

"From the idea of the Church now before us, we gather the most powerful impression of that *visible unity* which ought to bind all her members into one great whole. The life of the risen and glorified Lord is not a life in spirit only, but in an exalted and glorified body, and so lived it is at the same time alike one and visible. It exhibits no discordant elements; its different sides and aspects present no hindrances to the accomplishment of the common end. The divine does not obliterate the human; the human does not limit the divine. The body of the risen Lord is not lost in His spiritual existence; the manifest operations of His Spirit find their appropriate expression through the different members of His Body. In the perfect harmony of Body and Spirit He is One. But He is not only One. He is also visible both to His angels and to His saints.

"To the former He appeared after His resurrection (1 Tim. iii. 16); the latter 'follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.' If, therefore, it be the duty of the Church to represent her Lord among men, and if she faithfully performs that duty, it follows by an absolutely irresistible necessity that the unity exhibited in His Person must appear in her. She must not only be one, but visibly one in some distinct and appreciable sense—in such a sense that men shall not need to be told of it, but shall themselves see and acknowledge that her unity is real. No doubt such unity may be, and is, consistent with great variety—with variety in the dogmatic expression of Christian truth, in regulations for Church government, in forms of Christian worship, and in the exhibition of the Christian life.

"It is unnecessary to speak of these things now; variety and the right to differ have many advocates. We have rather at the present moment to think of unity, and the obligations to agree. As regards these, it can hardly be denied that the Church of our time is flagrantly and disastrously at fault. The spectacle presented by her to the world is in direct and palpable contradiction to the unity of the person of her Lord; and she would at once discover its sinfulness were she not too exclusively occupied with the thought of *positive* action on the world, instead of remembering that her primary and most important duty is to afford to the world a visible representation of her exalted Head. In all her branches, indeed, the beauty of unity is enthusiastically talked of by her members, and not a few are never weary of describing the precious ointment in which the Psalmist beheld a symbol of the unity of Israel. Others, again, aware of the uselessness of talking where there is no corresponding reality, seek comfort in the thought that beneath all the divisions of the Church there is a unity which she did not make, and which she cannot unmake. Yet surely, in the light of the truth now before us, we may well ask whether either the talking or the suggested comfort brings us nearer a solution of our difficulties. The one is so meaningless that the very lips which utter it might be expected to refuse their office. The other is true, although according as it is used it may either be a stimulus to amendment or a pious platitude, and generally it is the latter.

"But neither words about the beauty of unity, nor the fact of an invisible unity, avail to help us. What the Church ought to possess is a unity which the eye can see. If she is to be a witness to her Risen Lord, she must do more than talk of

unity, more than console herself with the hope that the world will not forget the invisible bond by which, it is pleaded, that all her members are bound together into one. Visible unity in one form or another is an essential mark of her faithfulness. Let it be allowed that differently organized branches may exist in different lands, or even in the same land, they must occupy such a position to each other that their unity shall be manifest to the world. There must be inter-communion, mutual helpfulness, even, to a certain extent, confederation, among them. Unless it be so, the unity of the Church is destroyed, and she cannot fulfil her mission. Nay, the very aim, in the thought of which she finds consolation for the loss of unity, will be itself defeated. The world will never be converted by a disunited Church; even Bible circulation and missionary exertion upon the largest scale will be powerless to convert it unless they are accompanied by the strength which unity alone can give. Let the Church of Christ once feel, in any measure corresponding to its importance, that she is the representative of her Risen Lord, and she will no longer be satisfied with mere outward action. She will see that her first and important duty is to heal herself, that she may be able to heal others also."

### FREE CHURCHES.

MANY Churchmen regret the, to them, slow progress in the direction of making our churches free and unappropriated. But after reading the curious document below they will rejoice no less at the action of the congregation referred to than at the great change which has taken place in the disposition of our Bishops in the last three-quarters of a century with regard to that subject.

In the course of a lecture on "Social and political changes in New Brunswick in the last 100 years" by Mr. I. Allan Jack, the lecturer said:—"I must read to you a letter, which I believe has never been published, from Bishop Inglis of Nova Scotia, which, as a diocese, included New Brunswick at the date of the letter.

