

Selections.

A MARK OF UNITY AMONG OURSELVES!

We know very well that many, from outside, are never wear, of harping on the differences existing between the parties in the Church. And some, among ourselves, are equally fond of exaggerating all little points of difference, as if they were "fundamental," "vital," &c.—exaggerations which are untrue in the first place, and lead to nothing but an increase of irritation, and a further aggravation of the bitterness of party spirit.

We, on the contrary, find it not only our duty, but we rejoice in it as one of our greatest pleasures, to point out from time to time, the substantial agreement of all things "fundamental" and "vital": and to show, also, that the bitterest, and apparently the most irreconcilable, of our differences, are often but the looking at opposite sides of the same great truth.

As a striking and most valuable instance of this substantial unity, we lay before our readers the following extract from the last Annual Statement of the Executive Committee of the Protestant Episcopal Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Knowledge, of which we have taken the liberty to italicise certain portions:—

But the Society is,

II. *Episcopal*—distinctively Episcopal. The Episcopal Church being, in the judgment of the members of this Society, conformed to the Standard of Holy Scripture, they feel conscientiously bound by all lawful and proper means, to make known its Scriptural character, and promote its extension in connection with those Evangelical doctrines which it is the office of the Church to preach.

This Church, with its ministry, sacraments, and liturgy, they hold to be the best conservators of those doctrines. But for teaching upon the important questions of the Church ministry and sacraments, we, as Episcopalians, cannot look to a press conducted by combinations of men belonging to different denominations. We must look to ourselves; for we are bound in faithfulness to our Lord to teach upon those subjects, opposing false doctrine, and circulating that which is true.

It has been said that that which constitutes "The Faith" is not necessarily connected with these subjects. But practically, among ourselves, we find the contrary, and that the most vital question of the faith—the question of the sinner's justification before God—is often intimately, and perhaps, inseparably, connected with the sacramental controversies.

There is, also, an aggrational denominational literature, which is being industriously circulated, not only in inappropriate fields, but which also finds its way among those who are rightfully our own to teach.

Our Church, not having undertaken this work, a voluntary association of its bishops and other members, governed by existing facts, offer through this, as an Episcopal society, the requisite facilities of the press for extending the Episcopal Church; and, unless the institutions which Christ appointed are to be deemed of no importance, we must teach and defend them, even in the way of controversy, if need should be.

But this, which is the trial and cross of the Gospel, is not to be separated from the joyous and popular office of preaching grace and salvation, leaving the one to be borne by one individual or institution, and the other to be enjoyed by another; thereby exposing the positive institutions of Christianity to unpopularity and neglect, a result which, sooner or later, will undermine the whole Gospel.

Now, everybody knows that the Evangelical Knowledge Society represents one extreme of Church opinion. If their words are not a fair and authoritative statement of what is held and acted on by that party, in this country, we know not where to find one that is so. That Society is not confined to one Diocese, and with no Bishop, like the Pastoral Aid Society; nor is it conducted on a basis so partial in extent, as the Philadelphia Missionary Association for the West. It numbers several Bishops, and has clerical and lay members from nearly all parts of the country, and commands the public and general confidence of Low-Churchmen everywhere.

Now it is evident, from the above, that these brethren hold to the "Distinctive" Principles of the Church, that they maintain these distinctive principles to be "conformed to the Standard of Holy Scripture;" that they declare it to be the office of *The Church* to preach "the Evangelical doctrines" of Christianity; and that the Church, with its *Ministry, Sacraments, and Liturgy*, is the best conservator of these doctrines.

Still more; we find them holding that these distinctive principles are not matters of indifference, or such as may be sunk as of little or no account compared to matters of Faith; but that the Faith is "necessarily connected" with these distinctive principles; that "the most vital question of the faith is often intimately, and perhaps inseparably connected with the sacramental controversy."

Nor are these distinctive principles, thus important,

to be passed over in silence, or kept from any prominence in the eyes of others. The true ground is taken that they are "Institutions which Christ appointed;" and that therefore they are not "to be deemed of no importance;" but that "we must teach and defend them, even in the way of controversy, if need should be," and we all know that need very often is.

But the most remarkable portion of this admirable extract still remains to be pointed out. Our brethren by unavoidable implication, here take the ground, that the American S. S. Union, and the American Tract Society, and indeed the Bible Society itself (for it, like the rest, is "conducted by combinations of men belonging to different denominations") cannot be relied on to furnish the publications needed by Low Churchmen in carrying on Church work. "We cannot look to a press conducted by combinations of men belonging to different denominations," say they. We must look to ourselves." And this is urged, not on the low ground of a wise policy, or needful expediency; but on the high ground of sacred duty, upon which it was so unanswerably placed by the Bishop of Pennsylvania two years ago. "We are bound in faithfulness to our God, to teach upon those subjects, opposing false doctrine, and circulating that which is true." Those, therefore who neglect or refuse to teach the "distinctive principles" themselves, through their own Society, they may yet unite with other Societies which, though teaching some of the great doctrines of the Gospel, do not teach the distinctive principles of the Church. No. If they have ever held such notions heretofore, they at length repudiate them now, for they say,—"This (i. e. the controversial teaching and defending of Church Principles) is not to be separated from the joyous and popular office of preaching grace and salvation, leaving the one to be borne by one individual or institution, and the other to be enjoyed by another." They know, by bitter experience, that in any such attempt at separation betwixt the two, the general tenets of Protestantism absorb all the popularity and attention, and Church Principles are rendered only the more unpopular, and the more certain to be neglected, because thus notoriously ignored by the very men who profess to hold and believe them. Henceforth, therefore, such amalgamations are to be avoided; for they find that they "expose the positive institutions of Christianity to unpopularity and neglect,—a result which, sooner or later, will undermine the whole Gospel."

