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THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH
UNIONS.

THERE has sprung up in many quarters an earnest feeling in favor of the reunion of Christendom. Thoughtful persons readily admit that the condition of the Christian world is by no means satisfactory. The numerous divisions in the visible Church, the frequent controversies and heart burnings which occur among Christian people, and the small progress made in the evangelization of the world, indicate that, in some way, full justice has not been done to the Gospel system. It is not surprising, in the circumstances, that some have been led to turn to the organic union of the Churches of Christendom as a panacea for the evils which are seen to exist.

Thirty years ago, there was organized in England, an "Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom," by intercessory prayers. In 1868, some two years after this Association had been publicly condemned by the Roman Inquisition, it had 12,684 members, drawn chiefly from the Anglican, Romish and Oriental Churches, with a few from various Protestant communities. This society which, I presume, still exists, embodies largely the aspirations of those who long for the visible union of the Anglican, Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, and then look, perhaps, for the absorption of smaller Christian bodies.

There has been also in recent times not only a happy breaking down of the prejudices with which the different evangelical Churches were wont to regard each other, but, in many instances, where the bodies were closely allied, organic unions have been successfully accomplished.

A movement has, moreover, been recently initiated in Canada looking towards the visible union of influential denominations which have long stood ecclesiastically apart. The distinguished prelate who recently preached before the Triennial Session of the Dominion Synod of the Anglican Church, in Montreal, declared his conviction that of many great questions coming before that body, "not one ranked in importance with that as to the reunion of Christendom." In his sermon, the preacher has honied words both for Roman Catholics, and for those whom he scarcely knows how to classify, whether as "organized dissent," or as "non-conformity;" and he evidently longs and prays for a union comprehensive enough to include Rome and Canterbury, Moscow and Geneva, not to mention other ecclesiastical centres less known to fame.

There is much in these movements and utterances in which earnest Christians may rejoice. They seem to indicate that the Divine Teacher is leading good men to feel after truer views of the unity of the Church, and to cherish feelings towards their fellow Christians, in other sections of the Church, which can scarcely fail to bear good fruit. It is, at the same time, clear that in many quarters, there mingle with these movements for the reunion of Christendom, confused and erroneous views of the Church and its unity, which we should avoid.

This topic not only concerns us on account of the weighty practical interests which commend it to the consideration of all Christians, but it has theological bearings which naturally invite attention in a School of Divinity.

The unity which we predicate of anything depends on the nature of the thing of which it is predicated. Whether we ascribe unity to a watch, a tree, an animal or a society, the unity in each case corresponds to the nature of the thing of which it is predicated. Our idea of the Church will necessarily determine our view of its unity, and will modify our conception of the importance of a coporate union and of the extent to which it is attainable.

Our Lord declares to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18. This statement distinctly involves the unity and the perpetuity of the Church. But the question at once arises what is that Church, whose unity and perpetuity are promised by Christ? We must ask:

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE CHURCH?

There are in reality only two conceptions of the Church which are radically distinct. These we may, for brevity's sake, style the Romish and the Protestant. That these views differ widely need occasion no surprise; for they are not derived from the same source. The proximate ground of faith, according to the Roman Catholic, is the living infallible Church, whose office it is to authenticate and explain Scripture and tradition, and whose voice is decisive on all points upon which it speaks. According to the Protestant, the proximate ground of faith is the Bible alone.

Prior to the Reformation, there may be found in Christian writers a good deal of confusion of thought on this topic, which largely disappears after that date. The great religious struggle of the sixteenth century turned upon questions which compelled men to think themselves out on this subject, and attain a definiteness of conviction, which made dogmatic definition possible and inevitable. Even since the Reformation, some excellent men have failed to apprehend the import and bearing of the distinctions then made. And, if we are not mistaken, we can discover in some of the good men who are agitating for the re-union of Christendom, a sort of mental vacillation on this point which introduces weakness and confusion into their discussions.

1. The Romish definition of the Church, as given by Cardinal Bellarmine, is as follows, viz: "The Church is a Society of men on earth, united together by the profession of one and the self-same sacraments under the government of lawful pastors, and especially the Roman Pontiff." (De eccl. Lib. III, Cap. 2.) This definition is not deduced from the Bible, and it is impossible to find any real ground for it there. It suits, however, exactly what the Church of Rome is. It is a visible Society of men on earth who make a certain profession

of the Christian faith, participate in the same sacraments and are subject to certain pastors and especially the Pope of Rome, Those who hold this view regard the Church as a purely external and visible Society, made up of all sorts of men, and even of "reprobates," as Bellarmine expressly affirms. The Church may promote or develop spiritual life and holy character, but it is itself made up of all sorts of men. It is admitted that many of that mixed Society over which the Pope presides, perish, but as saving grace flows only in the channel of the sacraments, those who are not united to this Church, necessarily come short of salvation. To this mixed community of saints and reprobates, according to Papal divines, belong the promises made to the Church in the Word of God. It possesses all the prerogatives of the Church. To it pertains all those attributes which from antiquity have been ascribed to the Church. It is one, holy catholic, and apostolic.

2. The Protestant conception of the Church is derived from a careful examination and induction of the teaching of Scripture direct and indirect, bearing upon it. Time will not permit our even sketching the wealth of evidence bearing on the true idea of the Church. We can only note the result at which Protestants have arrived. What they have gathered from the Word of God is that the Church consists of the whole number of those "that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof." In reply to the question, What is the Church? the Geneva Catechism answers, "The Society of believers whom God hath predestinated unto eternal life." This is substantially the common doctrine of Protestants. The Church in its true idea is the body of Christ; or the *coetus fidelium*, the company of believers. As the Augsburg Confession expresses it, "The Church of Christ is a congregation of the members of Christ; that is, of the saints which do truly believe, and rightly obey Christ."

Whether we regard God's purpose, the divine fore-knowledge or the actual outcome of history, there rises before the mind the conception of a body or society which includes the entire number of those ultimately saved through faith in Christ. According to the first view, it is the Society of the predestinated, according to the next, the Society of the saved as foreknown of God, and

according to the last, the Society of believers. All these descriptions come to the same thing, and include the same persons. A Protestant can, according to his theological standpoint, select which of these representations he prefers, without varying the substance of the doctrine affecting the recognized membership of the Church. We do not say that the abundant Scripture evidence of the Protestant idea of the Church will group itself with equal ease around any of these representations. We believe, on the contrary, that the view taken in our Standards is the strongest and the best, and that around which the Scripture testimony most naturally arranges itself.

On this we do not insist. The point of most importance is that the Church as set forth in the new Testament is not, in its widest conception, a mixed body made up of all sorts of men, good and bad. It is composed of "saints" and "the faithful in Christ Jesus." It is the body of Christ "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." It is a flock made up of sheep which hear Christ's voice and follow him—to whom he gives eternal life and they shall never perish. There are no hypocrites and no reprobates in this Church.

Protestants admit that the word Church has, in Scripture, various shades of meaning, but so far as sacred things are concerned, they are all derived from the general idea already stated. As every part of the Church, in the sense defined, has a common nature, or, in other words, is composed of those who believe in Christ and are the habitation of God, through the Spirit, it is evident the word Church may be applied appropriately, either to the entire body of Christ in all ages and lands (Col. i. 18) or to any smaller portion of it, united by some tie, on account of which it may be contemplated as a unit. This accounts for the manner in which we find it applied to Christ's professed followers, united in the bonds of ecclesiastical fellowship in a Province, a city, or even in a house. They are regarded and spoken of as being, in the judgment of charity, what they profess to be, a society or community of the members of Christ's mystical body. (Acts ix. 31. Revised, 2 Cor. i. 1, and Romans xvi., 5). In the New Testament, believers are required to associate themselves for Christian fellowship, mutual watch and care, and the extension of the Kingdom of Christ.

These societies thus formed, are spoken of as Churches. But unworthy members may easily find a place in the fellowship of these visible Churches, and this fact also is recognized in the Scriptures but the body, as a whole, receives the name which is appropriate to it, from the profession and standing of its members. But while unworthy members are in the visible Church, they are not there as its rightful members. They do not share in the promises and prerogatives of the body of Christ, whose name they have assumed. And they are not members of that Church of which we predicate Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity and Apostolicity.

And when, in the providence of God, their real character is revealed, and they are separated from the fellowship of the faithful, we can say of them with John, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would, no doubt, have continued with us." (1 John ii. 19).

It is manifest that if we predicate of a mixed society, made up of all sorts of men, what the Scriptures affirm only of the true people of God, we will be led to conclusions very remote from the truth, and our reasonings upon the unity of the Church, and, indeed, upon nearly all matters connected with this mixed society will be entirely vitiated.

We have mentioned two views of the Church, radically distinct, one or other of which men who think clearly should embrace.

3. There is, however, an intermediate position which has been assumed by some writers of ability, and which is involved in the reasonings of others who do not avow it. They hold the Romish idea of the Church as an external visible society made up of all sorts of men, and yet they admit with Protestants that the visible Church is divided, and needs to be re-united. Dr. Döllinger, of Munich, who writes so ably on the re-union of Christendom, evidently occupies this peculiar ground. In his lectures, without formal discussion, he everywhere assumes the Romish idea of the Church as an external visible organization, with very mixed moral elements in its membership, but somehow this Church, to which the promises pertain, has become divided, and must be re-united, before it can successfully achieve its mission in the world. Tractarians occupy the same ground: they can accept Bellarmine's definition of the Church, with the

exception of the last clause, which requires submission to the Roman Pontiff. They even teach that the undivided Church was infallible, or practically infallible, until it became fallible by committing ecclesiastical suicide, when it divided itself into its Eastern and Western sections. There are also not a few Protestants who, when they deal with the re-union of Christendom, appear to halt between two opinions. They see clearly that the Church is no longer to be found in any one visible organization. The visible Church is divided. But when they reason about re-union, they seem insensibly to slide into the Romish conception of the Church, and argue as if the body, which is divided, is identical with that whose unity is proclaimed in the Word of God, to which pertain the promises. These varying conceptions of the Church and its unity, affect very directly the views which we cherish in reference to Church unions.

II.—CHURCH UNIONS IN RELATION TO THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH.

