

# The Church.

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## THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

(By a Correspondent of The Church.)

If the testimony of the ancient Fathers be found so useful and necessary in support of the great principles of Ecclesiastical Policy, and in these days of controversy and dispute, when so many doubt, and not a few disbelieve that there ever was a divinely constituted government to bind together and protect the vast fabric of the Church—if in these days, I repeat, when they were never more needed, their invaluable writings afford deep-thinking and sober-minded men such assistance in their endeavours to arrive at a clear definition of what is truth—it is not to be wondered at if we open their pages with profound reverence and respect. It is true we ascribe to them no powers of inspiration, we deny all superstitious adoption of their sentiments. But in matters of fact, in questions relative to Church Government, History, and the like, we feel ourselves bound to pay them a becoming deference. After the close of the Sacred Narrative, where are we to look for a further account of the proceedings of the Church, but in the remaining works of those who immediately succeeded the inspired writers? Can we trust the meagre records of the Heathen to bring before us in faithful language the affliction and sufferings so soon encountered by that infant society? Amid the records of nations and the annals of empires, enough could be found to engage the pen of the ready writer without ever alluding to the persecuted flock of Christ. And so it was—if they are mentioned at all, it is only by way of allusion—in jest—in ridicule—in scorn. The few writers who have condescended to treat of them, clearly manifest—some by the cursory manner in which their observations are made, but most by the hatred and malice exhibited towards them—their utter inefficiency to transmit to posterity any thing like a true history of the early progress of the Church. Too proud to inquire into the merits of a "sect every where spoken against"—and, through the same lofty spirit which scorned to investigate, necessarily uninformed as to its nature and bearing—they would suffer prejudice and ignorance to prove an effectual barrier to truth. But that Being whose watchful eye is over all, suffered not his Church to sink under the calamity of unthinking men—may more than to be swept away by the sword of the destroyer. Faithful records of the truth, as well as valiant defenders of the faith, were raised up from time to time to bear a lasting testimony to the cause, and to teach those who should come after what was the destiny of the "little flock" left behind by Christ to evangelize the world. It is from these witnesses—many of whom were martyrs to their profession—that we derive the knowledge we possess of these interesting facts. Some of them conversed with the holy Apostles; others lived in the age immediately succeeding; and conversed with those who had conversed with them; and these again left to their posterity accounts (short and simple indeed, but not the less true to that account) of what they had seen and heard; for the more voluminous Christian Authors must be looked for after the close of the second century. Much, we know, has been said both for and against these venerable writers, according to the different views and opinions of men—or to speak more plainly, according to the sects and denominations to which they belong. Some, erring too far on the one hand, ascribe to their works a weight and authority due to inspiration alone. Others there are, against whose cause they militate, and whose principles they oppose—who affect to despise them altogether; regarding them as faithless and prejudiced writers, unworthy of credit—or, if their sentiments appear too consistent and too true to be overthrown by force of argument,—they lamely endeavour to get over the difficulty by asserting that they are forgeries; the spurious productions of later ages. But this can only be the last resort of a highly prejudiced mind, and manifests rather a desire wilfully to disbelieve truths, somewhat harsh and ungrateful, however self-evident they may be, than any real rejection of them;—and indicates moreover an unfairness and want of principle, which we behold too frequently in requisition, to make the worse appear the better cause. These writings have of late been powerfully appealed to by our most eminent Divines in the question of Church Government, and with no inconsiderable success. A tone and an impulse have been imparted to the Constitution of the Church, growing every day more and more visible,—and which we have good reason to believe will ultimately lead to the happiest results. Her distinctive principles are now more clearly defined; and men begin to discern a marked difference between that sacred Edifice built upon the Rock of Ages, and pillared upon Apostolical truth, and those motley assemblages of mankind whose unwholesome fumes have their slippery foundation, as it were, in the sand; whose forms and modes of worship are but of yesterday,—bereft of antiquity and union, and liable to all the abuses and corruptions both in discipline and doctrine, that the wavering and unsteady mind of man can produce.—no sure system to hold them together; no uniformity in their religious service; no oneness of faith; but separate from the visible body of Christ's faithful upon earth; forsaking the known and certain way; and wandering through devious paths and by-ways. Against such fatal errors as these, when the evil was growing wider and wider, and delusion had reached a fearful height;—and when each sect as it rose claimed for itself an indisputable right to the title of "Church"—the testimony of these ancient men was found of invaluable worth in aiding to decide the point:—not indeed to prove what is established in Scripture irrespective of any appeal to the Fathers; but to declare to the world what opinions these holy men held upon the subject, and in what light they regarded any defection from the Church of Christ and his Apostles. Here we descend not upon the merits of their writings in all respects: not upon their perfections or imperfections. Whatever frailties incident to humanity, like other men they possessed, in this one thing they seem universally to agree;—namely, that there is but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," to be found alone in a divinely constituted Church. Any encroachment upon the standard of faith, or any departure from the oneness of that body of which Christ is the head, was regarded with equal abhorrence. But the advantage to be derived from a perusal of these works is not exclusively confined to their use and importance in determining questions relative to Church Policy. We wish further to prove, that incalculable benefit may accrue from them, to the unprejudiced reader in a practical point of view; and that the rules and principles of godly living, which they set before us, are such as may well merit our attention and claim our respect. An occasional reverting to the manifold trials and sufferings which our forefathers were called upon to endure for the Cross's sake, as detailed in their own simple and unadorned language, would tend not a little to excite our sympathy and quicken our devotion; and at the same time, we should learn a lesson of gratitude to God for casting our lot in happier times, and permitting us the peaceful enjoyment of our religious privileges. Little do the careless professors of Christianity at the present day, who dwell in apparent undisturbed by the alarm of persecution, and death, reflect upon the time when a few hours spent in the worship of God seldom failed to expose his followers to every species of cruelty; when the superstitious, to avoid the fury of their surrounding