Higher, or nobler, or truer language than this, we have never known any Churchmen to use. Coming from the quarter that it does, we gladly accept it as additional and convincing proof, that what we have had occasion to call "the other shoulder" of the Church, is becoming more and more willing to take its proper share of the burden in upholding the "Distinctive Principles of the Church."—*N. Y. Church Jour.*

CENSO DE LA IGLESIA.—The correspondent of the *N. Y. Daily Times* gives the following account of the mode of getting Church funds in Central America. It is worth reading:—

In the month of August last, a lady distinguished for her many virtues, and loved as widely as she was known, the Senora Juana Baptista Garcia de Amador, died in the City of Santiago, in the State of Panama. This pious lady, by order of Eduardo Vasquez, Bishop of the Church of Panama, was refused the counsels of the ministry on her death-bed, and denied the sacrament of Extreme Unction. Probably, also, her ashes rest outside the pale of the holy consecrated ground of Mother Church.

Why? I will go a little into the history of the Catholic Church of New Granada, that you may know. This Church, like all the churches of New Spain, with perhaps the exception of that of Mexico, dates its rapid decline in wealth, influence, and usefulness, from the time when the Colonies slipped their necks out of the yoke of their European taskmaster. All over Central and South America may be seen the ruins of what were to have been magnificent Cathedrals, commenced before the outbreak, in more or less advanced stages of completion. The California traveller cannot have failed to notice the crumbling walls of one of these roofless edifices in Panama, and many a poor slobster has drawn his last breath in the long chapel beneath the shadows of another unfinished temple of the Virgin, in the war-worn city of Rivas. When the tocsin of the revolution sounded, the workman dropped his trowel for the musket—the quarry was forsaken for the tent and the bivouac, and the cathedral half-finished, which was to be the pride of a province, and a monument of the power of the priesthood, has, instead, become a mark to de-

signate the period of the decline of the Latin race, and religion in the land of Columbus and Pizarro.

Continual revolutions having at last destroyed every industry, and completely impoverished the people, it became no easy task for the bishops to raise the means to keep up the splendor of the churches, and to maintain themselves in their wonted luxury. And so the cathedrals and churches fell into decay. The gold was stripped from their altars, and the silver centers melted down to replenish the pockets of the priests. The pearls and diamonds from the necks of their Saints and Virgins adorned the bosoms of the lesser angels, their mistresses. This resource, of course, soon failed, and then the successors of St. Peter put their heads together to devise some other means of support. And a most notable and ingenious thought was the progeny of their fertile brains. When it had been fairly conceived, incubation was rapid, and the bird was christened "Censo de la Iglesia."

The *modus operandi* was this: Penances could not be collected in cash down. But the palatial mansions of the old Spaniards still remained. The churches must get possession of them. Their owners must become their lessees. Well, when some bigoted peccador had been guilty of a sin of notable magnitude, of course he must be confessed and absolved. Perhaps the heinousness of the sin calculated in solid cash, was valued in the day-book of the Church at \$1,000. Not being able to raise that amount in *plata*, the priest would kindly accommodate the sinner by taking a mortgage on his house, the annual interest of which debt was fixed at from three to eight per cent., according to the persuasive talent of the priest, or the senility or impressibility of the victim. In this way, as the man continued to travel the broad road to destruction spiritually, his gold had to pave the way, or rather his mortgage parchments had to carpet the track, until the title deeds of hundreds and thousands of houses in every city and province became vested in the Church. For instance, the house I have always occupied here, which cost \$40,000, had a *censo* or Church-tax on it up to within a year or two, given by its former owner, of \$20,000, which, at 3 per cent. paid the Church \$600 a year. When a hardened old transgressor was on his death-bed, or a worn-out, weak-minded old lady was sighing away her spirit, while imparting pious counsels the priest would picture the pains of purgatory in such vivid colors as to make it perfectly easy to get a good round mortgage signed by the trembling hand of the frightened culprit. This system will partially account for the fact that the Church held the deeds of 5000 houses in the city of Mexico, last year, when Comonfort began to poach upon its manor.

This tax at last began to weigh so heavily upon the house-owners of New Granada, that a relief from it became actually necessary. So when, some four years since, the Congress of Bogota decreed the separation of Church and State, and still further impoverished the priesthood by making marriage a mere civil institution, easing them of this monopoly, followed a law giving every property-holder the privilege of being relieved from his *censo* by paying into the Church one-third of the principal of his mortgage, when the interest was covenanted to be three per cent., and one half when it was fixed at over that per-centage. I believe the nation assumed the balance of the debt, which, of course, it never meant to pay.

These laws were so obnoxious to Rome that the Pope withdrew his Nuncio or agent, and New Granada was left to poke along the best way it could in default of the customary prayers of His Holiness in her behalf. The Bishops were instructed to take their revenge; and they do it by denying Church privileges to every man who shall have the audacity to redeem his property from out their clutches. And they visit his sin in this respect upon his whole family.

Senor Amador had redeemed his property from the Church in accordance with this law. So his wife is denied Christian sepulture by the Priests; and, if their power reaches that height, St. Peter will jingle the keys of Heaven in the face of Dona Juana when she taps at its pearly gates for admittance into the angel choir.

N. W. R.

AFRICAN SUPERSTITIONS—THE RAIN DOCTOR.

[Dr. Livingstone, in his "Travels and Researches in South Africa," just published in England, gives the following dialogue between himself and one of the "rain doctors":—]

Medical Doctor.—Hail, friend! How very many medicines you have about you this morning! Why, you have every medicine in the country here.

Rain Doctor.—Very true, my friend; and I ought;