

divine nature ;" and Calvin says : "As Christ's human nature partook of the divine, so believers are to become partakers of the Divine Nature." They are partakers of a common spiritual nature—a spiritual nature derived from a vital union with Christ. All Christian unity, as already remarked, pre-supposes this vital union with Christ. It is conditioned by it. It is a reflection of the union, which subsists between the Father and the Son. It centres in Christ and the Father, and is constituted by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

There are many types and phases of Christian life ; but there are no contradictions. There are many Christian denominations in the world, exhibiting a great variety of these types and phases, and emphasizing particular doctrines relating to the interpretation of Scripture and Church Polity—doctrines of great importance, which no wise man would sacrifice to blind zeal for outward uniformity ; but notwithstanding this variety of doctrinal belief, the common Christian consciousness has looked beyond these differences, and recognized brethren in every communion of the Church Catholic. Christians, in communions the most widely separated, have oftentimes found in each other, a closer union of spirit than in their own ecclesiastical connection. Their experience has been of the same type ; and God's dealings with them have been of the same character.

All Christians have proof of this statement. How many read with delight some of the writers of the Roman Catholic Church. Take Thomas à Kempis' (he wrote, however, before the Reformation) "Imitation of Christ," recommended to the Protestant public, by an introduction from the late Dr. Chalmers. Take the writings of Pascal, the sermons of Bourdaloue and Massillon, and how much do we find in them answering to the common Christian experience ! We feel that there is a closer spiritual union between Pascal and us, than there was between him and the Jesuits, though they both belonged to the Papal Church. Take Bernard of the same Church, who wrote the beautiful evangelical hymn, beginning :

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With gladness fills my breast ;
But dearer far Thy face to see
And in Thy presence rest."

Take Francois Xavier, the Jesuit missionary—I purposely mention those who are farthest from us ecclesiastically—take, I say, Francois Xavier, the author of the hymn, commencing :

"Thou, O my Jesus, Thou didst me
Upon the Cross embrace !
For me did'st bear the nails and spear,
And manifold disgrace."

The sentiments of these hymns are strictly evangelical, and find a response in every Christian heart. It matters not what the ecclesiastical connection of the man who utters them may be, we feel that he is a brother.

But observe, this feeling of brotherhood arises from the fact that we believe in, love, and worship a common Saviour.

Let us go into a Unitarian Church, and we may hear much that will please, much that is true. We may hear good moral teaching—viewed from a merely ethical standpoint—much that will exalt and refine the taste ; but we leave with the feeling that our spiritual nature has not been edified, that our spiritual wants have not been supplied. The moral teaching to which we have listened has no sanction. It does not satisfy the hunger of the soul.

Let us enter a Roman Catholic, or a Ritualistic Church, and we will hear much that is offensive, much that we consider idolatrous. But when they recite the Creed, and unite in chanting the grand words of the *Te Deum* :

"Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When Thou took'st upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb. When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of heaven to all believers." I say, when they recite the Creed, and utter these words of adoration and praise to a common Saviour, we feel that they are brothers, and though they excommunicate us ecclesiastically, many of them will acknowledge the same thing. A Roman Catholic priest, in Savoy, said to me, after a religious conversation, repeating it three times : "We are brothers, we are brothers, we are brothers." The Christian consciousness cannot be bound by the decrees of councils and of Popes.

I have purposely, as already remarked, adduced illustrative examples from those farthest removed from us both doctrinally and ecclesiastically. If we find Christian unity among them, how much more among those nearly allied to us in doctrine and Church polity.

As an additional proof that this unity is spiritual, I will state that there are many, in the same ecclesiastical communion, among whom there is no unity. There is an utter lack of the same religious experience. What unity could there be between real Christians of the Presbyterian Church and the friends and companions of the infidel Hume, among the Scottish Presbyterian clergy of last century ? None. The separation was greater than that between truly Christian Presbyterians and the Jesuit Xavier.

This unity must manifest itself in some outward form, that the world may perceive it and be impressed by it. Our Saviour prayed that His people may be one, that the world may believe that the Father sent Him. (John xvii. 21.)

It might be shown that the Church has manifested an outward unity, in its testimony for Christ, from the earliest times down to the present. Amid sectarian strifes, Christian unity has never been lost.

The world looks at the surface of things. It takes cognizance of the divisions and disputes in the Christian Church, and exclaims, "What a quarrelsome set these Christians are !" It looks at their differences, merely, not at their points of union—love, faith and common aims. It would think Christians very unjust if, in view of the strifes of political parties, they should denounce all these parties as destitute of love of country ; and it would think rightly, for these parties are the outcome of love of country. They differ as to means ; but they possess the unity of patriotism. Let the foe invade their country, and their strifes cease ; the sword of the one is as good as the sword of the other. The love of country unites them into one compact, determined band.

The Evangelical Alliance is an outward manifestation of Christian unity. At its meeting in Copenhagen, about three months ago, no one present could fail to see the unity of Christians manifested in visible outward form. There were present Lutherans, Reformed, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and others ; and yet they were not known as such. They were all brethren—all Christians—while, at the same time, they were not less Lutheran, Reformed, Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian. There were daily prayer meetings, in which men of all these denominations took part. They all addressed God as their Father, Christ as their Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as their Sanctifier. They all prayed for the same things. In their songs of praise they sang different words to the same music.