1. The Romish idea of the Church clearly bars, so far as Roman Catholics are concerned, all thought of union with other Churches. The Church is held to be one and indivisible: and there can be no union, because the unity of the Church has never been broken. Rome is compelled to take this position, because she predicates of a visible society, made up of saints and reprobates, what is true only of the real body of Christ, the *coetus fidelium*. Cardinal Manning declares, "the union of the Holy Ghost with the Church is not conditional, but absolute, depending upon no finite will, but upon the Divine Will alone, and, therefore indissoluble to all eternity." (Temp. Mission etc., p. 73.) If the Church, which Jesus Christ founded upon a rock, is a visible corporation, made up of all sorts of men, reprobates included, it exists somewhere in tangible form. Its unity is unquestionable, and its perpetuity sure. It is the one Church of Christ. Separated religious communities are only branches broken off from the living tree. The tree retains the life, and the separated branches are withered and dead. A union of Churches is an absurdity. Individual members of separated Christian societies

may be converted, and received into the fellowship of the true Church, but to imagine that the Church, which is one and indivisible in all ages, can enter into union with these separated communities, is a thought which cannot be entertained. It is easy to understand why the Roman Inquisition has forbidden Roman Catholics to pray for the re-union of Christendom. Such prayers ignore her claim, that the entire Church of Christ, to which salvation belongs, is comprised within the Papal fold. It should be noted that this stupendous claim, which Rome desires to impose on the world, is the logical outcome of her false and earthly view of the Church.

The logic of Papal theology scouts the thought of Church union. But common sense has occasionally asserted itself even in the Church of Rome, and in spite of logic, there have been repeated attempts made by the highest ecclesiastical authority in that body, to effect a union with the Greek Church, and a basis of agreement was definitely reached at the Council of Florence, in 1439, from which, however, the Greeks withdrew. And the Uniate Churches were admitted into the communion of Rome, preserving their own form of creed, with the *filioque* clause omitted, retaining their ancient rites and the use of the cup at the Lord's Supper. Distinguished divines, moreover, like Spinola and Bossuet, with the private sanction of the reigning Pontiff, entered into negotiations with Protestants to secure a re-union of Western Christendom.

2. The bearing of the Protestant idea of the Church on union. We have seen that according to the Protestant view, the Church which Christ founded on a rock, and whose unity and perpetuity he revealed, is a society of the faithful, and is composed of saints. It includes in its widest range, the whole sacramental host of God's elect, all who have been, all who are, and all who shall be, gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof. It is the mystical body of Christ. Its members in whatsoever nationality, or ecclesiastical organization they may be found, are so united that they necessarily constitute one body in all ages. Christ dwells in each of them by his Holy Spirit, and each of them, as a result of the Spirit's grace, abides in Christ by faith. This union is indissoluble and eternal. For the members of Christ's mystical body "are kept by the power of God through

faith unto salvation" (I Peter, i. 5). He who founded the Church on a rock has declared in reference to all his believing people, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John x. 28.) The members of Christ's mystical body are not only made one with Christ by the bonds of this blessed union, but they are made one with each other in Him. They are the habitation of the same Spirit, and partakers of the same faith, and are animated by a common life. In its most fundamental aspect, this union is not a thing to be sought after, or aspired unto. It is a present reality, an existing fact, which should be recognized and acted upon, but not sought after.

We admit that there is an important sense in which this unity may be viewed as progressive. The Spirit may be imparted to us daily in richer measure, and our faith may, with firmer grasp, appropriate Christ in the fulness of His redemptive work and sanctifying grace. And as the result of this richer inflow of the divine life into the soul, there will be a growing conformity of the thoughts, feelings, purposes, desires and life of the believer to the perfect example of Christ. And as we get nearer to the Master, we shall find that we are getting nearer to all who bear His image; and the oneness by which we are knit to Him and them, will stand forth before our minds as a blessed fact. And this progressive work of the conscious personal unification of the believer with Christ and His redeemed shall go on, until it attains perfection, as the Christian enters on the blessed life to come.

This Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic; and we have no occasion to degrade these predicates to a low or non-natural sense, when we apply them to it. As the oneness of the Church depends on the presence of Christ by His Spirit in believers and their abiding in Christ by faith, it supplies no pledge for oneness organization. If any Scripture evidence could be produced to show that Christ has promised, or indicated that there is to be oneness of organization in the visible Church, we would feel that we have solid ground to go upon in looking for such a unity. This, however, is what is conspicuously wanting. The Scripture argument, so far as we have seen it, is purely constructive, and its entire force is due to the underlying

supposition that the Romish conception of the Church as a visible society, is correct. The moment we rise to the Scriptural idea of the Church as the body of Christ, *the coetus fidelium*, the argument disappears.

Dr. Döllinger, in his interesting volume on the re-union of Christendom, supplies an excellent example of the reasoning to which we refer, but which unfortunately is by no means confined to the Munich Professor. This distinguished divine pleads earnestly for the incorporation of all the Churches of Christendom, East and West, into one grand ecclesiastical organization, which he seems to desire shall be equally removed from the Protestantism of the Reformation, and the Catholicism of the Vatican Council.

He sets out with the precarious assertion that such a union "must be possible, for it is our duty," which looks very like a new version of the old Pelagian maxim that, "ability limits responsibility." But passing this over for what is more important he writes, "that Christ, the Founder of the Church, desired and enjoined its unity is clear. In His eucharistic prayer we read, "That they all may be one: that as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." He emphasizes the fact that "the unity of Christian believers is itself to serve as the means to a further end: it is to be a testimony for the world in general, and for all nations, of the truth and divinity of the teaching of Christ." (p. 15). He closes his volume with these words, addressed especially to German Christians: "But if we are willing to march to this contest, we march under a leader whose name may inspire the most faint-hearted with courage. It is He from whom descends every good and perfect gift, whose word is not yet fulfilled, but must be fulfilled in time to come. 'There shall be one fold and one shepherd.'" (p. 165).

It is important to ascertain the meaning of Christ's language, here quoted, and its bearing on the unity of the Church, and the re-union of Christendom. From the manner in which Dr. Döllinger handles it, it is evident that if he and his friends of the Old Catholic party, have, since the Vatican Council, broken with Rome, they have not broken with the Romish idea of the Church. He assumes, as quietly as if it had never been disputed, that the

oneness for which Christ prayed, and which He intimated as a fact in reference to His Church, (John xvii. 21 and Matthew xvi. 18) is the unity, or, at least, involves the unity of a visible organization. He quotes, probably following the Vulgate, the words "There shall be one fold and one shepherd." Had he examined the Greek, he would have seen that the words (*μία ποιμήνη ἐῖς ποιμήν*) will not bear this rendering, but must be translated, as they are in our Revised Version, "one flock, one shepherd." But what constitutes a flock one, is not the enclosure in which they are folded, but the relation they sustain to each other and especially to the shepherd, whose sheep they are, and whose voice they obey. There is nothing in this text which is unfulfilled, or which necessarily contemplates that all Christians shall yet be embraced in one external organization. When we turn to Christ's prayer in John xvii. 21, we discover no petition that all Christians may be united in one visible society. The words run, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father art in me and I in thee: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

When it is assumed as self-evident that the reference here is to an outward and visible unity, almost the first thought which suggests itself is: Has this prayer remained unanswered for eighteen centuries? Or, taking the most favorable view of the facts of history, shall we say, it was answered for five or six centuries, until the unfortunate division between the East and the West, and overlooked ever since? And may it not be asked "If this prayer was unanswered as respects so many generations which are gone, who can assure us that it will prove more potent for the generations to come? This interpretation of Christ's prayer cannot be correct.

But as we examine the prayer itself, this conviction grows upon us:

1. It is a prayer, as we gather from verse. 20, for all Christ's believing people then in the world, and "for them also which shall believe on me through their word." It is a prayer which is presented expressly for all believers, from Christ's day to the end of time. There is no reference to an external society made up of all sorts of men. It includes none but believers.

2. What is asked on their behalf does not include the organic unity of the visible Church. It is a prayer that believers may

be one. But in what respect? Certainly not one in everything. No one imagines that the meaning is, that they shall be one in stature, colour or nationality! No one believes that they shall be one in learning, mental powers, or general culture. Why then should we suppose they must be one in the profession of faith which they make, the sacraments they enjoy, and the ecclesiastical government under which they live? Such a meaning must be put into Christ's words, from some other source, before it can be extracted from them. The language clearly points to a unity of a very different kind: "As thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us." It cannot be supposed that this unity is realized in all the members of a visible society which includes both believers and reprobates. Reprobates who are acknowledged by Bellarmine to have a place in the Church cannot be one in the Father and the Son. Judas Iscariot and Simon Magus were not in the company for whom Christ here prays, and did not share in the blessing sought, but they were both members of the visible Church.

3. It is claimed, however, that the end for which this oneness of believers is sought, viz: "That the world might believe that thou hast sent me," implies a unity which is visible and palpable. Dr. Döllinger attaches great weight to this consideration, and we would admit its force, provided it could be shown that the unity of a great visible organization is the only thing the world can see, and be impressed by. But such a unity does not necessarily lead the world to believe. When the character and spirit of the organization happen to be bad, it may have the very opposite effect. It is only when the members of the visible Church illustrate in their lives the spirit of Christ, that the world is impressed; and we venture to think that the impression will not depend so much on their being grouped in one, or in many visible organizations, as upon the beauty of their lives. History pours contempt upon the dream that the world is to be converted through the impression made by the unity of a great compact visible Society of all sorts of men. In the Western part of Christendom, prior to the Reformation, there was an external visible unity in the Church, but the world was not converted by it. We do not claim perfection for the Christian world, in its present divided state,

but no one can assert that the state of matters was better then. It is notorious that unbelief and immorality were then rampant, and the high places of the Church were disgraced by every kind of enormity. We need not go beyond Dr. Döllinger's testimony. "No doubt," he writes, "a great purification and renewal of the Church in the sixteenth century was a pressing need; the condition of things had become untenable and intolerable." (p. 14.) Something very different from the unity of a vast ecclesiastical corporation is needed to convince the world of the divinity of Christ's Mission.

We hold that Christ's prayer is answered, and his promise that there shall be "one flock and one shepherd," has been made good. His petition for the unity of believers does not stand alone in this prayer. There are other petitions whose meaning should guide us in understanding this. In verse 17 he prays, "Sanctify them through the truth: thy word is truth." To this petition there is given a threefold answer: (1) Fundamental, (2) progressive, and (3) perfect or final. Every living Christian has been sanctified. He has experienced a fundamental spiritual change, in which the reigning power of sin is broken, his heart is devoted to God, and grace is enthroned as the ruler of his life. The transformation of the character and life thus begun, advances progressively, and the Christian "is enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness," until the work is perfected as the believer enters on the glory to come.

