

mercantile business, it was necessary to be of that faith. To remain Protestant was to be condemned to a life of suffering and misery. On the other hand to be Romanist, was to open the way to honours at a time when royal favour was everything. Some conversions took place to reward the zeal of the persecutors, who did not hesitate to pursue the Reformed still more cruelly. If a mixed marriage took place in a Protestant temple the building was to be pulled down, so that France soon became covered with ruined buildings. For the distance of a hundred leagues, in some parts, the Reformed, sad and silent, witnessed the populace, led by the priests, attack the sacred edifices, and amidst jeers and sarcasms, raze to the earth, the temples around which clustered so many hallowed recollections. Nothing escaped.

THE ZEAL OF THE PERSECUTORS.

From 1657 pastors were forbidden to bear their titles, they could only serve their own parishes, and if the temples were condemned to disappear, they had only the bitter consolation of meeting their flocks in their dwellings, and there to worship God. But even this was not long tolerated, for on 19th April, 1681, orders were given that pastors should only visit the sick, and where there was no temple, the pastor was to remove at least six leagues.

In replying to adversaries who ceased not to decry the Protestant religion, the pastors became able controversialists and powerful speakers, refuting with solid arguments the statements of the Romanists. Claude, Jurieu, Pajon, Allix, spread their writings every where, animating the courage of those whose faith the priests were trying to shake. But even this consolation was denied them, for an order was obtained from the King, August, 1685, forbidding Protestant pastors "to speak directly or indirectly or in any way whatever of the Catholic religion."

Seeing Louis so docile to suggestions, Cosnac, Bishop of Valence, a disreputable man, said to him, in the name of his colleagues. "To be the restorer of the faith, and the exterminator of heresy, are solid titles, immortal titles, which will not only pierce the depth of all time, but will exist when time shall be no more."

Persecution was also to reach the domestic hearth. "At marriage and baptismal ceremonies of Protestants, not more than ten persons can be present," said the Edict of 9th November, 1670. Ten years later marriage between a Protestant and Romanist, was branded by making the children "illegitimate and incapable of succession," and this by a King whose profligacy was notorious, and whose bastards had to be legitimatised by the magistrates. Farther the school as well as the temple had to be condemned, and so, on November 9th, 1670, the King commanded that masters of Protestant schools should teach only "to read, write and cipher" in this way preventing all religious instruction. Only one school and one teacher were allowed in each parish, however numerous the children to be taught, thus compelling parents to send their children to Catholic schools. This was justified on the principle that by torturing the minds and bodies of Protestants, they were saving their souls. On the same principle the priests counselled and the King commanded that "It was lawful for our subjects of the so-called reformed religion—males as well as females—on attaining the age of seven years, to embrace the Catholic religion, without any hindrance on the part of fathers or mothers or relations." (1681)

Nothing better proves the

SAD CONDITION OF FRENCH PROTESTANTS

at this time, than the petition they addressed to Louis XIV. the text of which is preserved in the National Archives. "One of your declarations," said they, "forbids your subjects to leave the kingdom. Sire, retain them by the bonds of charity, and design at least to render their habitation possible, by frustrating the wicked devices of those who carry off their children, who take their bread from them by refusing to admit them to trades, who deprive them of their foods, who blight their honour, expose their life to continual perils, and forbid them the exercise of their religion, without which life itself is but a long death, your petitioners aspire not to great advantages in your kingdom, all they propose is to live simply in peace, and to serve God according to the dictates of their consciences. Permit not, Sire, that hatred deprive them of the happiness of breathing in your empire. They will not be useless therein, for they will contribute

to make commerce flourish as well as the arts and manufactures."

To this humble petition the King replied only by publishing fresh decrees of proscription. At last, weary of accumulating edict upon edict, and powerless to convince the mass of Protestants of the truth of Roman dogmas, the priests, raising the mask organized the form of persecution which has left in history the name of

THE DRAGONNADES.

French soldiers, marching under royal standards, penetrated, sword in hand, into the towns where Protestants lived; at the head of these "infernal legions," marched bishops, monks and missionaries, eager to see the misery and tears of those whom their arguments had not convinced. Protestant France was thus pillaged the dragoons shamelessly treating men, women and children, to compel them to abjure what they dared to call their errors, all justice was at an end: the reformed portion of the population. "I will tell you," wrote Pastor Claude to his son, "that we are already reduced to frightful extremities. There are more than 60,000 dragoons scattered over the provinces, amongst those of our religion. They call upon entire towns to embrace the Catholic religion—the King no longer allowing more than one faith. They pillage, break, kill and drag the people to mass with cords around their necks. Pray God for us, for all is lost, without remedy and without resource."

While this was going on, Colbert, coadjutor of the Bishop of Rouen, presented himself before the King, and in the name of the clergy of France praised him for that he had gained the hearts of the heretics, subduing the obstinacy of their spirits, for they would, perhaps, never have returned to the bosom of the church by any other way than *the road strewn with flowers* which he had opened up." Thus it was they sought to delude public opinion; and some months later (March, 1686) Bossuet did not fear to print these words "None of you have suffered violence either in your persons or in your property—I hear the same from other bishops"—and yet the diocese of Meaux, of which Bossuet was chief, had just been ravaged by the dragoons!

