

II. But, in order that any person should be entitled to be called "liberal," and his giving be true "liberality," two things are necessary: he must give ungrudgingly, not merely because it is expected of him, and he is ashamed to refuse, though he would like to do so; and (what is even more important) it must be his own property that he gives away. A very clever man once said that so far as he could see, charity usually meant that A. sees B. in great want, and thinks C. ought to do something for him. And there is quite as much liberality of the same kind current, when people make free with what does not belong to them, and give it away without having obtained permission from the rightful owners.

III. There is probably no sort of human thought and action wherein true liberality is so rare, and false liberality so common, as religion. True religious liberality is the exact opposite, not of narrowness (for there are certain religious truths and duties wherein Christians are bound to keep strictly in "the narrow way which leadeth unto life"), but of bigotry. Now the marks of bigotry are hatred of those who differ from the bigot's opinions; cruelty towards them where possible; unfairness in ascribing opinions and motives to them which they do not really accept; unscrupulousness in the use of means to counteract them; obstinacy in refusing to hear any side of the question save the bigot's own. Contrariwise, the truly liberal Christian will, like the Good Samaritan, readily and gladly help in their need the bitterest foes of his own most cherished beliefs; he will strive to be fair to his opponents, giving them full credit for sincerity and right motives, and acknowledging freely any good things in their teaching or practice; he will not be dogged in assuming that all truth must be only with himself and those who agree with him, while every one else is utterly wrong; he will be ready, like the Jews of Berea (Acts xvii. 11), to look candidly into evidence offered to his inspection; he will be most careful to abstain from any unfair or ungenerous conduct in resisting opponents, even when he feels that resist them he must. And besides all this, he will habitually show courtesy and good will to them as neighbours and fellow citizens. That is to say, in short, he will be kindly, just, candid, open-minded, good tempered, and friendly. But he will, as part of his duty to his neighbour as well as to God, hold firmly by those doctrines which he believes true; since, if he shows himself careless about them, he will so far teach others that those doctrines are not true, and need not be accepted, which might do much spiritual injury.

IV. In all these respects, however, he will be acting not merely within his rights but according to his duty. Justice, truth, good will, and modesty are, each and all of them, necessary parts of the Christian life: and no one who lacks any of the number is a thorough Christian.

The case is quite different when anyone makes free with what does not belong to him, such as Divine truths or laws and the ordinances of the religious society to which he belongs. And by "making free" is to be understood treating them as of little importance, disobeying them, whittling them down, or explaining them away. This sort of conduct passes for liberality, partly because it has a surface likeness to that side of real liberality which consists in being willing to admit the good in various systems, and in not being too dogged in one's own opinions: and partly because one of the commonest ways in which it is shown is by treating all denominations of Christians as much on the same level, so that persons, for example, who are nominally Church folk, will go just as readily to a Methodist, a Baptist, or a Quaker meeting as to church: and some clergymen will even encourage their flocks to do so. This is thought "liberal" by reason of a confusion of thought, due to the mistake of bringing political ideas into religion. Because it is true that no religious opinions which are not plainly dangerous to society and morals (such as those of the Thugs and the Mormons) ought to disqualify men from enjoying all the rights of citizens, it has been hastily taken for granted that all such opinions and the societies which maintain them are about equally good; and that their differences of belief and practice are matters of no real moment.

V. But this is not in the least the New Testament view of the matter. There it is laid down, over and over again, in the clearest fashion, that our Lord came to reveal certain truths which He sent His Apostles to preach, and which their disciples were to retain steadfastly, "holding fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. i. 13); "earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude i. 3); "with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. i. 27). Contrariwise, some other opinions are styled "damnable heresies" (2 St. Peter ii. 1); and "doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. iv. 1); while we are told that the reason why such heresies were divinely permitted to spring up was that they might test and try the faith of believers, "that they which are approved may be made manifest amongst you" (1 Cor. xi. 19). It is to be carefully remembered that these "heresies" were false doc-

trines arising within the Christian body, and so claiming to be themselves Christian, and were not the heathen errors of the time; and this fact teaches us that there may be a very serious difference in professedly Christian tenets, and that it is our duty to hold fast by those tenets only which there is good reason to suppose were part of the original revelation. To make light of them and set them aside, because maintaining them creates a distinction between those who do so and those who do not, is not liberality, but unfaithfulness and disobedience to God's will, for His truths are not our private opinions which we may deal with as we please, but trusts from Him to us, which we are bound to respect as sacred, and to hand down, whole and sound, to those who come after us, as we have received them from those who went before us.