Christ's prayer for the holiness of his people is not unanswered, because the Christian's life on earth is marred by sin, and a divine order is observed in conferring the blessing. And why should we not look for a similar fulfilment of Christ's promise, and a corresponding answer to his petition for the oneness of believers? This is exactly what we find as we study the Holy Scriptures. We have seen that the oneness of believers with Christ and with each other in him, is in its most fundamental aspect, an accomplished fact. We have seen that so far as the conscious personal unification of the believer with Christ and with those who bear his image, is concerned, the work is progressive, and shall finally attain a glorious completeness and perfection. The Scripture evidence for either the

present or ultimate organic unity of the visible Church on earth, disappears, as soon as it is understood that the Church for which Christ prayed, and whose unity he announced as a fact, is not a visible Society of all sorts of men, but the body of Christ, made up of the Lord's redeemed "out of everykindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

But there is another consideration which Protestants, at least, should not overlook. If we seek unity in the line indicated by the Tractarian conception of the Church, as a visible Society of mixed moral elements, we must be ready to advance further than even they are prepared to go. It will not suffice to have a number of independent national Churches, whether Prelatic or Presbyterian, all modelled after the same pattern, and holding communion with each other, and unitedly embracing all Christendom. This gives similarity, but not oneness in the visible Church.

According to the Tractarian idea of the Church, in which some Evangelical Christians seem to be partially entangled, there are three things in which the Church is one, viz., (1) the faith professed, (2) the sacraments enjoyed, and (3) the government under which its members live. But oneness in government, in this connection, can only mean one government. France, Switzerland and the United States of America, are all Republics, living in friendly relations with each other, but we cannot predicate unity of their government, nor will we ever be able to do so, until these three Republics are merged in one. The Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, live under the same form of government, and are on the most friendly relations with each other, but they are not one Church. The numerous bodies which form the Presbyterian Alliance are substantially identical in creed, sacraments, and form of government, but they are not one Church; because they do not live under one government, or submit to a common authority. The logic of Rome is inexorable. If government enters into the definition of the Church, where there is one Church there must be one government. If the unity promised by Christ to his Church has relation to the fold, and not to the flock, there must be one fold in which all the sheep are found. What is promised is not met by numerous sheep-folds scattered peacefully over the world, although all modelled after one pattern.

The oneness must respect all the elements which enter into the definition of the Church. And if government and organization enter into the conception of the Church, to which pertain the promises, there can be only one government and one organization in the Church. This is what the Papacy dreams, and then teaches, what Tractarianism logically demands, and what some bewildered Protestants seem to be feeling after in the dark, but it is precisely what the Word of God does not teach. What is set up before us in the sacred page is not one shepherd and one sheep-fold, but "one shepherd, one flock."

We have seen that Christ has not commanded, or promised the organic union of the visible Church, except in so far as it may be involved in that higher spiritual union which makes all believers one with Christ, and one with each other in Him. It is an interesting, important, and by no means an easy question to decide, how far a cordial recognition of this spiritual unity of believers, should carry us in the direction of the organic union of the visible Church. It seems reasonable to believe that where existing divisions are due, as, no doubt, some of them are, to pride, passion, self-will, prejudice and removable ignorance, that a richer baptism of the spirit of Christ, and a closer approximation to the living centre of unity, would lead divided Christians to cast a bridge over the gulf of separation, and come together in visible unity.

We cannot, however, assume that any measure of grace, attainable in this world, will insure an undivided state of the visible Church for two reasons, viz; (1) On nearly all questions of importance thinking minds are liable to arrive at somewhat different views. In philosophy, science and history, earnest and honest thinkers examine the same data, and draw from them diverse conclusions. Certain it is that no measure of grace which has ever yet descended upon the Church of God has led, even its most devoted members, to think alike on matters of Christian doctrine, and we can scarcely assume that the government of the Church is likely, in the future, to prove an exception. If God had promised the unity of the visible Church, we would expect him to find some way to overcome the imperfections of the human mind, but in the absence of such a promise, our expectations must be regulated by the lights of experience. (2) We have no reason to believe

that an undivided state of the Church would promote the highest welfare of the body of Christ. There are natural limits to the extent of any organization, commercial, civil or ecclesiastical which can be controlled successfully by man. Human ambition has often sought to establish a universal empire, but human resources have never been found equal to its successful administration. And we may safely affirm that "a universal Church would be as surely a misgoverned Church, as a universal empire would be a misgoverned empire." Those who believe that a universal Church is the only channel of saving grace, and that it has, in some way, been clothed with infallibility, may give a forced submission to its rule; but others will seek a government more capable of dealing intelligently with their interests, and advancing their welfare.

In determining the area over which a particular Church should extend, many considerations, linguistic, national, geographical and political, need to be carefully weighed; and sanctified common sense will find ample play. For here, in the words of our Confession, we deal with "circumstances concerning the government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed."

But even when we confine our attention to a single country, where one visible Church could efficiently attend to the ecclesiastical interests of the people, very serious difficulties stand in the way of an incorporating union. We admit that in such a case an undivided state of the visible Church is the ideal condition of things. This, however, does not throw much light practically on the attainableness of such a union, as we live in a world where ideals are not generally realized. An ideal man is probably one who is always in perfect health, who never makes mistakes or acts foolishly, and never disregards his neighbour's rights, and always acts from pure and exalted principle, who loves God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. It is no doubt most desirable that we should aim at this ideal, as closely as possible. But were we to devote ourselves to search for such ideal men, or give ourselves to study the social arrangements suitable for such a "Coming Race," we might probably spend a great deal of valu-

able time, which might be more usefully devoted to something else. And we may add, that as ideal men and ideal Churches are very closely connected, they will probably both be discovered about the same time.

It is a pleasant, and may be a very useful, thing for the representatives of different sections of the visible Church to come together to ascertain the measure of their agreement with each other, and to speak those fraternal words which Christian feeling impels them to utter, but it is not wise to build too high expectations of an organic union on such things, until we have endeavored to gauge intelligently some of the difficulties which must be overcome before the visible Church can be brought to present an undivided organization, even in one country, such as Canada.

“When men differ, it is better to avow their diversity of opinion or faith, than to pretend to agree, or to force discordant elements in a formal uncongenial union.” Where Christians cherish antagonistic convictions on important points of religion, we can only expect them to work together when their views have been brought into harmony.

If we aim at healing the divisions even of Protestant Christendom, we cannot leave out of view a denomination which has produced Bunyan, Carey, Marshman, Ward, Judson, Spurgeon, and a host of men whose names are high on the honor roll of the Church of Christ. But how can they be brought into the same organization with those who are constantly acting upon the most opposite convictions of duty? There is but one way possible: we must persuade all Baptists to become Pedo-Baptists or all the Pedo-Baptists to become Baptists. We cannot suppose the initial rite of the Christian Church left, both as to its subjects and mode, an open question. Union here apart from a radical change of convictions on the one side or the other, would work confusion in the Church of God, and do anything rather than edify the body of Christ.

But leaving the peculiar views of our Baptist brethren out of account, in the meantime: What are the prospects of attaining unity in the matter of Church government? The forms of Church government which obtain among Protestants may be regarded as practically three, viz: Prelatic, Presbyterian, and Congregational or Independent. Baptists and Congregationalists

agree in their views of Church government, regarding each congregation as a self-governing, spiritual republic. Not only these Churches which are usually styled Presbyterian among us, but the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of Europe, and the Methodist Churches throughout the world are Presbyterian in Church government. We are aware that the Methodists in the United States have bishops, but they are not regarded as an order distinct from and superior to ordinary ministers of the Gospel, with functions which they alone can lawfully discharge. They are set apart to their work as a matter of convenience, very much as superintendents were appointed in Scotland, for a short time after the Reformation, as a temporary expedient. The parity of the ministers of the Word is recognized in all these Churches, and no order of clergy superior to them is admitted. But while the forms of government, in the Churches of the Reformation can be reduced to three, it is evident that the three cannot work together in a visible Church, unless we call that one Church, which is made up of several distinct bodies, united by some federal compact. A congregation cannot be ruled at the same time by a bishop, by a presbytery, and by itself.

How are we to arrive at unity in government? There are those who hold that while Church government is of God, the form is of man. This view is widely accepted in reference to civil government. It is supposed that a nation is free to select the form of government which seems best suited to its circumstances, and whether it is a monarchy, a republic, or a democracy which is chosen, divine authority requires us to honor and obey it. By some it is held that this view applies substantially to the Church, as well as to the State. Where this view prevails, men may feel themselves free to make almost any change in the government of the church which they consider expedient, or to allow all existing forms to go unchallenged. A variety of this phase of opinion, has been adopted by some divines whom we highly esteem. They suppose that the form of Church government emanated from within, under the quickening influence of the Spirit upon the Church, leading it to adopt the organization necessary for it, in view of its surroundings. It is believed. "The organization of the Church was gradually formed, the living body putting forth, from time to time, the

organs necessary for the discharge of its functions." This application of evolution to the organization of the Church might have seemed very reasonable, had the New Testament not been written, and might have been found very convenient by some, as supplying a satisfactory answer to the objections which Protestants make to the late appearance of the organ of infallibility in the Church of Rome. But as this development is not supposed to take place under supernatural guidance, all existing forms of Church government have practically equal authority. Our minds, however, are calmed in view of the apparently ceaseless struggle of opposing systems, with the thought that, if we wait patiently, we will doubtless see "the survival of the fittest."

The New Testament, however, has been written, and many who read it carefully believe that it has not left us without definite guidance in the matter of Church government. Dr. Witherow, indeed, assures us that "The opinion of all theologians who have not studied the subject is, that no system of Church Polity is contained in the New Testament." This is not his opinion. On the contrary, he gives it as his "conviction, founded on a careful examination of the Word of God, that Church Polity is an important portion of Christianity."