enemies, were fain to meet together "in dens and caves of the earth," and there, in fearfulness and trembling, address their supplications to the throne of heaven. And in this respect alone, (I mean in the matter of duly worshipping God), what an example have they set to all succeeding generations. Hard as were their lot, the tribulation of the times, we find, had never taught them to "neglect the assembling of themselves together." God must be glorified, no matter at what risk of persecution, or peril of death. How diligent the early Christians were in the exercise of their religious duties we may learn from Justin Martyr, in a very forcible passage of his to this effect: "If any man absent himself for more than two Sundays successively from the house of God and the holy Eucharist, he is a murderer of Christ, (Χαροκτόνος)." A great and inestimable value was set upon the rites and ordinances instituted by Christ; so much so, that to part with them was to part with life itself. To be deprived of the privilege of partaking in those "holy mysteries," was what could not be endured under any circumstances. Indeed, the whole tenor of these writings teaches us how impossible it then was to assume the name of Christian without living up to the profession,—to be reckoned a follower of Christ, without endeavouring to follow Him,—to come out from the world and be separate, without denying themselves daily and taking up the cross. That this was deemed essential to a godly life we distinctly learn from the remaining works of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Ignatius, which breathe in almost every line a spirit of genuine piety and devotion seldom equalled, surely never surpassed, at the present day. From them we learn, in the most intelligible language, that the life of the sincere believer and faithful follower of the Lamb must indeed be a life of strict self-denial,—appropriately designated by the Apostle "the crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts."

