

is, from their youth, cast among sects, as guilty of this great sin until they are better informed. To the visible Church alone, certainly, the promises are made, but God has nowhere said that He will punish the ignorant as well as the guilty. On the contrary, the Lord says that "they who knew not the will of the Father shall be beaten with few stripes." And many are the instances in Holy Scripture of those who were real servants of God long before they were acquainted with the terms of the covenant in the Church of God's own appointment. Cornelius was one of these, and yet, though his "prayers and his alms came up for a memorial before God," he was required to be baptized, and to unite himself to the visible Church as soon as he was instructed more fully. Acts x.

PASSAGES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, PROVING THE VISIBLE UNITY
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, AND CONDEMNING DIVISIONS,
OR SECTS, OR SCHISMS OF ALL SORTS.

St. John's, xvii. 21.—"That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."

It is a well known fact that the greatest obstacle to the conversion of the heathens is the present state of open division among Christians. 'Learn to agree among yourselves,' say heathen philosophers, 'before coming to convert us.'

Rom. xvi. 17.—"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine that ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly, (or self-interest) and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The simple are easily gained by *good words and fair speeches*.

Divisions were ever offences to the Christian Church because they are wounds in "the Body of Christ which is the Church," and therefore to speak softly of sects is to speak softly of the wounds in Christ's Body. And to follow sects, and to encourage divisions in any way is to go directly against Holy Scripture, which commands us to "*avoid them*."

Col. i. 18.—"He is the Head of the body the Church."

I. Cor. xii. 18.—"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into *one body*."