

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 general 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.

THE METHODIST UNION MOVEMENT.

IT would be as futile as it would be indeed sinful to cherish any feelings towards those who are known generally as Methodists, who are seeking after union among themselves, other than the kindest, and towards their present endeavour the most sympathetic feelings. To satirize this movement for union would be a very easy task, and, looking at matters from a merely human, temporal standpoint, a task not without justification. We cannot, however, take this position; were we to do so, we believe we should be hindering rather than furthering the kingdom of God, by checking a process of gradual development which is going on leading the sects out of the Egypt of division and bondage to the Canaan of Catholic unity. In no spirit of unkindness we however call the attention of our neighbours the Wesleyans, of all manner of types, to a phase in their history which they ought not to overlook in their present time of transition. We well remember the origin and early life of several of the bodies who split from the elder community of Wesleyans. The "Fly Sheets" were written within a few yards of our place of residence, and one of the ministers excommunicated for refusing to submit to an inquisitorial examination by the Conference, was well known to us. The expulsion of Mr. BROMLEY naturally turned our thoughts to the peculiar phase of Methodism in those days which was towards a multiplication of separate bodies, by internal quarrels. These bodies were so antagonistic that we knew of members in full standing in the old Wesleyan body expelled for attending the services of those who called themselves "Primitive Methodists." The contention was a very bitter one for many years, and gave birth to a number of distinct organizations of the Methodist class or type. Sunday after Sunday we saw the older members of the Wesleyan body regularly attend Church once a day, and when Holy Communion was administered. The maintenance of union with the Church was a strong ground of objection and complaint to all the seceding bodies; not a single one went out from the Methodism of WESLEY'S organizing without at once setting up an ecclesiastical order wholly apart from the existing Church of CHRIST in England. Here we ask the special attention of Wesleyans. We speak not only from a knowledge of the original pleadings and apologetic writings of the different sects of Methodism, but from frequent conversations with the ministerial leaders and most zealous supporters of the various bodies, when we state that these separations were all defended and justified as being the outcome of more light being vouchsafed on the teaching of the Bible by the Spirit of God in answer to prayer. Every separate body, from the time of its separation up to a very recent period has boldly taken its stand upon the Word of God, and claimed to be following the special leading of the Spirit of God. A dilemma is thus put before us. We must either affirm that these separations were based upon the Word of God, and were evidences of the

leading of the Holy Spirit, and should therefore be maintained even unto death, or we must believe that those who made these exalted claims to divine guidance, and who a myriad times, in private and public prayer, have attributed their position to a more enlightened knowledge of Scripture than others, were after all utterly mistaken, misled in fact, into attributing their blundering self-will and love of dominancy to the inspiration of the Divine Spirit! A very painful dilemma, it seems to us, thus arises out of the desire to undo the separating dividing work which has made Methodism a congeries of sects inside a sect. We have to believe that our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who prayed that His people might be one, first systematized a movement by which they became split into fragmentary and antagonistic bodies; then, secondly, when the movement proved disastrous to the welfare of His kingdom, He changed the movement into its exact opposite, by reuniting those whom He had separated. That is for devout Wesleyans of the Primitive, New Connexion, Episcopal, and other types to get out of as best they may. We have read carefully all the reported union debates without discerning any sign of there existing a consciousness of this difficulty. It is wise to ignore it, for it threatens the whole fabric of Methodism, both organically and doctrinally, as it demonstrates the temporariness of its structure, and manifests how unphilosophical, how opposed to experience, is their system of proving all their claims and notions by private interpretations of Scripture and by their emotions. These unstable foundations formed the basis of disunion in the past; both of them also are appealed to as reasons for breaking up disunion in the future. Reading the wonderfully voluminous debates just going on, we came upon one expression, and, sad to say, one only which, to a Churchman looking ever to the Head of the Church for guidance, seems to have in it a gleam of Christian light. The Rev. Hugh Johnstone, of Toronto, is reported to have said:—

"Others could do as they pleased, but as for him, sooner let a millstone be hanged about his neck and let him be drowned in the depths of the sea than that his hand should be lifted up to block a movement so manifestly acceptable to God, so in the line of the Redeemer's intercessory prayer, and the baptizing influence of the blessed Spirit."