VI. Nor is doctrine the only matter in respect of which the New Testament enjoins Christians to be strict in their conduct. They are often warned against sects also, even when nothing is charged against such sects in matter of belief, but only that they make divisions, and separate themselves from the "one body," the Church of Christ. Thus Christians are warned not to forsake the assembling themselves together, "as the manner of some is" (Heb. xi. 25); and those "who separate themselves" are described as "sensual, having not the spirit" (Jude, 19). For our Lord did not only give us a certain body of doctrine; He also set up a Kingdom, with its own laws and officers, which Kingdom is the Church. But no religious society of modern origin is a Church, or part of the Church; it is at best one of those schisms or divisions against which the Apostles warn their converts. So, here, too, it is not liberality to draw no distinctions between the Church and the sects; it is disloyalty to Christ, for it is certain that He did not found or commission Methodism, or Quakerism, or Anabaptism; so that even if no other fault were to be seen in them than their having set up as new societies apart from the Church, that alone would be enough to make it wrong to join in religious exercises with them, or to be so lax by sometimes attending their assemblies as to lead ignorant persons to suppose that there is no great difference between them and the ministrations of the Church. What would be thought of people who claimed to be loyal citizens, if they paid their taxes and gave their obedience only to alien officers and foreigners living in their country, and refused them to the lawful authorities of the nation?

VII. As a matter of fact, there is a very serious difference indeed between Church teaching and ordinances and the teaching and ordinances of the sects, even the best amongst them. Not one of them teaches the "faith once delivered to the saints." Some teach only a little of it, others teach a little more, some teach none at all, not one gives the whole of it pure. They either add to it, or (more often) take away from it; they give short weight and adulterated quality. And it is to be noticed, further, that while the true Christian religion, as a system of doctrine, morals, and conduct, may be compared to a compound medicine made up from the prescription of a great physician, every ingredient in which is needed if the medicine is to do good; contrariwise, it will be noticed that every one of the sects put at most one or two of the ingredients to do the work of the whole, which is useless, and may even be poisonous. What is meant by this is that each of them picks and chooses among Christian doctrines, rejecting what it is pleased to think not "essential," and then lays the greatest possible stress on some one single doctrine, putting everything else far in the background, and so offering only a distorted caricature of Christianity; whereas our Church gives the whole of Christ's teaching, and keeps back none of it; just as it is only the Church which puts the whole Bible publicly forward in divine service, instead of merely selecting a few favourite passages here and there. And thus people must lose spiritually, instead of "getting good," as their saying is, by attending sectarian sermons and assemblies.

The least harm that can happen is that their ideas about Christian doctrine will become blurred and confused, from listening to contradictory teachings, and they may suffer even worse, by taking up with the false part, rather than the true part, of what they hear; or yet again may, as has often happened, lose their faith altogether from being unable to decide which is the truth amidst so many contending tenets.

VIII. But if lay folk are to blame who practise this false liberality, much more are Church clergymen deserving of the severest censure when they abet or take up with it. For they are betraying a solemn trust, placed in their hands at their ordination, and at their appointment to any cure, on the faith of certain pledges they solemnly made that they would not only themselves diligently minister doctrine, sacraments, and discipline according to the laws of the Church, but also would teach the people committed to their charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same; and would also banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines.