Couriers now followed each other daily to the court, announcing that, after solemn deliberation, the Protestants of Montpellier, of Nismes, of Montauban—those north and those south, had abjured their errors. This being so, there was no longer any need for the Edict of Nantes. Its revocation, so long demanded by the clergy, might now be pronounced, accordingly on the 18th October, 1685, the court being at Fontainebleau, the King signed the

EDICT REVOKING THAT OF NANTES.

"We see now," said Louis, "with gratitude to God, that our laws have had the result we proposed, since the best and greatest part of our subjects of the religion called reformed, have embraced Catholicism." Orders were given to demolish all temples still standing. Pastors were commanded to change their faith or to leave France within fifteen days, on pain of the galleys for life; and all schools were closed. Thus rights of conscience despised and trodden underfoot, ruins of towns and villages, burning hatred, intense suffering on the part of innocent persons, blood of martyrs, and the flight of thousands of the choicest men in the kingdom, carrying to other lands, the riches of France, were some of the consequences of this measure which covers with ineffable disgrace the king and ministers who, at the instigation of the priests, put it into execution.

The church, on whose behalf this wickedness had been perpetrated, returned

THANKS TO THE KING

through the Pope, who in a brief, declared "the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was the finest thing his Majesty had ever done, the fittest to cause his memory to endure for ever, and to draw down upon him the special benediction of heaven." In this the Pope was mistaken. The revocation did for a time prove the ruin of French Protestantism; but it was also the commencement of those reverses from which the House of Bourbon has never recovered. As I write, I am reminded by a friend that from that day to this, no son has ever succeeded his father upon the throne of France.

IN CONCLUSION

1885 differs, no doubt, in many respects, from 1685; still it must ever be borne in mind that the *spirit* of the papacy changes not, but remains the same to-day

as it was from the beginning. Happily, however, in most countries, that spirit is not allowed to manifest itself, as it once did, and in certain places still does, in overt acts.

T. H.

Clarens, Switzerland, 13th January, 1885.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

BY CHARLES ELLIOTT, D.D.

The Church is divided into many sects. These sects form distinct religious communities. This is the result of the exercise of the right of private judgment. It is impossible to make all men think alike, and it is folly to attempt it.

Christians walk in the same light; but each reflects a different ray, like the rays of the sun reflected in various hues from the objects of earth. While experiment has shown that the light from the sun can be separated into seven distinct colours, it has also shown that these colours can be blended into one, and thus form the light of day. So experience has shown that all true Christians, when viewed, not from their points of difference, but from their points of union, and from the Bible, are one. Man's prismatic, intellectual idiosyncrasies separate the rays of truth; their Christian experience—the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts—combine them into one ray, containing in itself the number of perfection, the sevenfold gifts and graces of the Sanctifier.

Men have looked at the points of difference, not at the points of union, among Christians, and they have held up the divisions of the Church as a reproach to the Christian name. Unity—meaning visible unity—it is said, is a mark of the true Church, consequently, the true Church cannot be found among sects distinguished by theological differences and separate Church polity.

Persons who speak thus look only at the surface of things, and possess erroneous views as to what constitutes true unity. Unity consists in harmony of thought and feeling, in common experience, in mutual sympathy, in co-operation, in a common life devoted to a common end, not in an aggregation of dead masses, or bodies joined by some external bond or power, which they cannot break or resist. Unity, in the moral and spiritual world, is not a passive, but an active condition.

Does such unity exist in the Church? It does. Christ's prayer was not in vain when He prayed. "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." (John xvii. 21.) Consider the nature of the unity for which the Saviour prayed.

It pre-supposes a *vital union* with Christ. In the preceding verse, He says. "Neither pray I for these *alone*, but for them also which shall believe on Me *through their word*." (20.) It is for the unity of those who believe in Him that the Saviour prayed. The unity of Christians, therefore, is conditioned by faith in Christ.

This unity is described as a reflection of the unity which subsists between the Father and the Son. "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." This teaches us that it is no *moral* unity of sympathy merely—though this is included—but a *community of spiritual life*. The Father and the Son are indissolubly one, of the same substance, so Christians are indissolubly one by a common spiritual life, derived from Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit. This common spiritual life constitutes them brethren, a relationship which eternity cannot sever; for it centres in Christ and the Father. Our Saviour prays "that they all may be one in us," i.e., in Him and the Father, who are one. Christ is the divine harmony of all Christian discords; and Christians are one with each other, in proportion as they are one with Him.

There is no intimation in our Saviour's prayer of a visible centre of unity on earth, either at Jerusalem, or at Rome, or anywhere else. There is no mention of any form of church government, or form of worship, as a necessary condition for such unity as that for which He prayed. These are all good and necessary in their places, but our Saviour did not consider them essential to Christian unity. The unity that He contemplated is not merely harmony of will and of love, but oneness by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Peter says that "exceeding great and precious promises" are given to Christians, that by means of them they may become "partakers of the