The barrier to organic union, which at present is insuperable, is that earnest Christian men differ widely with regard to the import of what the New Testament teaches respecting the Government of the Church. Congregationalists have been wont to plead Scriptural authority for their system of Church government. Episcopalians, although somewhat divided among themselves, as to the kind of Scriptural evidence which they adduce, do, very many of them, allege a divine warrant for Prelacy. Presbyterians hold that their system of government is "founded on, and agreeable to the Word of God." While employing this language with greater or less stringency, a large proportion of those who have given most attention to the question, agree with Dr. Witherow, in believing that the Scriptures supply a divine warrant for the essential features of Presbyterian government. They do not claim a *jus divinum* for the details of their system, but only for its formative principles. They readily admit that "there are many circumstances concerning the government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are

to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word.' From their examination of the Word of God, Presbyterians believe that the apostolic office has not been perpetuated in the Christian Church. They hold that "Presbyters, who labor in word and doctrine, are the highest permanent officers of the church, and all belong to the same order." They also believe that each worshipping congregation should not regard itself as a self-governing and independent body, but so linked to the visible Church at large that, according to the law of Christ, a smaller portion owes subjection to a larger. With such formative principles as these, embedded, as they believe, in the Holy Scriptures, Presbyterians cannot willingly aid in establishing any system of Church government which ignores or rejects them. When the Master has made known his will, they must obey. Even when, for example, they are asked to accept the "Historic Episcopate," not as an article of faith, but as a form of government by which the Church shall be ruled, they cannot accept the responsibility of setting aside a divine system for one which, however respectable and venerable, is merely human. In these circumstances a union of Churches implies either a radical change of convictions, or a sacrifice of conscience and self-respect.

Must we then abandon hope of further progress in the work of union? It is not for us to say what new light shall yet break in on the Church of God to unify the conflicting views of its members. It has been said with much force that "A true union between Churches must be grown into, rather than striven for.' But we do not object to striving, provided it is put forth on the right lines. When the views and feelings of Christians have been unified, organic unions, so far as workable, will soon follow.

We have viewed the attainableness of organic unions, entirely in relation to the divisions of Protestantism. Fidelity to the truth will not permit us to entertain seriously the wide range which some are anxious to give to union negotiations. We have not ceased to be Protestants. We do not regard the Reformation as a mistake, and we have no sympathy with those whose eyes wander towards the Seven Hills.

There may be no very definite prospect, at present, of healing even the divisions of Protestantism, but there are certain things

which may be done, which will greatly facilitate practicable unions, will lessen the evils of division, while they continue, and which are, moreover, in themselves right, whether organic union is the outcome of them or not.

1. We should cherish an earnest and unbiased love of the truth. While not lightly throwing away views we have learned from those who, in God's Providence, have been our teachers, we should study God's Word dispassionately for ourselves, and use honestly all the sources of information within our reach. And when any new truth is discovered by us, we should seek grace and strength to follow where it leads.

2. We should in this spirit, openly acknowledge as Churches all those bodies to which that character really belongs. If we accept the Protestant idea of the Church to which Christ has given the promises, we must rank as visible Churches all bodies of Christians, holding the fundamental verities of the Gospel, associated for the worship of God, mutual watch and care, and the extension of Christ's Kingdom. We sin against Christ, the Head of the Church, and against the Holy Spirit, when we do not cheerfully acknowledge, in all suitable ways, societies of believers, whose character and work have already received the divine *imprimatur*. This mutual recognition is specially called for between bodies which are feeling their way towards organic union. A union is in place only between homogeneous bodies. A Church cannot unite with a Board of Trade, a Temperance Society, or anything save a Church. An uncertain or hesitating recognition of other Churches, will not do much to advance union, or to promote that Christian feeling which, apart from organic union, is most desirable.

3. There should be a mutual recognition on the part of Evangelical Churches of each other's discipline and official acts. Owing to differences of standard in the matter of discipline, this may not be absolutely practicable in all cases. But where there is a proper sense of the relation which visible Churches sustain to the mystical body of Christ, we will be very slow to welcome into our fellowship fugitives from the discipline of other Churches. And in this connection, we may add, that if nothing more, in the meantime, is attainable, there seems no reason why Evangelical Churches should not have a Standing Committee or

Council, with purely advisory functions, where their representatives might consult together about common interests with a view to secure united action.

We may see no feasible prospect of the early re-union of Christendom, but we can at least, by God's grace, say "Whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk." We know that the oneness of believers for which Christ prayed is an existing fact, and that underneath all external divisions, there is among Christians a profound and living unity. If we keep this fact distinctly before our minds, it brings our thoughts and feelings gradually into harmony with itself, and many of the worst evils of Church divisions pass away. When a false view of the Church leads us to dwell on outward unity as of vital moment, the members of other communions seem separated from us by a great gulf, and we become so estranged from them that had we not been taught to love our enemies, we would feel that we owe them nothing save suspicion and aversion. But when we think of believers of every name, as the body of Christ, and, with ourselves, the habitation of God's Spirit, our love goes forth towards them, and alienation and bitterness, give place to the "unity of the Spirit," and the good offices of Christian brotherhood.

Knox College, Toronto.

WM. McLAREN.

RESPONSIBILITY.

THE most tremendous fact of human consciousness is the fact of Freedom. This power of self-determination in man, places a vast gulf between him and all lower orders of being. The whole inferior creation is under the iron rule of necessity. Man towers in grandeur above the beasts in virtue of his power to choose. They are passive and inert until acted upon from without. He is self-moving.

This fundamental fact of Freedom lies at the root of Responsibility. Without Freedom there can be no Responsibility. It is only because a man *can* act that there is any propriety in saying that he *ought* to act. We do not hold the stone responsible for obedience to the law of gravitation. It cannot do otherwise than obey. Indeed, it is only by a convenient figure that the stone is said to obey natural law. Strictly speaking, only beings possessed of freedom can *obey*. Even animals are not held responsible for their movements. The actions of a horse are determined not by itself but by the voice and whip of the driver, or by some physical craving. But as soon as we pass into the region of self-determination, we come upon the corresponding fact of responsibility. The child is responsible for his actions because the child is self-determined. Where action is the result of external stimulus, the word *ought* has no application. It can be used in its true meaning only in the realm of free activity.

Responsibility is thus seen to attach only to volition. For it is only in willing that man is free. So far as his physical constitution is concerned, man is under the dominion of natural law as truly as the beast or the stone. His arm may be stricken with palsy. Surely the man is not to be blamed for not stretching out the palsied arm to help his neighbor who is in need of assistance. What the paralytic is responsible for, is his willingness or unwillingness to give help. That is, being possessed of certain limited capabilities of mind and body, a man is responsible for the direction given to these capabilities. If they are directed to a bad end the individual is blameworthy; praiseworthy if they are directed to a good end.

Capacities are original or acquired. The child is born with certain powers of body and mind. These powers are original. By training and exercise, these original powers are developed and improved, and, as a result of their use, knowledge and other resources are gained. The effects of training upon original powers and the resources gained by their use may be called acquired capacities.

Capacities, whether original or acquired, vary greatly in different persons. The physical and intellectual inheritances of all children are not alike. This difference in original endowment conspires with the variety of their surroundings to make a great difference between the acquired capacities of one man and those of his neighbor.

What is to be emphasized here is, that men are responsible for the direction voluntarily given to their capacities, original and acquired, and of whatever kind they may be. All the powers of man are tools put into the hands of the workman. If these tools are properly employed for a worthy object, the workman does right and receives approval; if they are destroyed or used for the production of something bad and hurtful, he does wrong and merits blame. All workmen have not the same tools. And what tools a man has, does not depend wholly upon his choice. But his tools being what they are, the use they are put to, depends upon the will of the workman, and, therefore, he is held responsible for that use. One may or may not have great physical and mental endowments. But such as they are, his body and mind are under the control of his will. For the choice of the end to which his powers are directed a man is accountable, because it is his choice.

Man's power to direct his energies implies, as its correlative, various ends which may be sought. The selection made among these various ends of the goal of his efforts determines the character of the man. What a man is, is infallibly indicated by his choices.

The same capacities may be directed to very different ends. One man, possessed of a certain stock of physical and mental vigor, with trained intellect and cultivated tastes, and having his share of material resources, devotes himself to the pursuit of pleasure. All his natural abilities and acquired advantages are

employed to further his enjoyment of life. According as his pleasures are more or less refined, such a man is Mill's expert or a common-place voluptuary. Another man with the same capacities, original and acquired, employs his powers for the betterment, socially and morally, of those around him. When this direction is given to a man's abilities, you have in him the philanthropist. The same endowments may be variously employed, and it is not the endowments but the employment of them that determines character. The difference between the voluptuary and the philanthropist is a moral difference, because it is the result of choice. By saying that there is a moral difference between two men, we mean that one is better or worse than the other. And whether a man is better or worse depends upon the ends chosen by him. If the better end be chosen, we have the better man, and so he who chooses the worse end is the worse man.

When we speak of one end being better than another, we immediately think of a best end. The man who, having certain powers given him, seeks this end, is the best man.

Since men are possessed of varying abilities, the *best end* is a relative term. It is trite to remark that one man's best is not the best for another. For a man possessed of moderate means and having a large family dependant upon him, the career of a public philanthropist is not the best. The variety in the abilities and circumstances is indefinite. And for this variety, individuals are only partially responsible. That responsibility must be shared by his ancestors and neighbors. But no one can share with the individual the responsibility for the use made of his abilities, in the circumstances of his lot. A most important question to settle is: What is the very best that can be accomplished with the powers one has? But when that question has been answered, the further question remains: Will you seek the best? Or seeing and approving the better, will you follow after the worse? It is the answer to this question that settles what one's character is and what one's destiny will be.

Our estimate of the moral worth of a man's life must not be based upon outward results. This is apt to be done. The world worships success. The wealthy man may accomplish more in the way of relieving human ills than the poor man who in his own

sphere, seeks to be helpful. But if the end set before them is the same the moral value of the two lives is the same. The energies of both men are directed to the same end and the fact that these energies are different in the two cases, does not affect the moral estimate. The fact is, that a man of great ability may be a moral failure, though he has accomplished vastly more than another man of less ability. The important question from a moral point of view, is not: How much has this or that man accomplished? but: In doing what he has done, did he direct all his powers to the best end?

When one begins to think of the responsibility that each new power or opportunity brings with it, one almost shrinks from its acquisition. Wealth and power and learning do not assume the appearance of things to be grasped at, when they are viewed as capacities for the best use of which we are held accountable at the court of conscience. We must choose what we shall do with every new possession or acquirement. And for that choice we can not by any subterfuge escape the responsibility.

