

"Let us speak not in a spirit of defiance, but in a spirit of love, let us eschew all needless expressions which may give offence; above all let us remember that the grand object which we have in view is the discovery of the wisest methods of work, the strengthening of peace, the firmer cohesion of the members of the Body. By this course our very differences will serve to bring out more clearly the unity of our faith, and our diversities of thought will be at once a safeguard and protest against any narrowing of the limits which define the membership of our branch of the Catholic Church."
BISHOP MACLAGAN.

TRUE AND FALSE UNITY.

MOST fallacies which delude the minds of men wear so attractive a garb that we cannot be surprised at the power they exercise, in controlling the judgment and inspiring the actions of those under their spell. One of the great distinctions between Truth and Falsehood consists in this outward show, the true being usually less seductive in appearance, less instantly fascinating to the mind or heart than the false. The former is like a comely but plain-featured maiden, who is all virtue, goodness, sound sense and tenderness; the latter is rather comparable to one gifted with brilliant beauty, but whose soul is a mere name, heart a mere physical organ, brain a crude undeveloped power, and her whole nature a libel on her sex. But what is the reception such a pair meet with in any mixed assembly? While the one is kept within the narrow circle of the loved few who know her worth, the other is the magnet of all eyes and the theme of every tongue. So sound, so valuable, so true a guide is popularity, for its judgments are seldom based upon anything deeper than the tinsel attractions of mere external show, or some quality which is pleasant to the gazer's eye or flattering to his conceit or prejudices. The eye, says GOETHE, sees only those things without which correspond with those that are within,—it is the pure in heart only who will see God. A striking illustration of this is afforded us by the language used by those who have set themselves the impossible task of breaking up the unity of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, in order, with the stones of the ruined temple, to build up some yet undesigned structure which is to be the common meeting-house of those who will constitute the "Church of the future." The terms used in speaking of this fond dream only reveal how profound is the mental unrest, how biting the soul-hunger of those who have left the fold of CHRIST to wander in the sectarian desert. When looked at in the fierce light of God's Word and God's Providence, all this eloquent talk glares out as the rankest folly. To imagine that men who have left the divine centre of unity in order to organize an endless variety of heterogeneous sects will ever be capable, even if they so wished, of inventing some magnificent substitute for the One Church, founded for all His people by JESUS CHRIST, is to invest vain man with a divine prerogative and divine powers.

In spite of Evangelical Alliances planting, and Y. M. C. Associations watering the modern theory of Catholicity for so many years, never before did the sects fight so hard for their own interests as they do to-day, their struggle being agonising for pre-eminence and isolated power. "Blest be the tie that binds" is sung with enthusiasm at the union gatherings of the sects. But if deeds not words are a test, infinitely more "blest" are those notions by which the so-called churches are divided from each other and from the Body of CHRIST. The spirit of self-abnegation, the spirit of self-effacement for CHRIST's sake, which leads men to be of one mind in a house, the spirit which is

essential to unity, might indeed be spoken of as a "blessed tie," for it is the Spirit of God. But the operations of this blest Spirit seem unknown, or its motions are deadened by the vehemence of those sectarian prejudices which lead to vast expenditures in building up antagonistic institutions contrary to, irreconcilable with, nay so destructive of the very idea of Church unity, peace and concord, that the sects are beginning to deny that there is One Body, One Head, One Family, One Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is the One Fold under the One Divine Shepherd.

But how popular is such talk as one hears at union meetings! Hollow, unreal as it is, the bubble is irradiated with a sheen of beauty, reflected upon it by proximity to that glorious reality of which it is a mockery. Conscience has created an instinct in the Christian world which tells the Baptised that the disunion of sectism is opposed to the mind of CHRIST, that His flock is a flock not many. The very worldly feels the stress of that instinct, as he does the force of all truth, hence the applause which greets the platform orator who deprecates isolation and separation. Strange indeed is it, but true, that in any assembly made up of men of various sects, men who are fighting, with a zeal worthy of a good cause, to strengthen the interests of their own religious body, men who are giving largely in work and money to establish their sect as a distinct, independent, aggressive, proselytizing organization; strange is it that such persons applaud to the echo those sentiments of Catholicity which are wholly antagonistic to their practical, every-day life, labour and wishes.