On the whole, we feel ourselves constrained to declare that primitive and modern Christianity are in too many respects shown to be two different things. The thoughtful reader of these venerable writings cannot fail to mark the distinction. Then it was impossible to be a Christian in name and profession only, at least to continue so long, for persecution and distress soon unmasked the mere formalist, and exhibited his spiritual nakedness to the world. Nor were there such inducements, as there now are,—to lead men to profess what they did not believe,—but on the contrary, every thing that might serve to damp the ardour, and check the zeal of such as were not firmly established—"rooted and grounded in the faith." To become a follower of Christ was to incur the inevitable reproach of the Heathen. So sure were suffering and trial to succeed the profession of His name, that even in St. Paul's time baptism was reckoned the forerunner of persecution and death:—when by that open profession and visible rite, they declared themselves to be the avowed servants of Christ, and engaged to persevere in his worship despite the revilings of a heathen world. The holy Apostle, arguing against some who seemed to deny the resurrection, or at least doubt the possibility of it, boldly demanded of them why they subjected themselves to affliction and trial here, if they had no hope of such a glorious end; "why are we baptized for the dead, and why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" why profess Christianity at all; why be baptized in the name of Jesus; since martyrdom is the inevitable consequence; if we have no hope of a joyful resurrection hereafter? God, in his mercy, forbid that we should ever witness such scenes, and protect his Church, and all who take shelter within her sacred bosom, from the dreadful devastation of intolerance and persecution; from the devouring flame; from the destroying sword! But should we be called,—and that we are not to be ascribed solely to the goodness and forbearance of our merciful Protector towards a Church surely not more pure and holy than his afflicted flock in former times;—should we be called, as they were, to make full proof of our profession in the fiery ordeal of tribulation and distress, may God in his mercy likewise grant that the spirit which animated so many of his holy martyrs in ancient times, and cheered them on to rejoice in their most aggravated suffering, might be found even in these days to rouse many faithful believers to a holy emulation in patient endurance for the Cross's sake.—It is from an attentive perusal of the writings of these venerable characters that we learn "what manner of persons they were in all holy conversation and godliness," and what we ought to be with their conduct for our example, and their writings for our improvement. Tho' many affect to despise both them and their works,—and most of these "despisers," it is worthy of observation, have in all probability never read them;—we hesitate not to say that few modern religious works could be read with more real pleasure and edification. The laboured metaphysics and abstruse technicalities of modern Divinity occur not so frequently in their simple pages as to throw a stumbling-block in the way of the practical reader, and though much of the beauty and sublimity of the original is necessarily lost in a translation, yet the practical instructions still retain their energy even with the ordinary peruser. Sound wholesome lessons of Christianity, inculcating strict obedience, and submission to God's will and commands; patience and endurance in the cause of Christ; reverence and respect for his ministers and Ambassadors (distinctly specifying the three orders); a filial love and attachment to the Church; and steady perseverance to the end of our Christian course, are the characteristic features of those much despised and controverted writings. But specimens are perhaps the best arguments in the case. We subjoin therefore a few select extracts from the Greek of Ignatius, rendered literally,—not advertent particularly to those parts which treat of the duty of obedience to the threefold order of the ministry, and which indeed the great controversies of the day have made pretty well known already, but confining ourselves to those more practical passages which set forth prominently that spirit of true piety which distinguished the religion of our forefathers, and which may, through the blessing of God upon the strenuous endeavours the Church is now making to walk in their steps, impart a livelier tone and colour to our own.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, that faithful servant of God, who received the crown of martyrdom, to which he aspired with such earnestness, about the year of our Lord 107, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, written, as were all his epistles, while on his way to the metropolis of the Roman empire, where he was to be devoured by wild beasts, by order of the Emperor Trajan, thus affectionately exhorts them not to forsake the assembling of themselves together; "I know," says he, "to whom I am writing: I am condemned, ye are in favour: I am in danger, ye are in safety.—Through you lies the pathway of those who are martyrs to God. (Passengers from Antioch to Rome made their journey through Ephesus, as did this venerable Saint). Ye are the fellow-disciples of the sanctified, martyred and worthy blessed Paul, walking in whose steps may I be found, that God may be my portion. Be diligent then the oftener to assemble yourselves for the purpose of thanksgiving and glory to God: for by frequent meeting together the powers of Satan are shaken, and his attempts at your destruction rendered abortive by the oneness of your faith. Nothing indeed is better than concord; by it every opposition, both of spiritual and earthly enemies, is frustrated." Where, but in the volume of Inspiration, could we find more improving language than this?—If needful for Christians in his day; surely it is appli-