It is not a thing entirely unheard of, for men to become so oppressed by this sense of responsibility as to wish to be free from the necessity of making choices. Else why do men so frequently, in important matters, give themselves up to the guidance of others? Why do men seek in the teaching of an infallible Church, or Pope, the direction of their thinking and acting?

And yet what right-thinking man would give up this inheritance of freedom? If he does not give it up, no power can deprive him of it. Though he be chained and fettered by a tyrant, though iron bars and prison walls shut him in from the sweet light, nevertheless he is free. Freedom is a heritage to be gloried in, even while we tremblingly recognize its solemn responsibilities. To give it up would be to descend to the level of the beasts and stones.

"I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods.

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes."

Toronto,

J. McD. DUNCAN.

"NOT MY WILL."

AN INVALID'S HYMN.

Thy hand has touched me, Lord ;
I shrink beneath the pain :
I only heed the loss,
And never count the gain.
Oft have I sought relief,
And murmured at Thy " No ;"
Now—if it is Thy will,
Then I would have it so.

The hopes of life were fair ;
I dreamt of victories here,
And thought to lead the van ;
Thou sett'st me in the rear.
My day-dreams and my hopes
All unfulfilled must go ;
Father ! is this Thy will ?
Then I would have it so.

The day-dreams of my youth
Were all of toil for Thee ;
I thought no task nor load
Could be too sore for me ;
I sprang to raise the cross—
The end I could not know.
I found it not Thy will ;
I could not have it so.

I turn no potter's wheel ;
Myself am made the clay ;
And God's self fashions me,
And touches faults away.
An earthen vessel I
The seal of God will show ;
All's gain from this Thy will ;
Then I would have it so.

St. Helens.

R. S. G. ANDERSON.

SHAKESPEARE'S REFERENCES TO CHRIST.

“WE all know how lowly a reverence is paid to Him, in passage after passage by Shakespeare, the greatest intellect known in its wide, many sided splendor.”

These words are from the opening chapter of Geikie's "Life of Christ." They suggested to the writer that it would be an interesting exercise to pick out all the passages referred to, and, placing them together, to see how much they could really tell us of the attitude of "the greatest intellect" towards our Lord.

The task of compiling the references is not so great as might appear on first thought, for the number of plays in which our Lord's name is introduced is comparatively small. We do not expect to find it, nor do we find it, in the comedies. The scenes and the times of many of the tragedies, too, are such as to preclude any Christian coloring.

In the opening scene of *Hamlet*, the season of our Saviour's birth is referred to as being a time wherein,

"The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy tales nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

With this bare exception, all the references for which we are seeking (so far as I have discovered) are contained in the plays founded on English history.

We proceed now to quote the passages which speak of our Lord. Some of them, containing a mere mention of His name, teach us little in regard to the matter in hand. For example, in *Richard III.*, the wicked king, awaking from his terrifying dream, cries out "Have mercy, Jesu!"

In *Henry VIII.*, the king warns Cranmer that false witnesses may swear against him, and asks,

"Ween you of better luck,
I mean in perjured witness, than your Master
Whose minister you are, whiles here he lived
Upon this naughty earth?"

In *Henry VI.* young Richard of York, addressing young Clifford as they enter battle, declares, "You shall sup with Jesu Christ to-night."

Henry IV. tells us that Douglas was renowned for his valor, "through all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ."

Richard II., when dethroned, complains that men had cried "All hail" to him as Judas did to Christ

"But He, in twelve,
Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none."

In this same play, Act IV. Scene I, there is a passage, containing, like these others, a mere reference; but the connection is so fine, we are tempted to quote it in full. The Duke of Hereford, as he is about to take possession of the crown, announces that he will repeal the banishment of his old enemy, the Duke of Norfolk, and restore his possessions. The Bishop of Carlyle, standing by, declares that cannot be.

"Many a time hath banished Norfolk fought
For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,
Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross
Against black pagans, Turks and Saracens;
And toiled with works of war, retired himself
To Italy; and there, at Venice, gave
His body to that pleasant country's earth,
And his pure soul unto his Captain, Christ,
Under whose colors he had fought so long."

These quotations do not express any definite opinion as to the character and work of Christ, either on the part of the writer of the plays or the persons who are supposed to utter the words. There are other passages, however, which are more suggestive. Thus in the first scene of *Henry VI.* (Part II.) the Earl of Salisbury, lamenting the loss of Anjou and Maine, declares that these counties are the keys of Normandy, and affirms it "by the death of Him that died for all."

In *Richard II.* Act II., Scene I, John of Gaunt speaks of the kings of England being renowned as far from home

"As is the Sspulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son."

In *Richard III.*, the dying king Edward addresses the courtiers about him

" I every day expect an embassy
From my Redeemer to redeem me hence."

And in the following scene he speaks of one who has "done a drunken slaughter" as having "defaced the precious image of our dear Redeemer."

All of these passages have some reference to Christ's work for us. He is "the Redeemer," "the one who died for all," "the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son." In two or three other places these same ideas are brought out more fully. Thus in *Henry VI.* (Part II.), Act III., Scene I, Warwick, receiving the dead body of Humphrey of Gloucester, exclaims

" As surely as my soul intends to live
With that dread King that took our state upon Him
To free us from His Father's wrathful curse,
I do believe that violent hands were laid
Upon the life of this thrice-famed duke."

How could the doctrine of Christ's humiliation be more shortly and comprehensively expressed than in the second and third lines of this quotation?

A beautiful reference to the Redemption is that contained in Clarence's touching appeal to his murderers, *Richard III.*, Act I, Scene IV.

" I charge you as you hope to have redemption
By Christ's dear blood shed for our grievous sins
That you depart and lay no hands on me."

Of all Shakespeare's references to Christ none is oftener quoted (and none, perhaps, is finer) than the following from *Henry IV.* (Part I.) Act I., Scene I. The king rejoices that the civil war is now over, and, because it is, he declares

"Therefore, friends,
As far as to the sepulchre of Christ
Whose soldiers now, under whose blessed cross,
We are impressed and engaged to fight,
Forthwith a power of English we shall levy,

Whose arms were moulded in their mother's womb
To chase these pagans in those holy fields,
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd
For our advantage on the bitter cross."

Geikie in the sentence which we have quoted from his "Life of Christ," speaks as if Shakespeare's own mind was expressed in such words of reverence as these. To what extent the opinions of the great dramatist are unfolded in the utterances of his characters is, of course, a difficult matter to determine. One can hardly help imagining, however, that in such lines as those which close our last quotation there is the throb of a heart which has felt and appreciated the "immortal love." Our hope of this is confirmed as we notice how universal is the spirit of reverence which pervades the plays. The author never *allows* his characters to speak of our Lord except in terms of devotion.

Milton.

ROBERT HADDOW.

Missionary.

THE CLEAN SECT IN CHINA.

IT is inevitable that false religions should, when transplanted from one country to another, display different modifications due to different environments. Thus it is natural that the Buddhism of India, China and Japan should be, in important respects, one, and yet, in other important respects, different. On coming to China, the widespread prevalence of Mohammedanism is soon brought to our notice. The number of its followers is placed at 20,000,000. Honan furnishes 200,000. It is surely, then, worth our while to enquire about Chinese Mohammedans, their faith and practice. Very little is said of them in our missionary annals and our missionary conferences; their conversion has no special place on the programme for the 1890 Shanghai Conference. It was not to be expected, therefore, that I could find much literature upon them. Our contact with them here in Lin Ching is close, for we live in their quarter. Our neighbors are all too frequently calling on us, and what better can we do than levy toll upon them, not only in new phrases which fall from their lips, but also in some information regarding their religion, at the same time more than repaying with copious passages of the New Testament and Catechism.

The name by which they are often called in China is the Hui Hui Religion or Sect. This name is a translation from the Arabic. The Chinese Moslem character, a translation of Moslem, which, twice repeated, gives the name, is explained to mean, return and submission, that is to say, a return to God by the right way, and submission to the All-Powerful. In the year 1335, the designation, True and Pure Religion, was authorized by the Emperor. The commonest name for them is the Clean Sect, a name to which their purifications give some color of truth. It is said that they are generally cleaner in their habits than other Chinese.

We might expect that Mohammedanism would reach China first from the Western side. But the evidence goes to prove that it was first introduced by some merchants who, in 628 A.D., settled in Canton, South China. The tradition is that a maternal uncle of Mahomet, named Kosin, (according to my friend, the priest), came to China at that time and was received with much favor by the Emperor. To this Kosin, who appears in the accounts under eleven different names, is due the building of the first mosque in China, at Si-ngan Fu, a place which, by the way, is famous for that very early Christian monument, the Chinese Nestorian Tablet. The first real nucleus of Mohammedans in the West of China, it is said, was a contingent of 4,000 Arab soldiers, which a caliph had sent to succor the Emperor, and which the latter permitted, as a reward, to settle in various parts. These soldiers married Chinese wives and "may be considered the stock origin of the Mohammedan Chinese." Authorities say that they are different by race from other Chinese, and that in them may be clearly recognized a mixture of Arabic, Turkish and Chinese blood.

The precise number of Mohammedans in Lin Ching cannot be given. Some reckon them at about 1,000 families. They have two very large mosques, and one somewhat smaller. But this as a criterion of numbers is unreliable. Where the money to build these came from and why there are three I cannot tell. One mosque is said to have been five hundred years in being completed, and, as these structures are probably rarely so large, outside places must have helped, as is always the case in the building and repairing of temples. The people are reported as poor here, although, perhaps, there may have been some wealthy members in past time. One of the mosques is called the Hung mosque, because a clan of that name was chiefly instrumental in building it. The immense size of these places is apparently now in advance of the zeal of the people. An audience of thirty or forty, the usual number, do not require a cathedral, although a cathedral may be serviceable for special demonstrations.

