

and, ere long, into their most intimate communion?

I am quite ready to grant that, in the case of the flagrant offender against morality, there must be some profession of amendment before he will be received by the sectaries into what they call "Church fellowship;" but even then he would be saved from that most salutary humiliation of returning amongst those before whom we had sinned. And, indeed, the very fact of admitting him on the same terms as the rest into their congregations, which you know they would be quite ready to do, even from the first moment that he was excommunicated from, or laid under the censure of, the Church, would be of itself almost sufficient to destroy the beneficial effect of such spiritual chastisement.

But it is not in the case of the profligate sinner that this evil is most strikingly seen;—it is in the neglecter of the church, or the despiser of her injunctions, or the trifler with her doctrines, that it is most apparent. You, I know, are too well acquainted with your Bible to think these I ght sins;—but of how little service would it be for the Church to censure them, while so many of the sectaries, who are crying "Lo, we are the people of God," are ready to receive them on a slight, or even without any, confession of error.

Now, under these circumstances, it cannot be matter of surprise that the Church should have become loth to exercise a discipline which she had no means of properly enforcing; or at least, the outward penalties of which would be thus certainly nullified by Dissent; and the consequences of which would be the increasing of the ranks of Dissent, probably without any beneficial results to the individuals themselves, who, on the contrary, would be thus not only lost to the Church, but strengthened in error.

But how fatally injurious this must be to the interests of true piety, you will be fully aware. Now the longer I calmly considered these things the more fully I became convinced that a *system of division* could not be of God, the unavoidable consequence of which was the weakening of the hands of the Church of Christ, rendering its ministers in many cases unable to fulfil their office as His faithful shepherds, and emboldening men in sin and hardening them against rebuke.

Mr. Brown—I confess there is a great deal of force in what you say; but still I cannot find sufficient apology for that which many even of your

his own authorized servants, and cause that their holy intrepidity should turn out to the furtherance of His glory and their honour. But yet I always feel that it scarcely becomes me, as a layman, to form an opinion on a subject, which our venerable Reformers, as appears from our own Prayer-book, regretted, but knew not how at once to remedy. But, my dear Mr. Brown, what must be the sin of those who, by their schismatical and unnecessary divisions, have placed our Catholic and Reformed Church in so painful and serious a dilemma? But I must really say "Good night."

Mr. Brown (with seriousness)—Good night, Mr. Secker; I am exceedingly obliged to you for this call and conversation; I shall look forward to its renewal with much interest; I will acknowledge that you have started a few doubts in my mind.

Church Matters at Clackington in 1875.

Continued.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. ERNEST CRAMPTON was one who had from his earliest years been brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Having in Holy Baptism been regenerated by water and the Spirit, he had been taught to live the rest of his life according to that beginning, and by the mercy of God had been kept from staining the purity of his baptismal robe by any habitual acts of wilful or deliberate sin. But as saintly Leighton so beautifully says "the peace of God in the soul of man is a tender plant in a strange unkindly soil," and the evil nature of that soil in which it is implanted is ever making itself manifest. "The evil infection of that nature remains,—alas, only too strongly—even in those that are regenerated," as the IX article of the Church declares; and our friend Mr. Crampton was no exception to this sad rule. The way in which the Old Adam within manifested itself in his case, was in the subtle form of unconscious pride in the high and spotless character which every one connected with the family, for generations back, had always maintained,—a character, which, notwithstanding the comparatively small extent of their property, had secured for them an unusual amount of influence and respect in their native county.

Our Heavenly Father, however, loves His children too well to spare the rod when He deems the application of it will be profitable for their purification. He sought, by the discipline of sorrow, to purify his servant, and to lead him