able to the present times. How many now ward the word of exhortation; yes, and of reproof too, to their hearts; and yet, in their neglected duties, and to teach them the value of constant attendance upon the house of God and the blessings of likemindedness in their devotion; and addresses to the Most High. As regards to empty profession and fruitless faith substituted for vital godliness, the topic of which we have already treated so largely, "better is it," says our author "to be silent and be a Christian, than to profess and not to be. It is good to instruct, if a man set forth his doctrine by his example. One Instructor there was whose actions corresponded with his words; and whose glorious deeds, performed as it were in silence, were worthy of his Father. He who possesses the word of Jesus, can in truth hear him speaking even in silence, that he may be perfect, that his actions may bear out his words, and his quiet demeanour attest his sincerity. For nothing is hid from the Lord; the recesses of our hearts are exposed to His view. Let us, therefore, do every thing as having Him dwelling in us; that we may be a temple to Him, and He our God in us." Nor are these useless admonitions. So long as the visible Church exists, even the faithful will need to be stirred up and roused to more strenuous exertions in their Christian course. And surely while among us, they cannot be too often repeated. We need them from time to time to quicken the careless, and awaken the dead. Speaking of certain deceivers who had the impety to deny our Lord's humanity, the reality of his visible body when upon earth, thereby completely destroying the efficiency of the atonement, he thus warns the Smyrncens to beware of such: "I set you on your guard beforehand against beasts in the shape of men, whom not only must you refuse to entertain, but even avoid meeting; if possible; being satisfied to pray for them, if by any means they may repent, which indeed it is difficult for them to do; and which is in the hands of Jesus Christ alone, who is our real life. For if the works of our Lord were merely done in illusion and appearance, and not in reality, then I also only seem to be bound. And wherefore then have I subjected myself to death, to fire, and to the sword? But being near the sword, I am near to God; amongst the beasts, I am with God; but only in the name of Jesus Christ, and participating in His sufferings, I endure all things; He himself strengthening me, who was made perfect man. Him indeed some ignorantly deny, or rather, are denied by Him; being heralds of death, rather than the truth; whom neither the prophecies, nor the law of Moses, nor the Gospel up to this day have persuaded; nor even our sufferings in the flesh; for the same fanciful opinions in measure apply to us. But what is it to me if a man extol me and blaspheme my Lord, denying that he is come in the flesh? Whosoever will not confess this hath wholly denied Him, and is living in death. The very names of such unbelievers I cannot bring myself to write: let them be altogether forgotten till they seek repentance in His death, which is our resurrection." Such was the spirit which animated this holy martyr when trembling for the safety of the flock of Christ. No trials, no sufferings, however great, could, in his estimation, equal the miseries of defection from the truth. What his own personal feelings were on this point, he hath fully informed us in his Epistle to the Romans, by an extract from which we will close our selections from the writings of this illustrious servant of God. "All this way," says he, "from Syria to Rome, I am contending with wild beasts, by day and by night; on sea and on shore, (calling to the faithful character of his guard). May I be so happy as to find the beasts ready for me; from the devouring flame; from the destroying sword! But should we be called,—and that we are not to be ascribed solely to the goodness and forbearance of our merciful Protector towards a Church surely not more pure and holy than his afflicted flock in former times;—should we be called, as they were, to make full proof of our profession in the fiery ordeal of tribulation and distress, may God in his mercy likewise grant that the spirit which animated so many of his holy martyrs in ancient times, and cheered them on to rejoice in their most aggravated suffering, might be found even in these days to rouse many faithful believers to a holy emulation in patient endurance for the Cross's sake.—It is from an attentive perusal of the writings of these venerable characters that we learn "what manner of persons they were in all holy conversation and godliness," and what we ought to be with their conduct for our example, and their writings for our improvement. 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Encroachments of the Papacy upon the Irish Church. (From the Achill Missionary Herald.) Independent as our Church originally was, and though long she struggled to preserve her independence, she in the long run allowed herself to be deprived of it, though centuries later than the sister Church of Britain. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." It was so with the ancient and apostolically constituted Church of Ireland. Rome, by getting so good and firm a footing in a neighbouring island, had become her next-door neighbour, and thus, at length, opened up the way to a mutual communication and intercourse, the effects of which came by a slow but steady progress to be gradually visible in the loss of much of her primitive orthodoxy of belief, and purity of worship, with the introduction of many superstitions and practical corruptions. A great help to all this was the injuries which the Church sustained from the destructive invasions of the Danes and others, in the ninth and tenth and eleventh centuries;—injuries which had well nigh amounted to the very extinction of Christianity from our land. But the first successful step towards the consummation of our country's ecclesiastical degradation, was in the year 1152, when, at the Kells convocation, and in opposition to the remonstrances of others of the brethren, the Archbishops of Armagh, Tuam, Cashel, and Dublin, consented to receive, at the hands of Cardinal Papero, our bulls, sent by Pope Eugenius the Third.—And the great climax of it was twenty years after, when, at another synod assembled in the city of Cashel, Henry the Second produced from Popes Adrian and Alexander, those bulls so well known to the readers of the Irish history as what conferred upon that monarch the sovereignty of Ireland, upon condition that he would help to purify her from her alleged ecclesiastical disorders, and subject every house to the yearly pension of a penny to the chair of St. Peter. While we regard the submission at Kells as the first decisive step towards this unhappy result, we must bear in mind that it was preceded by certain preparatory steps, in which the Irish hierarchy would appear to have been more passive than otherwise. It was no wonder that the extent of injury which the Irish Church had sustained from the invasions referred to, in the destruction of her temples, colleges, literature, religious institutions and other privileges, should—when contrasted with the comparative prosperity of the English Church, now Romish—induce her members to a greater readiness to submit to a connexion with the latter, than if their own Church had lived on in the undiminished enjoyment of all her native resources. But this was not simply the doing of the clergy, at least of the native portion of them, or those who in their ordinances and consecrations were so. The amount of success that attended their ministerial labours in the conversion of their Pagan invaders—while on the one hand it seemed to promise a restoration of their former prosperity—on the other hand contributed much to the destruction of their ecclesiastical independence; for these new and foreign accessions to their ranks, so far from being jealous of a connexion with the Anglo-Roman Church, or conformity to its ways, rather courted, for various reasons, both the one and the other, and were mainly instrumental in the first approximations to both.—What an approximation was the appointment by a Danish King of Dublin, in the 11th century, of one of his countrymen (Donogh) to the bishopric of that city;—and he consecrated to that office, not by any of the bishops of the Irish Church, but by the Pope's obedient servant, the Archbishop of Canterbury! A wheel once set moving on an inclined plane is not easily stopped. Patrick, the next in succession to Donogh, was similarly consecrated, with a "promise of obedience, in all things relating to the Christian religion," to his most Reverend conservator (Landgrave) and his successors. Lanfranc having thus obtained in Ireland a footing similar to what the Pope had secured in England between four and five hundred years before by the establishment of Augustine in the See now held by that prelate himself,—being a man of cleverness and address he knew well how to work himself into the good graces of the Irish Kings, and through them advance the interests of Romanism in the country which they ruled. His successor was Anselm, equally clever and successful in pushing on the cause they had so much at heart. When they had succeeded in getting into their hands the consecration of an Irish Metropolitan, with his consequent submission to the jurisdiction of the English Primate, they had not much difficulty in securing a Legate in the person of another Irish bishop, but a foreigner, and the bishop of a Norman settlement, Gillespie of Limerick. This paved the way for further encroachments, and rendered the Irish clergy, in general, more accessible to the emissaries of Rome; and so things went on bit by bit, Rome gradually increasing the number of her adherents, until she further succeeded, early in the 12th century, in getting even the ancient See of Armagh into the keeping of one of the most zealous of them—Malachy O'Morgan. Malachy went so far in his exhibition of attachment to the Papal See, as immediately, on his elevation, to go himself in person to Rome, and apply for an archiepiscopal pall to Pope Innocent the Second. The Pontiff, however, seeing that his cause had not yet made sufficient progress in Ireland to bestow that favour at once, deferred doing so till a future period, when he hoped the application for it would be more an act of the body of the hierarchy than of an individual; and though he did not himself live to give it on such terms, no more than about nine years elapsed from his death, when one of his successors had the satisfaction of conferring that badge of submission to his supremacy on the four Irish metropolitans, all in a batch. Then followed the additional security to this submission by the stipulation with Henry, by which also it was rendered not only more extensive and compact, but also more corrupting in its moral influence upon the whole character of the Irish Church, though as Romish writers have been forced to confess, and as their own authentic documents are found to testify—also it was rendered still towards the dawn of the Reformation, by a few isolated but faithful bands of witnesses, not included within the pale of the English settlements.