Our landlord, who, in fact, is several brothers, is on easy terms with us, and it was no difficult task to secure and accept an invitation to go and see their Worship Halls or Temples. Their appearance from a distance is not what the reader has already

imagined to himself. He, perhaps, thinks of the Mosque of Omar or Mt. Moriah, or of St. Sophia at Constantinople. The architecture of these differs greatly from that of the structures which daily meet our eyes here. Here the dome is replaced by a roof, which begins far out beyond the wall beneath, and which increases in slope until the apex is reached, the whole being surmounted by a large ornament, globular, tapering to a point. Again, the minaret is wanting, chiefly, I suspect, because the *muezzin* is also absent. Everyone knows this beautiful custom in Moslem countries. Who has not heard of the "There is no god but God, and Mahomet is his prophet. Come then to prayer, for prayer is better than eating and drinking." I have made diligent enquiry regarding any similar custom among the Lin Ching faithful and I am inclined to think that there may be something like it in the fourth month, when they fast. But they say it takes place at midnight. The building of a minaret here might be taken as too great a menace to the "luck" of the city and in fact to be a challenge to the pagoda, of which Lin Ching boasts. In this connection it is curious to find that when the American Board began to build in the vicinity of the mosques the Chinese were full of curiosity about the probable effect on the mosques. They expected the foreigners to build many-storied warehouses, which would be able to overthrow the "luck" of the mosques. They were greatly disappointed to find that the houses were to be only one story high. The mosques are surrounded by numbers of different buildings of varying heights. The various roofs have highly ornamental eaves, and in the case of the old mosque the effect from the river is very fine. The Gate Building, in accordance with Chinese, and, indeed, Eastern custom, is imposing. Entering, as private individuals, a small side door or gate, we were introduced into the Front Court, spacious, well-paved, with a high stone way from the Great Gate to the Main Building. The side rooms were for the priest and his little scholars, whom he taught the Koran in Arabic. A venerable old man, who might be mistaken for a prophet, unlocked the door of the mosque proper, and I was requested to remove my shoes. The Chinese, like the Japanese, find the practice rather grateful than otherwise. Why not ease the foot of a hot shoe, as you enter the cool retreat of a mosque or temple? In winter it may be otherwise. The story

goes here that some foreigners visiting this mosque complained that they could not take off their shoes (laced, of course), and so walked in with unpardonable coolness with shoes on. They surely could not have been missionaries. We enter, and are at once struck with the vastness of the place, the immense pillars which support the roof and the height of the roof, amid the rafters of which many birds have made their homes. Our second thought, perhaps, is, this place is clean. If you know what a Chinese *Temple* is generally like, you will understand this remark. Our third thought is, here are no hideous idols. No, penetrate if you will into the inner sanctuary, and still you find no semblance of idol, even in picture, and what instead? The whole west end, the Mecca side, adorned with arabesques in gold and blue and black, sentences from the Koran in gilt being most conspicuous. In the centre, a circle with a gilt filling, the name of God, with tortuous bewildering curves. This circle probably corresponds to the niche called Mehrab in other lands, towards which the faithful are required to look during prayer. When facing this west wall we are lost in the thought, they worship, in form, at least, the Creator of all things. How destitute of ornament the rest of the building is. *Its West Wall is its glory.* In one corner a flight of steps led up to a small blind door. My guide called this the "Gate of Heaven." The Moslems call prayer "the key of Paradise," and there they pray betimes. They also know of a future world, of heaven and hell. As if to remind us, in one corner stands a four-handled frame of open fancy wood-work in which they place that coffin yonder and bears its load to the last resting place. This coffin strikes one at once on account of the thinness of the boards, which were about one inch thick. The Chinese use wood several inches thick, but the Mohammedans use the coffin merely to carry the corpse to the place of interment. At Pang Chuang I saw four most ponderous coffins stored in a temple. Services are sometimes held here at night, and many pretty glass lanterns hang here and there, while in a corner is stored an extra supply of larger lanterns. As we pass out we take a closer view of the Emperor's tablet next the door. It is placed on a high table with curved legs, like a foreign parlor table. Above and around it is a canopy of rather dirty white cloth, the front side of which parts in the middle, and is tied back

so as to imitate curtains, and reveal the tablet. This is made of wood, about three feet high, and four inches wide, and bears this inscription in gilt on a blue ground: "The Emperor, the immortal, may he live forever!" This tablet is worshipped with incense in temples, and its presence here, with two candles before it, naturally excites surprise. Mr. Milne, the Scottish Missionary, visiting a mosque in Ningpo, charged the priest with idolatry on account of this tablet. Of course he stoutly denied the charge, as my friend here did. Be this as it may, it seems a politic concession to the other sects, and a method of placing themselves under Imperial sanction. I asked to see their Sacred Book, but the priest was not at home. A second opportunity, however, soon came.

Their Worship Day is our Friday, perhaps from a desire to avoid both the Jewish and the Christian days. On this day the faithful close their shops, and about noon repair to the mosques for worship. One day my neighbor, who had, on my invitation, previously attended our worship, came in and invited me to go and witness theirs. I was nothing loth, especially as I had been told that this privilege has been rarely accorded missionaries in China. At about twelve o'clock we arrived, but, as it was early, we were shown into the priest's guest-room, a spacious lofty apartment with good ventilation, infinitely superior to ordinary Chinese houses. The brick floor was uncommonly level. In the centre of the room opposite the door was the usual table, flanked by two chairs, found in guest-rooms. I was invited to sit in the left-hand chair which is the seat of honor in China. Behind us, on the wall, hung a large wooden board, on which in large gilt characters was "The Doctrine has a Great Origin," meaning, of course, the Mohammedan doctrine. For about an hour the faithful straggled in, at intervals, and either went off into a side room to chat and smoke, or seated themselves on stools and engaged in conversation with each other or with me. There were a few old men and a good percentage of young men. I recognized quite a number as those who had called on me, but the strangers plied me with questions regarding my honorable name, age, country, family etc. etc. Presently the priest came in. He is an intelligent looking man of forty, with a husky voice. He and his two colleagues had previously called on me. From time

to time I anxiously enquired when worship was to begin. Of course, it was always "soon." I suspected that the priest did not particularly care to have me see their worship, and wished to tire me out by delay. So, notwithstanding the pangs of hunger, I sat on, solacing myself with unlimited tea. A basket of fine peaches was handed around, and I ate one, but it was half-past two before they led me out. The children, some ten in number, study a small yellow book containing Arabic sentences, written by the priest. I asked to see their large book, and it was at once brought out from the priest's private room. You could see at a glance that this was a foreign book, not Chinese. It was bound in boards, the paper white and thick, was written not printed, on *both sides*, with black ink, with a few red letters. Now a Chinese book is, if of any size, made up of five or six paper-covered volumes about one quarter of an inch thick, placed within a stiff cloth casing, open at both ends, but covering four sides, and made fast with little bone clasps. The paper is so thin that it can be used only on one side, and the characters are written from top to bottom. This Arabic, of course, is from right to left. I longed to know Arabic that I might know if the priest understood his book.

In the rear were some bathing rooms, where the worshippers wash before coming into the guest-room. This seems to be the only substitute for the tank or fountain for ablution, which in other lands is so prominent. As they stripped to the waist while waiting, owing to the hot weather, they certainly looked clean. Off the guest-room was a sort of robing-room, or rather capping room. The priests always wear little blue cloth caps with conical crowns, and all the faithful secured for themselves similar caps before entering the mosque. Under these caps, their queues were carefully tucked, by winding round the head. The priest and a few helpers wound a long piece of white cloth around their caps and made very fair *turbans*. Besides this the priest had no differentiating dress. The priest went in first, and I could hear his voice uplifted in prayer. Then the worshippers filed in and, after a pause, I was introduced *behind* the worshippers. It was a pretty sight to see them sitting and kneeling in three rows on the mats, all in white grass cloth, worn at this season. The priest and twelve lay helpers faced the East dur-

ing the reading of the Sacred Canon, and the remaining eighteen or twenty faced the west. At prayer all faced the west. The conical caps, the turbans, the absence of queues, the foreign tongue all remind one of a foreign land. The only thing to bring your mind back to China was the universal use of fans by the worshippers. Their shoes were left at the edge of the matting, not at the door. In one Mosque the floor is all plank ; in this there is a wide border of brick. As shoes are to be removed only at this matting I did not need to remove mine. In the midst of the worshippers was a low table, on which was a pewter pot containing, as I afterwards learned, sandalwood. But whether this has any religious use or not I cannot tell. Shortly after my arrival, this was removed and the reading of the Koran went on. I probably understood as much of it as the worshippers. The reading was not done from a pulpit, but by one of the lay helpers as he set on the mat. During the reading of the Koran, individuals would go aside to a flight of steps leading to the "Gate of Heaven," and pray silently. When the reading was over, the priest arose and gave a short exhortation in Chinese, the only Chinese part of the whole service. This was chiefly to enlighten me. He eloquently set forth the fact that they worshipped the only true God, in terms which were quite like the opening part of our Christian Catechisms. Muharmeto, as he called him, was their Holy Man. When the sermon was over, the faithful responded with an Arabic, "So mote it be," and the prayers towards Mecca began. One turbaned official went out and stood on the edge of the front pavement of the porch and opened with a plaintive recitative. All the prayers reminded me of the beautiful chant with which Highland precentors are still wont to "line" the Psalms. Towards the end of his part he deliberately turned his head right and left in succession and then went within. Why he went out there I did not know. He thus faced the Emperor's Tablet, as it looked outwards, but it is hardly likely that any worship of that was intended. The congregation took little audible part in the prayers. At frequent intervals they bowed their heads, then their whole bodies, then, kneeling, touched the floor with their foreheads ; again, standing erect with fingers outstretched, and thumbs on lobes of ears, then hands on the stomach, then on the knees, then more prostrations. Towards the mid-

dle of the service one man ascended the steps and, clasping a long staff with both hands, muttered his part. At the close of the service, all rose and, standing close together, prayed towards Mecca. The priest led them in tones which fancy might well suppose to be tones of penitent confession. A few more motions and the worship is over.

Do women join in this worship or worship here at separate times? No. Mohammedanism has nothing for the women of China. Their women seem in all respects to dress and live as the rest. Of course the vail is nowhere to be seen. Do children join in this worship? No. Mohammedanism has nothing for the children of China. "Are *you* going to worship?" I asked the little boys, who study the Koran. "No, we don't know how." The little fellows were more highly privileged than the others in that they could creep up to the open door and peer in at their elders performing their prostrations. Even heathen religions give women and children a place as worshippers, but this religion, with its complicated ritual and jargon speech, does not make room for the majority of the race. How can it attract these heathen?

