

THE EVILS OF DIVISIONS [SECTARIAN] IN THE MISSION FIELD.

[From Earl Nelson's Home Ruination Notes in Church Bells]

THE EVILS OF DIVISION IN THE FOREIGN MISSION FIELD.

Love and order should be the chief characteristics of Christianity; but our miserable divisions have gone far to destroy the witness either to the one or to the other which Christianity should show forth to the world. It is sad enough that in attacks upon heathendom Protestant and Roman Catholic should magnify their differences before the heathen, but it is a parody on Christianity when churches calling themselves Protestant cannot learn from the Roman Catholics some principles of organization, and for their own sakes, as well as for the success of the Christianity which they seek to propagate, cannot come to some understanding which will prevent them from concentrating their home antagonisms in the same districts of heathendom, instead of dividing the vast tracts of heathendom, as the Romans do among the different orders and nationalities.

The important article on the Protestant missionary work in China, which the *Times* published from a correspondent on May 25th, very forcibly exposes the present state of things, and shows that very earnest, and self-denying work, not only of the more direct Missionary kind, but by translations of important works into different dialects, is hindered by this woeful waste of power.

I append a cutting from the article above referred to, which demands the prayerful consideration of all Christians.

NELSON

"These forty Protestant missionary bodies, it has been said, work, almost without exception, in total independence of each other. There is scarcely any division of labour, geographical or otherwise; each works in its own chosen field. The different Roman Catholic orders are most carefully distributed—the Franciscans in one district the Dominicans in another, the Belgians in one province, the Germans in another, the Spaniards in a third, and so on. The whole of the Chinese empire, as well as the eighteen provinces and the vast districts lying outside them, are divided into bishoprics and carefully organized, so that the work of no man or order overlaps that of another.

"Seeing, then, the terrible waste of force involved in forty different bodies attacking the vast mass of Chinese heathendom, each for itself, without regard to the others, Dr. Alex. Williamson, an eminent and veteran missionary, whose *Travels in North China*, published many years ago, has already almost reached the dignity of a classic, has addressed an earnest appeal to his fellow-missionaries for union. Looking out on the state of Protestant missionary enterprise in China, he exclaims, "What a waste of strength!" It is desirable to reproduce his own words here. Their weight, coming from a man in his position, is as undoubted as their sincerity is evident:—

"To begin with, we have the Church of England with her thirty-nine Articles, her Prayer-book, and her formularies all translated, and she is striving and hoping to impose them all in their entirety upon China. Again, we have the Presbyterians with the Westminster Confession, their longer and shorter catechisms, their system of Church government, also translated, equally zealous and sanguine in their endeavour to lead the Chinese to adopt their system. Further, we have the Methodists, with their elaborate organizations; the Congregationalists, with their form of government; the Baptists, with theirs; the

Lutheran Church, seeking to produce in China a facsimile of itself, nothing less or more; the American Episcopal Church with a like aim. And so with other denominations. What a spectacle to thoughtful Chinamen! And there are many such. No wonder they say to us—'Agree among yourselves, and then we will listen to you.' But this is not the worst of our divisions. We have three branches of the Episcopal Church, eight different sects of Presbyterians, six sects of Methodists, two Congregationalists, two Baptists, besides several other minor bodies, all acting independently of each other; and in addition to these we have the Inland Mission, many of whose members belong to our own denomination, but the bulk of whom disclaims creeds and systems; and unless the leaders of that mission receive special guidance from God it will become neither more or less than another sect."

"Dr. Williamson describes the Protestant army in China at the present time as going "to war at a woeful, shattered, tattered, sorry disadvantage." Each sect is trying hard to keep its own little heap of embers alive, and refuses to throw them altogether, so that they may "blaze of themselves and set us free to kindle other fires in different parts." He looks forward to the time when all these little separate heaps shall be formed into "one great, living fire, which shall illumine, and warm, and comfort, and purify the whole nation." On one point he is clear. Here are his own words—"Something must be done. In our present divided state we will never Christianize China. Never!"

THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

BY THE REV. J. D. HERRON.

