward and actual. If these men are influenced too strongly by a sense of religious division they will inevitably betray that feeling in a manner at once inimical and intolerant, and thus that spirit of Christian peace which the Saviour brought on earth, and which was chanted by angels' voices at His birth, is relegated from the midst of a community, the members of which are supposed to observe it as the fundamental doctrine of their

code of Ethics. For an evil so vast the remedy the most radical and effective is to eliminate from the minds of men the false religious principles that are the source of so much strife and contention, and substitute in their place the true principles of Christian unity. That this is the wish of many leading churchmen belonging to the various Christian denominations was clearly demonstrated at the Congress of Religions held in Chicago, in 1893, and even more recently at the Pan-American Congress of Toronto. In both congresses the various contending creeds were well represented, and although the reunions were not as successful as had been anticipated yet they have not been altogether without fruit. They have created a further desire on the part of the various denominations to know more of one another, and while no practical movement has been undertaken for the re-establishment of religious unity, yet much has been done towards allaying the harsh feeling of prejudice and encouraging and promoting a more universal spirit of Christian fraternity. There is nothing dearer to the heart of Him whom we all regard as our common Master than the preservation of that admirable union which was characteristic of His first disciples and which in succeeding generations was the criterion of the truth of His Religion for the Pagans of Greece and Rome. "And not only for them do I pray but for those also who through their word shall believe in me; that they all may be one, as Thou,