Thus do we trace the progress and consummation of an unholy union between our country and the Pope, for the entire, unqualified, and permanent seal of which it is the duty of every member of our Church to strive, until we shall be permitted to see the yet schismatical portion of our nation brought from the bondage of Romanism to the liberty of the Gospel. Towards this great movement had been made in the reigns of Henry and Edward. In the reign of Mary that movement was checked, or rather forced to retrograde by measures which, wherever they were brought to bear upon the professors of the Reformed religion, gave no alternative but MARYTDOM OR RECANTATION. On the happy accession of Elizabeth, it not only revived, but with increased energy and power, and a far larger and more general measure of success than had previously attended it. Now may it be said to have received, with few exceptions, the full concurrence of the whole Church—bishops, clergy, and people combined. But though the laity, following the example, and influenced by the counsel of their spiritual guides, continued for some time to attend the old reformed churches of their respective parishes—where, through the blundering policy of England, they found themselves treated to the unsatisfactory and unedifying sub-

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The Pontiff, however, seeing that his cause had not yet made sufficient progress in Ireland to bestow that favour at once, deferred doing so till a future period, when he hoped the application for it would be more an act of the body of the hierarchy than of an individual; and though he did not himself live to give it on such terms, no more than about nine years elapsed from his death, when one of his successors had the satisfaction of conferring that badge of submission to his supremacy on the four Irish metropolitans, all in a batch. Then followed the additional security to this submission by the stipulation with Henry, by which also it was rendered not only more extensive and compact, but also more corrupting in its moral influence upon the whole character of the Irish Church, though as Romish writers have been forced to confess, and as their own authentic documents are found to testify—also it was rendered still towards the dawn of the Reformation, by a few isolated but faithful bands of witnesses, not included within the pale of the English settlements.

Thus do we trace the progress and consummation of an unholy union between our country and the Pope, for the entire, unqualified, and permanent seal of which it is the duty of every member of our Church to strive, until we shall be permitted to see the yet schismatical portion of our nation brought from the bondage of Romanism to the liberty of the Gospel. Towards this great movement had been made in the reigns of Henry and Edward. In the reign of Mary that movement was checked, or rather forced to retrograde by measures which, wherever they were brought to bear upon the professors of the Reformed religion, gave no alternative but MARYTDOM OR RECANTATION. On the happy accession of Elizabeth, it not only revived, but with increased energy and power, and a far larger and more general measure of success than had previously attended it. Now may it be said to have received, with few exceptions, the full concurrence of the whole Church—bishops, clergy, and people combined. But though the laity, following the example, and influenced by the counsel of their spiritual guides, continued for some time to attend the old reformed churches of their respective parishes—where, through the blundering policy of England, they found themselves treated to the unsatisfactory and unedifying sub-

stitute of English for Latin prayers—the larger portion of them were soon again led back to their former superstitions, by the agents of Rome, who knew well how to work upon the national prejudices and antipathies of our gullible countrymen, and make them believe that whatever the English had a finger in, deserved only to be rejected as the work of an enemy. Those whom they were thus able to deceive, and into whom they were further able to infuse a spirit of rebellion against their Sovereign, getting them by every consideration and promise that could act either upon their passions or expectations, to flock to the standard of a foreign invader—they formed into a new and schismatical church, presided over by ecclesiastics of foreign consecration, and unable, therefore, to claim any manner of connexion with the church of St. Patrick.—There, then, was established upon quite a new footing, another and more partial union, as a substitute for that which had been little more than just repealed; but it was neither a Union between our Church and the Pope, nor between our Country and the Pope, but between him and a rebellious and schismatical portion of our country's inhabitants. This is the Union, the repeal of which is now so essential to our country's prosperity; this is the Union, a repeal of which would, with the Divine blessing, not fail to confer upon us, as a people, a rich abundance of all those spiritual and other blessings, which are now but partially enjoyed among us. At this we all ought to aim; for this we all ought to contend; and, as one of the most effectual means we could adopt for its attainment—as many of us as profess "not to know any thing save Jesus Christ and him crucified," ought, by God's grace and His Spirit operating in our hearts, be found exhibiting our belief in such holy influence upon our lives, as—to the silencing conviction, and ultimate reclamation of our adversaries—would show the distinguishing doctrines of our Apostolical Church to have emanated, not from man, but from the Spirit of our God.

## WHO ARE SECTARIANS?

(From the Boston Witness and Advocate.)

There seems to be a great deal of vagueness, in the minds of many, as to what constitutes sectarianism, and who are sectarians. The impression most general is, that sectarianism consists in an exclusive attachment to particular views, and a rigid adherence to one's own sect or denomination, and that those are sectarians who believe their own views so true as to falsify the opposing sentiments of their neighbors, or their own sect so divine as to claim the devotion of their hearts.