How do the priests and assistants make a living? Their pupils bring in something. The faithful also contribute for the purposes of the Mosque. The names of subscribers, with the amounts, are posted on yellow paper at the door. Besides, every fowl they kill for the faithful brings in one big cash and every ox or cow they slay brings in 200 cash, and the priests have a monopoly of the killing business! But there are three animals which they never kill for food, viz., the pig, the donkey and the dog. These, especially the first, the faithful abhor, as food. As pork is a favorite with Chinamen, it is said that this, to him, unreasonable prejudice militates against his acceptance of the Mohammedan religion. They are chiefly engaged in various branches of the hide business. Foreigners are especially grateful to their animal-killing propensities, because fresh beef can be obtained at all seasons, if there are Mohammedans about. We are not, however, specially pleased that the tanning business is entirely in their hands. Our two near neighbors are tanners!

The Mohammedans fast during the fourth month (*Chinese*). They keep a calendar of their own. This fasting consists in abstinence from food, drink and tobacco till sunset, at which time,

it is said, the priests give the signal for breaking fast. The Koran's prohibition of wine is probably poorly observed. The Mohammedans here do not pray at home, or each day, as in Moslem countries. My neighbor says he has no copy of the Koran in his house. The only worship is on Fridays in the Mosques. It is not to be expected that they can be very well instructed in their duties. My neighbor says the Koran, which he calls the Ku-erb-nar-ni, is translated into Chinese, and the book is called "Hanchi tapu" which is a foreign word represented by Chinese characters. But he had no copy and no one else in China has. The prohibition against translating the Koran is in force in China, so say the authorities. They have certain Arabic phrases which are in current use among them. Beggars say "Sa wapu" which is not Chinese. The faithful salute each other with "Bertie Kwin." The uplifted forefinger signifies, Are you in the Church,—a circle, The true God. Their sacred city they call Karbuy, evidently the Acaaba of Mecca. They frequently ask me; "Have you ever been there?"

They often allege that we and they are one in doctrine, instancing the fact that they also worship the "Heavenly Lord." One old man enthusiastically said we were *one family*. They say: "We also *revere* Jesus as a Saint," but on this point they are not so enthusiastic. They say God has no wife, and, therefore, no son, but they will take up our catechisms and read with approval the introductory chapters on the True God and Idols. My neighbor read on till he came to Baptism and then he asked how often we baptized. I explained. He then said, in the true spirit of a miserable formalist who passes over the grandest truths without remark and fastens on an external rite: "There is an error here, we baptize five times a day," referring to ceremonial washings. I asked him what we must do to be saved. He replied, (1.) "Worship towards Mecca." This is very important. They often ask: Towards which direction do you worship? (2.) "Observe the fasts." (3.) "Do good." I asked him what plan they had for forgiveness of sins. He replied, "Nothing but what I have said."

This bald morality has not prevented their acquiring an unsavoury reputation from the other Chinese. The Chinese Repository tells a story of how the Chinese characters "Holy Man of the West" over the door of a Mosque, were changed, by erasing

parts of characters, into "Four Myriads of Bastards." They are charged with an unlimited capacity for using violent language. Hence the proverb: "Ten sharpers cannot talk down one Tientsin man and ten Tientsin wranglers cannot talk down one Mohammedan." They are exceedingly clannish and present a combined front. Mr. Noyes, of Canton, says of them: "They hold tenaciously to their religion, not necessarily to its doctrines, but they do not easily leave their sect." A Lin Ching Mohammedan said in effect: "We have nothing like church discipline. If a man is unfaithful we leave that to God." When appointed to office they find no trouble in going through the forms of the Chinese ritual.

Mohammedanism in China does not seem to have gained its numbers by proselytizing. The Mohammedans of to-day trace their descent for hundreds of years from Mohammedan families. They have multiplied by natural increase. They, also, it is said, add largely to their numbers by purchasing children in famine times, just as the Catholics do. They have been known, in a single famine, to purchase as many as ten thousand. If they are zealous missionaries in Africa, they are certainly not so here. What will be their future in China? Who knows.

Lin Ching.

DONALD MACGILLIVRAY.

A LETTER TO THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

THE members of the Alumni Association of Knox College will read with special interest the following letter from their missionary in China, Rev. J. Goforth, which was written in time to reach Toronto to be read at the annual meeting of the Association, but which, owing to the irregular mail service in China, did not arrive until three days after the meeting closed. The Alumni and all friends of our missionary enterprises will rejoice at the progress made in that field and will join with us in assuring Mr. Goforth and his associates of our increasing interest in their work. The students and graduates of Knox College, in all parts of the country, unite with those present at the annual meeting last week in their expression of sincere sympathy with Mr. and Mrs. Goforth in the sore bereavement which so recently brought sorrow to their home, and blighted many a fond and worthy hope, and all join in asking for them the sustaining sympathy and comfort of the God of all consolations.

Mr. Goforth's letter, which is dated from Lin Ching and addressed to the members of the Alumni Association is as follows :

"We did not visit Honan last spring as I had hoped we should. Dr. McClure arrived at Pang Chuang early in April, but did not feel justified in making the proposed visit owing to his imperfect knowledge of the language. This delay will probably be an advantage rather than a hindrance to the work of founding the Mission. Now, with a better knowledge of both people and language, we will produce a more favorable impression.

"Dr. Smith is expected to arrive from Chefoo in September, then, as soon as possible, we will start on the tour into Honan. At the same time Mr. MacGillivray and Dr. McClure will probably tour in Chang-te-fu and surrounding country. Chang-te-fu is where they hope to establish their central station. Dr. Smith and I will likely spend a couple of weeks in each of the chief cities on the Wei river, and if there is time we will re-visit them.

By this method the Doctor will be able to treat a good many of the sick in each place; then, as the fame of the foreign physician spreads, we may hope to receive invitations for a longer or, perhaps, a permanent stay among the people thus benefited. We may expect two results from short stays in several cities. First, we are not so apt to arouse opposition, and second, other places would be ready to receive the new-comers as soon as they acquire the language.

“At the time when you are met together as an Alumni Association remember us in prayer for we will then be in Honan. The fate of hundreds of thousands of souls will depend upon the work which we have undertaken to do for our Master. We will in weakness raise a “Standard” for the people; but it will be a calamity if you who have sent us ever come to feel that the success of this undertaking is any more dependent upon us than upon yourselves.

“The horrors of famine are past, and everywhere there are prospects of an abundant harvest. It is too soon to see the fruits of famine relief, but this fact was noted at the time: No relief came from Chinese sources until after it began to flow in from the foreigners then, as if emulated unto good works, the fountains of Chinese charity were liberally opened up.

“I did not engage in the relief work because there was in the Shan-tung district a sufficient force of experienced missionaries, while, in Honan, the Chinese Government undertook to care for the people. The famine district in Honan is not in the territory we hope to occupy, but properly in the territory taken up by the China Inland Mission. The members of that Mission undertook to relieve the extreme cases but sent us no request for co-operation. Under the circumstances, I deemed my time more profitably spent at study.

“The Yellow river at the old breach has been permanently closed and yet it is only closed in one part to burst its banks in another, and that too, in the near future, unless different methods for preventing it are adopted. The river-bed, where we examined it, is at least ten feet above the surrounding country. The loose soil, composing the banks, has little more consistency than sand banks to resist the flood. A company of engineers from Holland made surveys of the Yellow river last

spring. We were told by them on their return that the river could certainly be kept within bounds by the application of scientific methods, but they did not seem over sanguine of China's willingness to accept their scientific methods. Since the river has been forced back to its old bed the officials are taking every precaution to keep it there but, in spite of all effort, it has broken out in three places near its mouth and flooded a district in size equal to county of York.

"As to the attitude of China towards foreigners, though the officials are not so ready to grant us privileges as they were a few years ago, yet the people, as a whole, through the constant contact with foreigners are coming to regard them with more favor. At Lin Ching, where we now live, Dr. McClure and I walked through the main business street, a distance of about two miles, and, though in foreign dress, we had no rabble following us, but, instead, many of the merchants politely bowed and invited us into their shops. On the streets, where we usually walk, most of the people speak in a friendly manner and the children, big and little, run out to greet us.

"I have not yet mastered all the difficulties of the language. I have been attempting to teach and speak a little since the first of the year. Though the range of expression is not great we hope some good may be done while, at the same time, the practice will be giving greater facility of utterance.

"You have heard of our great loss. God in His wisdom has seen fit to afflict us. Yours in the Work,

"Lin Ching, North China.

J. GOFORTH."

Open Letters.

THE THEOLOGICAL CLUB.

THE response to the suggestion regarding a Theological and Exegetical Club, made in last issue of the MONTHLY, is most encouraging. Three open letters are given in this number as samples of the replies. Many other ministers have written and spoken in the same line. Space will not admit of any further discussion in this issue, but I trust that, after further consideration and conference, a scheme may be submitted in the November MONTHLY and the way opened for carrying it into effect. In the meantime I shall be grateful for any suggestions from ministers who are interested in the proposal.

Knox College, Toronto.

J. A. MACDONALD.

I HOPE you will use your influence through the pages of the KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY to help to establish a first class Theological Club to meet once a month, discuss the burning questions of the day, and to discuss them in a most thorough way. Such a Club could consider the Mosiac authorship of the Pentateuch, the authorship of Isaiah, of Daniel, of Hebrews, etc. Questions, too of Egyptology, of Assyriology, of history and antiquity, so far as throwing light on the Scriptures, ought to be taken up and discussed in the light of the literature found written on the monuments and given to the world through the Palestine Exploration Society. Nor would it be out of place to study anew such theological subjects as Inspiration, the Decrees, the Atonement, Miracles, Prayer, the Reign of Law, Evolution, Ethics, the great unknown fields of Political Economy and Natural Science in relation to the Bible. It would be vain to take up such questions unless after the most careful study, and the Club should be so arranged as to give at least one month's time to read up the subject. If more time could be given all the better. Nor need the Club be altogether theoretical; it could devote an hour or two to exchange of ideas about texts etc. Conducted on these lines, the Club would inspire, direct, and give material for thought most helpful to ministers. But no man should join who is not anxious to know the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth—so anxious that he is prepared to study and to make many sacrifices to know the truth of God as revealed to man whether in Nature, in Providence, in the Bible, in Conscience, or in the Christ who is Lord and King of all. I am anxious

to see such a Club organized and would count it a great privilege to be a member of it. Let me ask you to use your pen, and tongue, and all your influence to get up one that we will all be proud of, and one that will do good.

Hamilton.

SAMUEL LYLE.