The Apostolic Succession.

The first point to be noted about the Church, which the Lord founded upon the earth for the salvation of men, is that it is a visible Church, Certain religionists, who have broken with the Apostolic order, in which alone the Church inheres, have liked to talk of an invisible Church. What thought any one can have of an invisible Church, is not clear, except it be the number of the elect which is known only to God.

But with this, certainly, man has nothing whatever to do; and if he has to do with a Church at all, it must be with an organization as real and tangible as himself. As long as man is visible, the Church into which God calls him must also be visible.

So we find it in the charter of its organization: The Sacred Scripture. We find it composed of visible men; with visible officers, who are ordained and endowed with visible authority by visible ceremonies; with visible sacraments by which alone members are admitted and preserved in their membership; and we find this Church continuing down through the ages as visible and tangible as a masonic lodge continues to-day. There is one scene in which we may speak of the invisible Church, and that is when we mean the Church at rest, the Church in Paradise. Yet here the word invisible does not mean that which cannot be seen; but simply that which at present is not seen.

But the Church Catholic on earth, the Church which is set for the salvation of men, is the Church militant, the military Church, the fighting Church, the visible army of the Lord throughout the world.

The members of this Church are all the baptized.

There may be among this number many stragglers, and many deserters; but they are all soldiers of the army, sworn, if not true.

The chief officers of this army are the Bishops of the Apostolic Succession throughout the world. Many have broken from the main column, and are fighting a guerilla warfare.

Yet notwithstanding the fact that they are fighting for the great Commander-in-Chief, the Ascended Christ, this main column is still the Church, and the only Church which the Lord founded.

This fact does not unchurch the denominations around in their membership; but it does unchurch them as organizations.

As organizations they are religious societies which ought to be under the supervision of the Apostolic Ministry that our Lord founded.

This is the plain meaning of the fourth declaration of the House of Bishops on the subject of Church Unity.

No offence should be taken at this, for none of these organizations claim a history any older than the Reformation. It is probable, however, that the offence is that the Episcopal Church should claim a history any older.

But we cannot help but claim that which has been given to us. We cannot see that the English Reformation made any break in the Church, either in its government or in its membership.

The answer to the question, "Where was your Church before Henry VIII?" is answered fully and completely in the responding query, "Where was your face before it was washed?"

It is therefore no disparagement to the religious bodies around us, other than must come from the nature of the case, when we keep the fact before our minds, and press it upon our children, that the Church into which we are baptized is a true branch of the Church which went out from Jerusalem.

That Church was Episcopal. This Church is Episcopal, and there has been no break in the Episcopal succession of her ministry. To hold this fact as a precious truth, close to our own hearts, and to teach it to our children, is simply our duty as churchmen. If any do not clearly see this duty, they should seek for light in the diligent study of the New Testament and of Church History.

During the great forty days, as mentioned in the 1st Chapter of the Acts, our Lord gave special directions to His Apostles concerning his Church. Those directions are not written: but in what the Apostles afterward did, we may know what they were. Study the Church, her government, her sacraments, her sacramental rites, and her worship in the light of the Acts of the Apostles; then study the Acts of the Apostles with the Church before you, and you will not long debate in your mind where to find the true Church. And by the true Church I mean the Church which claims the office and power which the Lord gave to it, the power of joining the soul to Christ, and of preserving it as His lively member.

I doubt if any other religious body claims this power. They admit that the Apostolic Church had this power; but they think, or try to think, that it was limited to Apostolic times.

But the "Lo! I am with you alway," was given with the command, "Baptize all nations." That command is still in force; for all nations are not yet baptized.

Therefore we believe that the Apostolic Church, endued with every power which the Lord imparted to her, has not failed from the earth.

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Other religious bodies teach that a man is joined to Christ simply by faith in His Word, and that he becomes a member of a Church merely for convenience, merely to aid him in his religious life.

This Church teaches, that which plainly the Apostles of our Lord taught, that Baptism, or grafting into the Body of Christ's Church joins us to Christ, and that feeding upon Christ'