Now we have no hesitation in saying that this is altogether a false view of sectarianism. Such a definition would make Christ and his Apostles the greatest sectarians in the world. None were ever more exclusive in their views of truth than they; none ever adhered more pertinaciously to the sect they had formed. Nothing can be more manifest to those who read the scriptures, than that our Saviour and the Apostles intended the Christian Church to be forever one and indivisible. Equally clear is it, that they foresaw and provided for a wide difference of opinion among the members of the Church. But they looked upon this difference far otherwise than as a needless cause of division. It came to pass after a time, however, when the jarings of individual opinion began to call for mutual forbearance, and to try to the utmost the strength and genuineness of charity, that certain persons conceived that there would be more ease, and less cross-bearing, to withdraw from the great body of believers, and hold their peculiar opinions apart by themselves. This was sectarianism.

Again time passed on, and this sectarian feeling produced a multitude of sects; and now these divided communities begin to talk of mutual kindness and charity. They wish to bury the hatchet, and kill this party spirit; and how do they propose to do it? Why by standing each with his heel and toe carefully upon his own side of a dividing line, and reaching across to shake hands. But does this secure the end intended? By no means. Why not blot the line of separation, and come together? Sectarianism consists in being willing to divide the Church on account of differences of opinion; and it shows itself to an equal extent in a willingness to continue existing divisions for the same reason.

A family living in a large house fall into a quarrel; and finding it inconvenient to govern their passions, they abruptly terminate the contest by moving, retiring to different apartments, and living as three or four secluded families instead of one. After a time they begin to see their folly, and propose to settle the difficulty by the interchange of such kindly offices as belong to good neighbourhood. They lend and borrow, visit and revisit. But is this all that is required of them? Not at all. Were their feelings what they ought to be, they would again become a united family, and sit at the same table. Until they do this, whatever their professions, the old feelings of enmity are unconquered.

So in the Christian household. A portion of the members having withdrawn and lived in morose separation for a long time, having little or no intercourse with those from whom they parted, now begin to ask for the courtesies of good neighbourhood. But does this prove that they are not sectarians? By no means. When their feelings are right, they will be willing to become a united family, and sit at the same table of their common Father. For what are the arguments they use in favour of an interchange of kindly offices? Why, that the difference between the several denominations relate only to subjects of minor importance, whereas, in all that is essential, they are agreed. If, then, they agree in all that is important, what occasion for the separation? Are they, themselves being judges, on account of things which are not essential, living in a state of open violation of the commands of their Lord? Are they so much wedded to the preservation of separate organizations, that they resolve to keep them up, while they confess that they ground of their origin and perpetuity, is nothing better than the non-essentials of religion? They are in the fullest source sectarians.

We come to the conclusion, that he who, for the unsubstantial reasons assigned,—unimportant by the confession of those who offer them, is willing to continue the broken state of the Church, is a sectarian, while he who mourns this disunion, and does all in his power to heal it; who feels himself chilled rather than warmed by any heat which does not melt the whole body of believers into one mass, is not a sectarian.

## THE PENITENT THIEF.

(From Sermons by the Rev. H. Blunt.)

Perhaps, from the view which we have taken of this deeply instructive narrative, some may be led to inquire—are there, then, no encouragements to be drawn, no consolations to be derived by the sinner, even at the eleventh hour, for so glorious a display of His Redeemer's power and mercy as this affords him? We will not reply, there are none; but, we candidly confess, that as faithful interpreters of Divine truth, we cannot venture to assert, that there are many.—When all the circumstances which were combined, are taken into consideration, although we will not say, as one of the older writers of our Church upon this subject has beautifully said, "Christ must die again, and thou must be crucified with him, before such a day as that shall come again; for, although on the days of coronations, and great espousals, the streets be hung with tapestry, and the prisoners be let