To promote the unity for which the Saviour prayed is the duty of every Christian. To do this, it is not necessary to break down denominational barriers, and include all Christians in one ecclesiastical communion. That is an Utopian scheme, advocated only by idle dreamers. Could it be carried into effect it would tend to multiply dissensions, instead of promoting Christian unity. This might be illustrated by reference to its working, on a narrow scale in some State Churches.

The best way to promote Christian unity is by each denomination labouring to promote the Gospel according to its own methods.

If any Christian denomination has a reason for its existence, it is not loyal to the truth to ignore that reason. Fidelity to God requires it to maintain the distinctive principles which separate it from others. No separate communion holds the system of Scripture truth in its completeness. One gives prominence to one doctrine, and another to another doctrine. The Calvinist emphasizes the sovereignty and eternal purpose of God ; the Arminian, man's free agency ; the Ritualist, the Church and sacraments. In their zeal, the Calvinists may go to the verge of fatalism ; the Arminian may nearly fall into the error of man's entire independence ; the Ritualist, into that of substituting the Church and the sacraments in the place of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. As human nature is, in its imperfectly sanctified state, there is always a danger of extremes, and abnormal developments. To prevent this is impossible, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Divisions, therefore, while they contribute to extreme views and abnormal developments of truth, are,

at the same time, favourable to the preservation of the unity of the faith. We find the truth in its totality not in any one denomination, but in the whole body of the Church Catholic. "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." With the late Dr. Duncan, professor in the Free Church College, Edinburgh, I can say : "I am first, Christian ; second, Catholic ; third, Presbyterian." That is the true order.

MONTREAL NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

The Rev. H. A. Robertson, missionary from Eromanga, left Nova Scotia with his family in the end of December to return to his distant field of labour, via San Francisco. While spending a few days here Mrs. Robertson was taken seriously ill with inflammation of the lungs, and for three weeks was confined to bed. The whole family have now left for the west, purposing to take the steamer sailing for San Francisco on the 14th inst., for Sydney, New South Wales. They were most anxious to be in time for this steamer so as to connect with the "Dayspring" which sails from Sydney on 1st April for the New Hebrides ; otherwise they would be nearly six months later in reaching Eromanga. From their home in Nova Scotia to Eromanga, by the route they take, is a distance of about 12,000 miles. Mr. Robertson is the first missionary who has laboured in blood-stained Eromanga, who has been privileged to return home on furlough. The others either died while there or were murdered by the natives. Mr. Robertson had a thrilling story to tell, the story of the triumphs of the Gospel on that island where Williams and Harris and the brothers Gordon sealed their testimony with their blood and where two years ago 192 of the natives lay down at the table of the Lord, clothed and in their right mind, including several members of the families of those whose hands were stained with the blood of the martyred missionaries. The visit to Canada of Mr. Robertson, has done much good in drawing out the sympathies of our people and in deepening their interest in the work in the New Hebrides. During his visit he has addressed some 295 meetings and has received upwards of \$7,000 on behalf of the work (of which, about \$1,300 were from Montreal) including \$1,200 for teacher, and \$1,500 for the new mission steamer. On Thursday last he was invited to take tea with the students of the Presbyterian College here when he was handed the sum of \$50, contributed by the students themselves to support two teachers, one in Eromanga and one in Efate. Mr. Robertson carries with him the best wishes and earnest prayers of the whole church for the welfare of himself and family, and for the success of the Lord's work on his island. He is assuredly a missionary of whom any church may well feel proud.

The visit to this city of the Rev. J. Fraser Campbell, missionary from India, is already bearing fruit. The Rev. A. B. Mackay, of Crescent Street Church, has appealed to his congregation to support a missionary to India, in addition to their regular missionary contributions. For this purpose a special collection is taken at each Wednesday evening service with, thus far, good hopes of success. The Rev. J. Barclay, M.A., of St Paul's Church, has also appealed to his congregation for \$1,500 additional per annum, towards the maintenance of a missionary in India, and already a large portion of the amount has been promised.

On Monday last the Rev. R. H. Warden moderated in a call in Erskine Church in favour of the Rev. L. H. Jordan, of Halifax, N. S., the stipend promised being \$3,000 per annum ; and a *pro re nata* meeting of the Presbytery is called for the 12th February to take action in regard to the call.

A few weeks ago the St. Joseph Street congregation here called Mr. Jordan but he has since intimated his purpose to decline the call. His own congregation have recently increased his stipend by \$400 per annum and are evidently determined not to lose his services, if they can possibly retain them. It is stated that the congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Kingston, meet on Wednesday first with a view to call Mr. Jordan also.

At a recent meeting of the Montreal Presbytery, which was largely attended, the remit on marriage with a deceased wife's sister, was considered and the Presbytery, almost unanimously resolved to approve the judgment at which the committee of Assembly had arrived and the action which they recommended.