WE who are at a distance from Toronto might be pardoned were we already green with envy of those ministers who live near the city. Now you propose to make matters worse by the formation of a Theological Club. What a grand thing for its members such a club as you suggest might be! Not every man has the love of theological study which roused Meyer at an unearthly hour of the morning, year after year, and enabled him in the midst of pastoral labors to put forth five editions of his Commentary. Such a man as J. S. Mill traces, we are told, his inauguration as an original and independent thinker to the discussions of a similar society. Had all writers in past times been compelled to submit their productions to such criticism, the world would probably have been spared the reception of bushels of chaff.

No doubt much of this chaff has been produced in connection with such matters as Inspiration, the Canon, etc., but one cannot forget that men of the highest learning and most thorough loyalty to Christ differ here from the traditional beliefs. Critical examination of their arguments may lead us to think the atmosphere in which they live, or the spirit of the times, the cause of the new opinions, but, whatever be its result, personal conviction can be reached only by such a thorough investigation as a club is well fitted to undertake.

It seems to me that such a society might secure another end. It is very difficult to attain a mastery of those doctrines or systems of doctrine with which our Church is not in sympathy. One must, however, measure the strength of a doctrine before he can see its weakness or get rid of its power to attract. And if we cannot study all the false doctrines with which we come in contact, the members of a club might, by distribution of work and general discussion, obtain a fair acquaintance with them.

I must not omit to point out how attention might be directed to comparatively new lines of theological research. Such a line is Biblical Theology. The day is not far distant, even if it has not already arrived, when this will be considered by the theological world the most important of the theological sciences. It is already studied with the greatest diligence but for the most part by theologians whose point of view is quite different from that of our Church. Hence it is not a favorite subject among us. If, however, men were asked to trace the development of a doctrine, or to compare the Pauline conception of it with that of Peter or John, they and their fellow-members would become so enamoured of the work as to prosecute it themselves and to urge the Church to give it a place, and a leading place, in its course of study for the ministry.

It is impossible to specify all the fields which the Club you propose might cultivate with the greatest profit. The prospect is most inviting. I hope the project will be carried out and will succeed. And if it

prove successful, similar clubs may afterwards be formed in other centres and none of us may need to leave our present fields of labor in order to enjoy the benefits. Toronto, of course, presents the most favorable opportunity for making the experiment.

Londesboro.

D. M. RAMSAY.

YOUR proposal as to a Theological and Exegetical Club is both practical and opportune. You have in your own article so summed up the evidence in its favor that your correspondents need only endorse what you have already said so well.

There are many in the ministry who would be delighted to take a post-graduate course—even ten or twenty years after graduation—if it were possible to do so. But such an opportunity is not a probable contingency. Hence, as continuous individual study in special lines, takes more perseverance than most men can command, your suggestion should be welcomed as the nearest approach to a post-graduate course within reach.

There are in Toronto, as you say, a large and increasing number of Professors, who are specialists in their departments, who would no doubt be ready to give the benefit of their presence and wisdom to such an Association. It is a pity that the benefit of contact with these men—as *Professors*—should be discontinued at the completion of a College Course, at that point when best able to profit by them.

To indicate other lines of enquiry, besides those you have named, would be easy, but is needless at this stage. Time is the chief difficulty. In order to make such meetings profitable it would be necessary to give each a whole afternoon, or afternoon and evening. If the members were really studious, a great deal could be done in that time, but if not, much more time would be required and much less accomplished. It would not be *Monday* work, but would demand the freshest and clearest hours of the week.

No doubt many sub associations could be formed throughout the Church, which could be worked in harmony with the Central one, and greatly widen the circle of influence. However, these are details that can easily be arranged after the main proposition has been accepted. Thanking you for the suggestion,

Parkdale.

R. P. MACKAY.

MR. BRADLEY'S MISTAKE.

THE last issue of the MONTHLY contains an article on "Jesuitism in the North-West Territories" which seems to me to call for some attention, and I feel the more responsibility in the matter since the writer has mentioned my name in connection with one of his arguments.

With Mr. Bradley's main contention (barring the grammar), I heartily agree, to wit: that "Jesuitical plotting and political wire-pulling"

are "carried on to an alarming extent." it being understood that the word "Jesuitical" is used in its general sense as indicating the principles and practices usually associated with the name of Jesuit, for it is only fair to admit that there are no members of the Society of Jesus in the North-West Territories.

The feature of the letter to which I wish to call attention is that although Mr. Bradley has so good a cause, he is, for a man whose tastes have led him to write an article on the subject and who has enjoyed such opportunities for studying the question, singularly unfortunate in his choice of arguments in support of his view. The proofs he alleges are, in the main, four, contained in as many paragraphs, and each of these proofs is, it seems to me, vitiated by a serious error.

He says there is "a Roman Catholic section of the School Board which sets and examines all papers of Roman Catholic candidates for certificates. The result is apparent. A knowledge of the Roman Catholic Catechism is the most essential qualification necessary for a certificate." This is incorrect. One Board of Examiners, composed jointly of Protestants and Catholics, examines all candidates for certificates. The papers are the same for all applicants except in History, in which subject the papers for each section are prepared by the examiners of that section, and in religious knowledge, in which there is an examination for Roman Catholic candidates but not for Protestants. The system of marking is similar to that adopted in like cases in Ontario and elsewhere. A fixed minimum percentage is required in each subject and it is, therefore, quite untrue that "Sisters received certificates last year, a knowledge of the catechism compensating for any deficiency in mathematics".

The second paragraph reads:—"Again, in the Indian Department the same Jesuitical craft may be found. Untiringly, they pursue their plans of having Protestant agents and officials removed and their places filled by 'the faithful' whose pleasure is the will of the priest. And what they ask, the servile authorities seldom refuse." In answer to this it is only necessary to say that of the twenty Indian agents in the North-West, not one is a Roman Catholic.

The next paragraph speaks of the school which was established by the Presbyterian Church, with the assistance of the Government, on the Stoney Plain reserve, near Edmonton, and which was interfered with by the Roman Catholics. The letter says "It is an unusual thing for the Government to erect a school for one denomination when another has already occupied the field, but influence is so strong at headquarters that they get what they desire. They applied for a Roman Catholic school and one was erected within eighty rods of the one already there." The implication here evidently is that the Government built the second school, which was not the case; the Roman Catholic Church built it and supported it for a year before any monetary assistance was received from the Government, and what was given then was the result of pressure brought to bear on the Government over the heads of the Indian Department. The Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church which had charge of this matter, remonstrated strongly and frequently with the Government for its supineness and disingenuousness

in this case ; but it will readily be seen that the charge brought by the Church against the Government is by no means as grave as that which Mr. Bradley brings.

The last paragraph contrasts the wealth of the Roman Catholic Mission at St. Albert with the poverty which prevails among the *habitants* in the neighborhood and says that last year "663 people at St. Albert—this nursery of Catholicism—received Government rations. This is virtually a case of the Government supporting a Roman Catholic Mission. The few dollars that the *habitant* may earn he takes out in prayers for the removal of purgatorial coals from the body of some dead relative. * * * Every year this state of affairs exists to a greater or less degree among the French half-breeds of St. Albert."

For six years I lived within a few miles of St. Albert and since then I have had many opportunities of knowing the condition of affairs there. The case quoted by Mr. Bradley may, in great measure, be accounted for by considerations different from those he alleges, by the facts, viz.: (1) That during the previous year a large number who had a preponderance of native blood in their veins, and who had, up to that time, been reckoned as Indians and received rations as such, withdrew from treaty relations on the opportunity being afforded to them, and during the following winter, as was to be expected, many of them were in such distress that they needed help, but less help than they had previously received as Indians. (2) The soup-kitchen having been opened for these, a number of shiftless creatures, sufficient to make up the large total quoted by Mr. Bradley, applied for and received assistance, although not in distressingly indigent circumstances, but regarding the opportunity as too good to be lost. Help of a similar kind, but in a much less degree, was given to some of the same people during the following winter, but these are the only years in which any charitable assistance has been given by the Government to the St. Albert half-breeds. It may be true that the fees exacted by the Roman Catholic Church for special services are high and are exacted in an unfeeling manner, but the idea that the average half-breed would deny himself, much less reduce himself to beggary and allow the Church to be enriched by such means savors of the ridiculous. The Mission is for him an institution from which he *gets* material assistance, rather than one to which he *gives*.

I find myself occupying a position to which I am little accustomed when I take sides with the Roman Catholics rather than with a writer in the MONTHLY. I do so, not because I sympathize with them nor because I think that the condition of Indian affairs or of education in the North-West affords no examples of their aggressive scheming, but because I believe the attacks are so insidious, so deep-laid and so persistent that it is hopeless to fight against them with any weapons except those forged from the purest truth. I am, etc.,

Winnipeg.

ANDREW B. BAIRD.

Here and Away.

"THE best yet."

This was the verdict of all who attended the College Opening and Alumni meetings.

WE are bubbling over this month with piths and points and paragraphs, but the exigencies of space shut the safety valve. There were so many things deserving of note in connection with the Alumni meeting that this Department counted on six pages.

THERE was the election of officers, shewing Dr. Armstrong, Ottawa, President; J. Campbell, Granton, Vice-President; G. E. Freeman, Toronto, Secretary; W. Burns, Toronto, Treasurer "Goforth Fund"; and a good Executive. Then came the "Library" Report shewing activity and hope; the "College Mission" brighter than ever, while the financial statement of the MONTHLY was a delightful surprise. Then came the re-election of the associate editors and the nomination for the Senate. The public meeting in the evening with Principal Caven's great speech on "The Duty of the Ministry and the Church in view of Jesuit Aggression" could not be a failure.

THE second day's Alumni meeting was perhaps the most important. At it the question of additional lectureships in Knox College was discussed. R. C. Tibb introduced the subject and was supported by about a dozen members. Several felt themselves on delicate ground and tried to go softly lest they should be misunderstood by the Professors. But Dr. MacLaren cleared the way by joining with those who advocated the foundation of such a Lectureship and asking that his own department be given prominence. Several subjects were mentioned, among them that of "Comparative Religions," but as no plan was proposed a committee was appointed to consider the whole question, bring it before the Church and report to the next meeting of the Association. This committee is composed of Dr. MacLaren, R. P. Mackay, R. C. Tibb and the Editor of the MONTHLY. They will be heard from at an early date.