loose, and the conduits run with wine, yet if a man be cast into prison at any other time, he will be left to be executed, and if a man go to the conduits at any other time, he will find only water." Although we will not presume thus to limit the infinite grace of our Redeemer to that tremendous day, and to that solemn hour, we would most earnestly intreat you not to trust to such another day, and such another instance. We grant that a true repentance cannot come too late, but who is to ascertain that the late repentance is a true, and therefore an acceptable repentance? Who is ever to insure to you the opportunity of this late repentance? Doubtless the bed of sickness has often been made the blessed scene of a total change of heart and affections, and some eminent instances might be given, of repentance unobscured, of grace offered and accepted, of pardon most mercifully bestowed within the walls of the chamber, from which the sinner is to go no more out again, into the follies and allurements of the world; but we ask, Who will insure to you the certainty even of a bed of sickness, much less the certainty that Divine grace, so frequently neglected in health, shall be at that season forced upon your acceptance? Are there no sudden deaths? Are there no instances of a few hours, or a few days' illness, during the whole of which the sufferer is absolutely incapacitated from every degree of mental exertion, by bodily languor or by bodily pain? And will you run the hazard of an eternity of happiness, against such a probability as this? Could any thing short of mental aberration, induce you deliberately to make such a choice? Imagine even the very best alternative that can await you, and how little comfort does the prospect hold forth. Perhaps, after living a life of sinful forgetfulness of God, you may be brought, during the few painful and melancholy hours, which mark the close of such a life, to a knowledge of the Redeemer, to a deep conviction of sin, and to some degree of love to God, and of meekness for the inheritance of the saints in light. How difficult, in such a case, to ascertain what is really the effect of Divine grace, and what the specious counterfeit produced by the dread of death, the terrors of approaching judgment. As the ministers of Christ, we may leave you in hope of the never-failing merits of an infinitely merciful Redeemer; but seldom indeed can we, in instances such as these, assure your own minds; seldom can we comfort your weeping friends by any thing beyond a hope, a faint and doubtful hope, which the heart indeed, in every case, loves to cherish, even while the mind and judgment stand trembling aloof, and refuse all share in the decision. While even the language of hope itself, loses much of its hilarity and joy, from the recollection, how many similar instances we have witnessed, in which returning health has brought back returning worldliness and sin; while every trace of faith and penitence, which we had so highly valued on the bed of sickness, and from which, if the sinner had died, we should have ventured to deduce our hope of his salvation, has utterly and for ever disappeared.

Do you then ask, brethren, what comfort you may derive from the narrative we have been considering? One important lesson to be derived from it, is this,—That if our gracious Redeemer could so freely, thus readily, pardon the dying malefactor, who had never, probably, until those hours of agony, heard of the name of Christ, and who at such an hour might be glad to cling to any hope, much more will He accept and pardon you, whatever be your sins, however great, or however habitual and confirmed, if you now come, in the days of health and happiness, with the same penitence, and the same faith, offering from a broken and contrite heart, the same petition, "Lord, remember me."

This is a lesson which the incident we have been considering, well may teach us; this is the consolation which it may really impart; but if you will only look to it for future support, for pardon at the eleventh hour, for acceptance when the few remaining sands of life are quickly ebbing from the glass, be assured that you are leaning upon a broken reed; and that, if you persist in the delusion, the sin, the misery, the disappointment, must be your own.

The present moment, then, is the only time at which we can insure to you the fulfilment of the petition in the text. Make it your earnest, faithful, heartfelt petition now, and it will not, cannot be denied you. Say, Lord, behold my sinfulness, behold the hardness of my heart, the coldness of my affections, the waywardness of my will; behold all my poverty, all my necessity; see my utter inability to help myself, and "remember me." "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mightest be feared," O bestow it upon me. There is grace with thee, that thou mightest be loved; O deny it not to me. There is pleasure at thy right hand for ever; O give me my portion there, and I will ask no more; only, "Lord, remember me," now thou art in thy kingdom. The answer to such a prayer will be, for these are the words of Him to whom you pray, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." I have gone to prepare a place for thee, that where I am, there may also my servants be; Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. For all that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Cleave to me with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and when thy heart and thy flesh fail thee, I will be the strength of thine heart, and thy portion for ever. Such, in effect, is the gracious answer which our Lord has vouchsafed to thousands of his praying people, and such will be this day vouchsafed to you, if you, from a contrite and believing heart, present the petition of the text.

That you may be enabled by Divine grace, so to do, may God of his infinite mercy grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## THE COMMON GROUND OF CHURCHMEN.

(From a Sermon by the Rev. W. F. Hook, D.D.)

We find the Apostle urging men to mutual forbearance on the ground of their being united in principle,—their common principle being a desire to please the Lord. "He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, unto the Lord he doth not regard it: he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not and giveth God thanks."

And let me ask, may not a similar appeal be made in these days, to those who, on the





