

The practical separation among disciples hinders the fulfilment of the Church's mission by preventing co-operation. The tendency of intelligence is to independence and individualism ; and so liberty to think and speak and act begets division, which, unhappily, has been carried to such extent in the Church of Christ that we have to-day as many sects as there are days in the year. Christ said, " I am the vine ; ye are the branches ; " and it is true—principally branches! One would think that the more minute the ramification, the more prosperous the growth.

Organic unity may not be needful, but organic sympathy is. The divisions which exist have brought dissension. As Father Cameron used to say, " It would seem that the tenacity of denominationalism is in direct proportion to the insignificance of the denominational tenet or usage." There are some things which are beyond reasonable question right and true ; others as unquestionably wrong and false. The former should constitute with all evangelical believers the essentials. Between these lies the doubtful territory, where there is likely always to be disagreement because there is no clear, conclusive revelation. After two thousand years of Church history, believers do not yet all see alike as to infant baptism and believers' baptism ; immersion, affusion, or sprinkling ; ordination by Presbytery or bishop, or no ordination at all ; apostolic succession, or only the succession of spiritual life and power ; prelatical, presbyterial, or congregational church order, and a few kindred things. That disciples should divide, even to the point of practically unchurching each other, upon matters such as these, is a pity—perhaps, in God's sight, a crime. The Spirit was promised to guide us into all truth—certainly all essential and fundamental truth. The very fact that disciples, equally devout and holy, equally scriptural and spiritual, equally evangelical and evangelistic, do not see alike in these respects, is an argument, if not a proof, that these things cannot belong to the essentials. Of these we can only say, " Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," and let every other man have the same right, and respect that right in others. To demand, " You must be like us," betrays an immoral tone of mind. If error is to be shunned, bigotry is to be abhorred ; and persecution, even in its mildest forms, is to be accounted as diabolical in spirit. We must learn to respect the right of private judgment, and concede that, in matters of honest doubt and difference, we ourselves may be wrong. Augustine's famous motto needs incarnation in our church life : " In essentials, unity ; in non-essentials, liberty ; in all things, charity." In very few modern churches is there at once an avoidance of laxity, and at the same time an indulgence of liberty and a cultivation of charity toward those who differ with us on non-essentials. To be fully persuaded ourselves, and yet concede equal intelligence, honesty, and even right of conviction in others ; to admit that our customs may be, as Cyprian said, only *vetustas erroris*—the old age of error—the result of tradition ; that it is possible we are ourselves wrong in some things of which we are most tenacious, and that there is room for a different inter-