Now, a clergyman who looks on the Church as only one amongst a variety of denominations much on a level, who in fact calls the separatist bodies by the name of "Churches," which they are not and cannot be, and who sees no objection to his flock attending the ministrations of outsiders, is guilty of a grave breach of a solemn trust. His congregation was committed to his charge on the faith of his doing all in his power to make them loyal and devout Churchmen; he knows that the sects are not the friends and allies of the Church, but its rivals, drawing away men from its fold and teachings; he knows that he has to pray in the Litany for deliverance from "all false doctrine, heresy, and schism"; he knows that he could not lawfully invite any of the pastors of the sects to minister openly in his church, and that none of them would be permitted to do so without being regularly ordained, seeing that the Church does not recognise their call to the ministry as valid. He knows also that all of them differ more or less from the doctrines and standards of the Church, and that either the Church is wrong or they are wrong. By continuing in the service of the Church himself, he publicly affirms that the Church is in the right; by telling his people that they may attend this or that sectarian assembly, he as plainly teaches them that the Church is wrong in keeping aloof from the sectaries, and in enacting canons against them, as has been done in the English canons still binding and in force. He is the sworn servant of these laws; they are not his to repeal at his pleasure, and thus, when he makes a present of them to the sectaries, it is no true liberality, for they are not his to give: it is simple treason to his own Church, and lack of charity to those who are outside it, by encouraging them to continue in their errors. It may be due to dulness and ignorance, to his really not knowing what are the distinctive doctrines and discipline of the Church, and wherein it differs from the sects; but in that case he is as unfit mentally to be a religious teacher of any sort, as he is unfit morally to hold office in a Church which he betrays, if he has knowledge of the facts. S. P. C. K.

## Home & Foreign Church News.

From our own Correspondents.

### DOMINION.

#### ONTARIO.

CLARENDON MISSION.—Christmas eve was observed in our little village of Plevna (one of the six stations in this mission) in good old fashioned style. On Thursday afternoon and evening about thirty young people, under the direction of the missionary and his young bride, devoted themselves to the decoration of our beautiful little gothic church ready for the Christmas services. Christmas eve was a joyous time for the children of Holy Trinity Church Sunday school and for the older people too. A grand social and concert was held in the public hall, at which a Christmas tree was displayed, laden with upwards of two hundred gifts for the children and others, of which the greater number were presented by the ladies of St. Paul's Church, Kingston, who have won the heartfelt thanks of all our people here for this manifestation of their active and kindly interest in our work in this remote mission. There are three regular Sunday schools in the mission, and about seventy children receiving instruction by this means. Before the closing anthem was sung, Mrs. Maclean, of Ardoch, and Mrs. Dawson, of Plevna, read a short address, expressing the esteem, confidence, and affection felt in and for Mr. Taylor by his people in the mission, and expressing the wish that he and his young bride would have a long, joyous, and useful life, and asking him to accept as a Christmas gift from his people a beautiful fur coat. In reply, he spoke in warm terms of the hearty reception everywhere accorded him, and of the manner in which his arduous labours were lightened by the kindly co-operation of many willing workers. He thanked his friends for their kind address and for the magnificent present given him. Proceeds of the concert was over \$40, in aid of the Holy Trinity Church Sunday school funds. On Christmas morning the church was well filled with grateful worshippers. The service was beautifully rendered, nearly every one joining in the responses and in the singing. About thirty joined in the celebration of holy communion, Rev. Morris Taylor being celebrant, assisted by Rev. T. Bate, of Griffith. It was announced that the usual Christmas offerings, instead of being retained by the missionary, would be sent to the Kilburn Orphanage, England. The collection amounted to about \$10. Everyone admired the decorations, the font, pulpit, lectern, prayer desk, credence bracket, and altar each receiving loving care. The screen was also beautifully decorated. A magnificent altar cloth sent out by the Kilburn Sisterhood, was used on Christmas for the

first tir worked ings for approp sent ou to the l in its neat a the Ho done in

QUEE was hel under t The col the bar much duets, t berry." ed:—M Mr. J. amount fund. Burton their a be held

KITL joyable day sel by the Warren McCra good p out the plied given amate variou a liber organi first C Day se congre well r

FRA Chure larger ous to Morni Lord's selves years, \$14.50 wife o Christ But c was n gifts Mrs. C libera McCra good and t gathe

NAT the C accep provi arch from Arch with secur to rel press and c

Mc Chris Monc 1886, had t sions and c a ver

Go Chris Ledi the :

Di rega Lan Chr wish