

UNIONISM AND POLITICS.

SOME people seem to have a very hazy notion of the relations between patriotism and politics. Their care for the interests of their party is so great, and their patriotism so small, that they are ever on the watch, lest any generous sentiment on behalf of British nationality should be turned to the injury of the knot of politicians with whom they are accustomed to work. If they would give themselves a little trouble to distinguish between politics and party politics, they would find their ideas clarified, and their course of action made more intelligible to themselves and others.

In the large sense of the word, it is impossible to keep politics out of any subject which has any real connexion with the practical life of man upon earth. Politics deals with the wellbeing of the State, as distinguished from the Church, the family, and the individual. But although we can distinguish we cannot separate. The Church is in the State, profoundly affecting it, profoundly affected by it. The same is true of the family and of the individual. Therefore it is impossible for any community or for any individual to ignore the subject of politics when dealing with those topics which concern their life and wellbeing.

In this sense politics must appear in the pulpit, in the Church assembly, in the family circle. We rightly condemn the preacher who takes advantage of his position as a teacher of religion to bring into the pulpit the political squabbles of the locality, or even to ventilate his own partisan opinions respecting the government of the country. But we do not blame him when he teaches that we must not only "fear God," but "honour the King." We should blame him if he neglected to expound this as he does other portions of the sacred volume from which he draws his lessons. Similarly, if a rebellion were to break out in any portion of the Empire, we should expect our Christian teachers to talk "politics" in the larger sense of the word, but not in the narrower. We should certainly be greatly surprised in such a case to hear of a protest being made against political preaching.

Are our notions getting a little cleared on the subject of what is lawful and what is not lawful in connecting religion and politics? Concrete instances have the advantage of bringing the substance out of the haze of indefiniteness, but they have the disadvantage of narrowing the field of view. Let us consider, then, that the wellbeing and integrity of the land of our extraction, our birth, or our adoption, are subjects which cannot be separated from the religious and ecclesiastical thoughts and deliberations of individuals and communities--and these are strictly political subjects. They are political in the etymological sense of that word; they are political in the meaning stamped upon that word by long usage. In this sense, then, politics must be a concern to everyone who cares for his country and for mankind, and must be interwoven with all his thoughts.

We think if these considerations had been borne in mind, the debate at the Anglican Synod last week on the Home Rule question might have been a little less breezy. Assuredly there was nothing in the amended resolution that drew party politics after it. Nor, as far as we can see, was there anything in the remarks of the speakers which touched upon the forbidden ground. It is quite true that there was a continual danger of the discussion sliding away into party politics; but surely the mere assertion of the necessity of preserving the unity and integrity of the Empire had not got that length. This necessity was alleged in the amended resolution, and the seconder of the resolution had done no more than repeat, perhaps somewhat vehemently, the assertion. If political subjects were subsequently introduced, it can hardly be maintained that it was the fault of that particular speaker, and we imagine that the objectors have themselves to thank for the very features in the debate to which they most objected.

This whole question of party politics is getting a very serious one, and it is high time for many persons who belong to the recognised parties in our political life, to consider how far they will allow themselves to be trammelled by the supposed requirements of party loyalty. Has it come to this, that, whenever a party leader may consider any measure useful as a means of retaining political power, it is a matter of loyalty with all his ordinary followers to support that measure, however injurious they may think it to the well-being of the country? If so, then not merely must politics be in a diseased condition; but the very life of society must be unsound.

Before leaving this subject, we should like to say a few words on the charge that the Orange Society has become a mere political organisation. Let it be clearly understood that we are not defending Orangeism, with which we have a very imperfect acquaintance. Nor are we representing the Conservative party of this Dominion with which the Orangemen are said to have entered into alliance. With neither of these have we any

alliance beyond that which may be connected with partial unity of aim, and sympathy on particular points. But surely it is a very remarkable thing that such an accusation as this should be made. We may well ask, how that society which is built upon the very foundation of Whiggery should have been ever suspected of going over to Toryism.

As regards the Origin of the Orangemen there is no dispute. They contend for the principles of the English Revolution, "civil and religious liberty," the watchword of the Whigs. They are not accused, that we have heard, of deserting their *principles*. How comes it, then, that they are accused of deserting their *party*? This is an interesting and important question. Perhaps the *Sentinel* will help us to understand it.

As a matter of fact, we do not in the least believe that the Orangemen are, as a society, political, in the party sense of that word. If we are mistaken, we shall be glad to be corrected; but our clear impression is, that a man may join the body, whether he is a Liberal or a Conservative, and that no questions are asked on such subjects. We believe that the Orangemen, as a body, are not pledged to the support of any political party. If, however, they find that one political party is resolved to uphold and strengthen principles against which they are pledged to contend, can we wonder that they seek from the other party what assistance they can obtain for the maintenance of their own principles and the carrying out of their own plans? We do not say that this is the case; but if it be so, it certainly is not discreditable to the society; nor is it a reason for asserting that it is a mere party organisation.

Here we must pause for the present. It is possible that we may not have thrown "a flood of light" on the subject; but in the present twilight a few additional rays may be of some service. C.

SOMETHING ABOUT CAPE BRETON.

THE internal aspects of this island and the seas that surround it may have some part toward producing a people in many respects absolutely unique and peculiar. The storm gales that so often rage about this ocean-bounded land, and the heavy fogs that for months together are never absent from some part of its coast, must exercise a direct and permanent influence upon the character of such a race as we find in Cape Breton; as the pure, strength-imparting breeze that sweeps over the rugged hills and through the beautiful valleys most assuredly does in producing the splendid bodily development with which a majority of these islanders are endowed. The predominant race-power is Highland Scotch; but English, Irish, Welsh, and Acadians, at different times have settled here in large numbers, and in that combination, which forms the bulk of the population, the distinctive traits of these nations are all more or less manifested. They have many manners and customs and ideas that belong entirely to themselves, and in some respects are wonderfully old-fashioned, and consequently wonderfully honest and upright. Especially is such the case in politics. Regarding government and patronage they have always entertained the most distinct and independent opinions, and any attempt to teach them another way of doing things is viewed with slight encouragement. When a candidate comes before the electors and asks them to give him their votes, it does not appear to make any great difference with the sturdy farmers and fishermen whether he belongs to the Liberal or the Conservative party. If in certain respects of vastly greater moment to these simple reasoners he can prove himself to be all right, the gentleman stands a good chance of success. And the case seems about the same if he supports the Dominion Government or proclaims himself a follower of Premier Fielding. These considerations are purely local. In the first place they want to know if he belongs to the ruling clan in the county he desires to serve? If this question can be properly answered, they will next require evidence that he has the right qualities and inclinations to secure the building of the roads and bridges, in which respect almost every Cape Bretoner appears to think the locality in which he happens to reside has been cruelly neglected. Then the matters of more extended railroad communication and a better steam service along the interior and exterior coasts is always before their minds; and those aspiring to such political honours as they have to bestow must be able to show ability and zeal for presenting and energetically pushing any special or general claim on these subjects. Besides these main issues, there are many minor interests about which a candidate must be posted and entertain correct views before he has a chance of becoming the official representative of any county on the island.

In the late election the most sanguine friends of Repeal hardly expected that their party would secure more than two of the eight members that come to Halifax from the four Cape Breton counties. But it turns out that four extreme Liberals have been chosen, and one gentleman