False, fleeting, unreal Catholicity glitters with a phosphorence far more attractive to the popular eye as an outward show than the calm light which burns ever in the Catholic Church of God—the unquenchable Light of Him Whose office it is to be her Comforter and Guide forever. The Catholicity of the sects is a mere cloak to cover infinite and offensive forms of disunion, self-seeking, ambition, lust of power, jealousies, envyings, strifes, rivalries keen and bitter as of competing traders whose spirit indeed inspires them. This cloak pleases the general fancy of the undiscerning multitude, and he who lifts it to expose the miserable, beggarly, unsightly rags and wounds beneath, draws upon himself a senseless and harmless storm of unpopularity. He, however, does more, or he would not do ought worth the trouble or ought he could justify, for he does an essentially Christian work who lifts up his voice against the delusion that mere sentimentality, mere fitful enthusiasm, mere outward show of union, which films and skins the ulcerous sore of division, can be in any sense acceptable to God as a substitute for that visible unity of His people for which He prayed in order that the world seeing it might believe.

"That they all may be One as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they all may be one in Us." Such is the will of the Master. The will of sects is different, for they would die if His will were done on earth as it is done in heaven. The instinct of self-preservation inspires a desire to retain their diversities, their organic isolation, their individual specialties, their complete severance and independency, their perpetual struggle for mastery over each other, while at the same time they would deceive the Master and delude the world by specious devices which seek to conceal a lack of the living unity of One Body, by binding the severed members in a mechanical union, as though a faggot of sticks were the same as a living Vine.

True Catholicity is freedom within the sphere of

the law, the freedom enjoyed in a wisely governed State, so the Catholic and Apostolic Church permits the exercise of all the liberty which is compatible with loyalty to the Divine Head. The spurious Catholicity coming into fashion is the sphere of license, its liberty is the largeness of anarchy. The compensatory penalty for this freedom is the severity with which discipline is enforced and the narrow restrictions put upon it votaries within the circles of their private sects. Just as in the French Revolution era the Clubs rang with the cry of social and political emancipation, liberty and equality, catholicity of sentiment and of sympathy were all the rage, while at the same time the direst, cruelest tyranny was shown in girdling thought and action with an iron band. Men love the work of their own hands, hence the popularity of the Catholicity of the modern platform, which is as much a human invention, as entirely artificial, as the electric light. The Catholic Church was set in the firmament by her Divine Creator as a perpetual witness of His glory and goodness, to shine alike upon the just and the unjust, and giving, as does the sun to the tiny lights of man's ingenuity, all the illumination they possess.

CO-OPERATION IN CHRISTIAN WORK.

(From the Century.)

THE praise of Christian unity is often chanted now-a-days; the grand chorus of the Evangelical Alliance stately joins in celebrating the excellency of its glory, and there is an unwritten liturgy of pleasant phrases, describing its delights, into which most Christians, in their devotions, spontaneously glide. Of this sort of sentiment there is even a surplussage. The terms in which it is commonly set forth have become so prodigiously inflated that they pass for much less than their dictionary value. Meantime, the schisms increase, the churches are multiplied far beyond the needs of worshippers, and the relation of the sects is practically one of rivalry.

Most of the great denominational assemblies devote a day to the reception of what are called fraternal delegates, and the speeches of these delegates are full of the sentiment of unity. But there is nothing in them more substantial than sentiment. Propositions looking toward the concentration of forces in Christian work are never heard in these places. The applause of the platforms would cease, and a coolness would soon fall upon the meeting, if any such suggestion were heard. Indeed, the speakers on these occasions are generally careful to explain that they do not expect or desire any practical union in Christian work. "Union," said a distinguished speaker at one of these meetings, not long ago, "union is chimerical; union is impossible; it is useless to talk of union at present; but we may have unity—the unity of the spirit; that we ought to pray for and promote in every possible way." Precisely. Union is concrete; unity is abstract; what the average "fraternal delegate" wants is an abstract or sentimental unity that will call for the sacrifice of no sectarian advantages.

Nevertheless, all these love-feasts of Christian fellowship, from the Evangelical Alliance down to the union prayer-meeting in the country villages, bear united testimony that the differences between the sects—between those called Evangelical, at any rate—are not of any real importance. In other words, they bear witness that the sectarian divisions of the Christian Church in city and country, by which in so many places its power is destroyed and its glory turned to shame, all rest on non-essential differences.

There is a large body of Christian men in all the sects—mostly quiet men who do not talk much in the union meetings, but whose contributions support, in large measure, the churches and the missionary societies—who have been paying close attention to

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