

ple having Jesus Christ for its foundation and its architect, is a divine and immortal structure! Without doubt, the most fatal misfortune, after that of withdrawing from it, is the not returning to it again.

"I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, with all humility and meekness—careful to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit; as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism—one God and Father of all." Here is unity evidently presented in every shape and point of view, in government as well as in faith, in the body of the Church as well as in the profession of doctrine. The governments of the earth may vary according to the will of nations, and the vicissitudes of life; but the government of the Church founded by Jesus Christ, and purchased by his blood, must needs be one, as are its hopes, its baptism, its Lord, and its God. "Only let your conversation be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or being absent may hear of you, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, labouring together for the faith of the gospel." And not fighting against one another, and tearing one another to pieces, as the sectaries have at all times exhorted their followers, and unfortunately have too well succeeded. "Fulfil ye my joy, that you be of one mind having the same charity, being of one accord, agreeing in sentiment. Let nothing be done through contention, neither by vain-glory.—Nevertheless wherunto we are come, that we be of the same mind, let us also continue in the same rule.—And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body.—But avoid foolish questions,—and contentions, and strivings about the law. A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition avoid, knowing that he that is such a one is subverted and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment. Be not led away with various and strange doctrines." Thus did the indefatigable apostle of nations preach to the world. He still lives, breaths, and speaks in his epistles; his preaching, beginning with the Church, will pass on with it to the end of time. He never ceased, nor does he yet cease to recall to unity that crowd of societies gone astray for so many ages, to whom, nevertheless, is due the glory of having preserved Christianity in Africa, and carried it to the extremities of Asia, I mean the Nestorians and Eutychians; he still calls upon the numerous people of the Greek Church, so nearly resembling our own and our brethren, the Lutherans, Calvinists, and English, separated in more modern times; he exhorts them, he conjures them all in a body, and you Sir, in particular, who have just seen and read his words. He again speaks to you and to all, in words to the following effect.—"Heretics or schismatics slaves or free, to whatever climate or nation you belong, you have all been baptized to be one body and one Church. Return then to it, from which a secession was never lawful; enter her bosom which your ancestors unfortunately left from motives,

which you can no longer avow, and upon pretexts, the fallacy of which are at the present day so well known to every enlightened and impartial mind. Fulfil our joy; let us live together with a perfect understanding and reciprocal love, having but one heart and one mind, and then the peace of Jesus Christ to which we have all been called, as members of one body, will reign in our hearts."

3d. It cannot be doubted that the primitive Christians must have had much more lively ideas of unity than those that we collect from the New Testament, since they had it as well as we in their hands, and moreover possessed the additional advantage of having heard this doctrine developed by the apostles in their discourses and daily conversations. The first bishops were formed in the school of their inspired masters, and received consecration at their hands. This immediate institution has gained them from posterity the honorable title of apostolic. There is good reason for supposing that they composed many works—unfortunately but few have come down to us.*

The most ancient are the epistles of Saint Clement, who is called by the fathers, sometimes apostolic, sometimes apostle, sometimes almost apostle. He, as well as Titus and Timothy had accompanied St. Paul in his travels: he followed him to Rome, of which he was bishop, having succeeded Saint Peter, after Linus and Cletus. We will now consider the circumstances in which he wrote his first epistle: A warm dispute had just arisen in Corinth, something similar to what happened in the time of St. Paul. A party had been formed against certain priests of irreproachable character, and had been audacious enough to think of deposing them. Fortunatus immediately leaves Corinth arrives at Rome with information of the disturbance. Clement was then in the chair of Peter. He wrote to the Corinthians that admirable epistle, which for a long time was read in the oriental churches together with the canonical scriptures. He begins by lamenting over, "that impious and detestable division," (these are his words) "which has just appeared among them." He recalls them "to their former piety, to the time when, full of humility and submission, they were as incapable of inflicting an injury as of resenting it. Then (adds he) every kind of schism was an abomination in your eyes." He concludes by telling them that he is in haste to send Fortunatus back to them, "to whom, says he, we join four deputies: Send them back as speedily as possible in peace, that we may be quickly informed of the return of union and peace among you, for which we pray without ceasing: and that we may be enabled to rejoice at the re-establishment of good order amongst our brethren at Corinth." How sacred must unity have been considered in this happy age, when at the first appearance of division, the ancient fellow-labourer of Saint Paul, the venerable Fortunatus, to stop its progress, exposes himself to the dangers of a long voyage and betakes himself to Rome to solicit the successor of St. Peter to interpose his authority.† What would this apostolic Pontiff have said

*Tradition of the first ages.

†Observe, I pray, this early recourse to the chair of Peter in the first ages.

of the great defections of the East, of Germany, and England, since, on the first rumor of a dispute arising in a small portion of the flock in a single town, he immediately takes alarm, treats this disturbance as an impious and detestable division and nothing less than an abominable schism, and employs the authority of his see and his paternal exhortations to bring back the Corinthians to peace and concord?

Ignatius, the disciple of St. Peter and St. John being transported from Antioch, of which he was the third bishop, to Rome, where he was expecting the crown of martyrdom, under Trajan, in 107 in his passage by Smyrna, saw Polycarp, who kissed his chains: he visited, on his journey, many other churches, and wrote to them seven epistles, which are the most precious monuments of the faith and discipline of the primitive church. His epistle to the Christians of Smyrna commences as follows: "I give thanks to Jesus Christ our God, for that he hath filled you with so great wisdom: for I know—that you are fully persuaded that being the Son of God—he was truly born of a virgin, by the will and the power of the Father,—that he was truly crucified for us in his own flesh, under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch; that with his blood he has produced us as the fruits of his divine and blessed passion; and, that by his resurrection he has raised to the end of ages, the standard of the cross for the saints and faithful, both Jews and Gentiles, that we may be all united in the body of his Church."

He afterwards proceeds: "Avoid schisms and discords, which are the source of all evils. Follow your bishop as Jesus Christ his Father, and the college of priests as the apostles. Let no one presume to undertake anything in the church, without the bishop." And yet a female in your country, was bold enough to drive all the bishops from their sees, in order the more easily to accomplish her new plan of a Church!—In his letter to Polycarp, "Watch most carefully," says he, for the preservation of union and concord, which are the first of all blessings." Therefore, the first of all miseries are schism and division. Further on in the same letter, addressing the faithful: He says, "Hear your bishops, that God may hear you. With what joy would I give my life for those who submit to the bishop, the priests, and the deacons! Oh! that I may be one day united with them in the Lord." And in his epistle to the Philadelphians. "Not that I have found schism among you, but I wish to fortify you against it as the children of God. He does not wait till schism has appeared: he stifles it in the birth and cuts off in the bud. "All those, who are of Christ, hold with their bishops, but those who separate to embrace the communion of accursed men, shall be cut off and condemned together with them." And to the Ephesians: "Whoever, says he, separates from the bishop, and agrees not with the first-born of the church, is a wolf in sheep's clothing. My dearly beloved; labour to remain united to the bishop, the priests, and the deacons. He who obeys them, obeys Christ, by whom they were established: he who re-