"The Bishop writes from Fredericton on the 5th of August, A. D. 1809, to the Rector, Churchwardens and Vestry of Kingston, as follows:—

"GENTLEMEN,—When lately at Kingston I received much pleasure from seeing so large a congregation on Sunday, the decency of their behaviour during Divine service, the large number of persons who presented themselves for confirmation. I sincerely rejoice at these circumstances, and most earnestly pray the Great Shepherd and Redeemer of souls that He would most effectually bless both the ordinances thus administered, and those that may hereafter be administered in that church to the spiritual nourishment and growth in grace of all who did or shall partake of them. But it gave me no small concern to hear that the pews in the Church of Kingston, were all held in common, that none were appropriated to individuals as is the case in all other churches in our communion. I never knew an instance before this in Europe or America where the pews were thus held in common, and were men, of perhaps the worst characters might come and sit themselves down by the most religious and respectable characters in the parish. This must ultimately tend to produce disorder and confusion in the Church of God, and check the spirit of true devotion and piety. When a man has a pew of his own he can leave his Bible and Prayer Books in that pew when public worship is ended on Sundays, and he will be sure to find them in his pew on the next Sabbath. The infirmities of age and bad health require attention to the comfort of

warmth, especially in the winter; a man may protect that comfort by lining his pew with some kind of cloth and covering the floor. It is needless to say that the mode of holding pews in common, must necessarily preclude these with many other benefits and conveniences that might be named. What could occasion such an innovation—such a departure from the usage of the Church of England I am unable to conceive. The greatest disorder must be the consequence if this mode be continued when the country becomes populous and in some places it would at this day be ruinous to the Church. Very earnestly wishing for the prosperity of the Church and congregation of Kingston, I earnestly recommend to your consideration, Gentleman, the removal of this strange arrangement. Your prudence and good sense will point out the mode of accomplishing this, which should be gentle and conciliating, and I flatter myself when the matter is coolly and deliberately weighed that there will scarcely be an objection to it. To obviate any difficulty there should, in yours and most other churches, be a pew or two set apart for strangers, the poor should not be neglected, due care ought to be taken of them—and as "Government" contributed to the building of the church, the same order should be observed in it, as in all other regular established churches. Heartily commending you and your congregation to the special blessing and protection of Almighty God, I am gentlemen your affectionate friend and servant in Christ.

(Signed)

CHARLES NOVA SCOTIA.

Mr. Jack says, "I regard this letter as a very interesting illustration of the great diversity of opinion which may be entertained by persons living at either extremity of a given period of time. There are, of course, many, at the present day, who will not consent to making their churches free, but it would be difficult to find any one, especially a bishop, possessing sufficient hardihood to attack and rebuke the members of a congregation for maintaining a free church."

Our readers will agree with us that it would be difficult to find a similar plea advanced in these days in defense of the pew system, although there are still some who, in part, at least, agree with the Bishop's views. It will occur to our readers that "so large a congregation," "the decency of their behaviour," and "the large number of persons who presented themselves for confirmation," in striking contrast with other parishes, bore some relation to the system in vogue, and that had the good old Bishop sought for an explanation he would have been convinced of the instability of his arguments, and in the interests of progress and the Church's welfare, have become a convert to the change. Happily, although learned slowly, the lesson has been learned, and we may hope that more of the Bishops of to-day will soon speak out as strongly in favor of the free system as did Bishop Inglis in condemning it.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Church Guardian:

SIR,—For the benefit of those who are apt to think that the teaching of our Roman brethren is "not so bad after all," and especially of those who send their children to Romish schools, will you kindly give a place in your widely-read paper to the following extract from a letter read by the Superior-General of a R. C. school to the pupils just before the Christmas vacation, and published in one of their papers? Comment is unnecessary.

J. S.

"May all praise be given to the glorious Queen of the Snows, who took me, 42 years ago, as it were, by the hand, on her own Feast of the Snows, giving me to understand that she would shield me