But the noble ring this utterance would have had is spoilt by a little rift in the bell. The Redeemer's intercessory prayer was not, as Mr. JOHNSTONE inferentially implies, "That all Methodists may be one," but that "they," that is all His flock, all His Church, may be one, one manifesting unity to the world, manifesting therefore unity not to be spiritually discerned, else the world would not see it, but unity visible, unity shining out clear as the glory of the firmament showing forth the handiwork of God.

But the movement has our earnest sympathy, unworthy as it is of so great a jubilation as its advocates are making. We recognize the Divine Hand in all the modern phases of Church aggregation. Convulsive revolutions are not God's way of working. He will bring His Church to unity as He brought His people out of bondage, step by step by a way they wot not of. We see in this happy tendency a reward coming upon the Church for witnessing faithfully for unity "in the line of the Redeemer's intercessory prayer," when sorely tempted to throw in her lot as one of an indistinguishable disorganized host of sects and so-called Churches. Let but our Wesleyan brethren keep up a close study and a fervent yearning to live harmoniously with the prayer of their Lord as ours,

and in His own good time He will lead them up from that real unity with brother Wesleyans to the heavenly level of unity again with His Catholic and Apostolic Church. This was the Church of WESLEY to his death, the Church of which he will shine as a star for ever and ever, having turned many to righteousness and none to severance from that unity towards which his followers are feeling their way, if haply they may find their lost treasure and power.

PAPERS BY AN ORGANIST.

H. G. COLLINS, ORGANIST.

NO. II. ON BOY CHOIRISTERS.

"All that we know of saints above,
Is that they sing and that they love." — PLAYFORD.
"Samuel ministered to the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod."

FOR the age of innocence to have its representatives engaged in the public ministry and service of the Lord has been a most edifying and cherished usage of the Church, and there is perhaps no surer mark of the Church treading in the footsteps of the Divine Master, than the love and care with which she treats childhood, the anxiety she shows to take infants in her arms and bless them, and the tenderness she manifests in providing for their future guardianship and training.

There are some reasons for selecting those of our Sunday scholars, who have good voices and a taste for music, to lead the praises of God's House, which seem so cogent and weighty, that their presentation must occasion thought, and might perhaps lead some choir-masters who love boys to instruct them for the choir. Certainly, boys require very careful training, great watchfulness and patience, but the end gained is so satisfactory and so almost self-repaying in its results, that the outlay of labour is only remembered with cheerful thankfulness. The superiority of well-trained boy voices to female voices is rather a dangerous opinion to bring forward, as the majority of choirs are mixed; but those who have had the good fortune to hear an English Cathedral choir, and those of some of the large London churches, will endorse the statement. Of course, judgment in the selection is very important, correctness of ear and sweetness (not strength) of tone being essential, if the result is to be satisfying.

Now for the reasons for utilizing boys:—

I. *For the sake of the boys themselves.*—It is without doubt the earnest wish of every clergyman to see the boys and girls of his Sunday school grow up good Christian men and women, and finally attached to the Church in which they have been baptized. With regard to the boys, there is unfortunately a very weak spot in the Sunday-school system, for the great defection or leakage from the Sunday school takes place when the lads are fourteen or upwards, just at the very time when many leave the public school and commence working in business or trade. This is the time of life when the youthful mind is so easily led astray, and when, though the desires may be good, yet there is not sufficient judgment and sufficient manliness and courage to maintain and preserve personal piety. Then again, at this time of life boys become insensibly filled with, at first, a struggling feeling of manliness; a desire for independence of thought and action; a feeling of chafing at control; of ambition, and of that wondrous sanguine hope, that promises marvels for the time coming, even as the breath of spring whispers tidings of the beautiful summer.