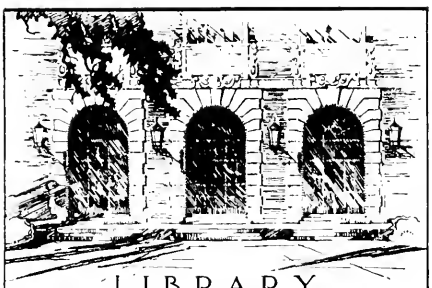

ADDRESS AT IPSWICH.

WHEN it is proposed that a better understanding shall exist between important groups or classes of persons, there is the recognition of a past severance in sympathy, of a visible chasm which it is sought to bridge over. This is essentially different from a private dispute, a quarrel or coldness between individuals, where it is oftener the best course to forget all "bygones." The divisions of Christendom have their origin in historical events, to ignore which, even if it were practicable, would not be wise. To review them in the spirit of candour and moderation, and not from the old stand points of party, is to fit the mind for a conciliatory estimate of existing facts. It has been said that an exact knowledge of the origin and nature of the complaint goes far towards a remedy. This old maxim need not in its application be limited to the medical art.

When we enquire how it is that disunion exists to a fearful extent amongst those who in England hold the Christian creeds, the answer to be correct must refer to causes both complex and remote. It will range over a large part of the religious history, not of England only, but of Europe. It would be necessary, in the slightest survey of the field, to recur to the events of the Reformation, while some might prefer to trace the story up to the days of its "morning star"—JOHN WYCLIFFE.

The re-reading of important passages of history, with fairness and impartiality, not relying as heretofore on the partisan writers

who have influenced the individual mind in past days—This will be the first step towards a better understanding. Here is required in the student a calm and equitable frame of mind, a willingness to admit that his own side has not always been in the right, to recognise purity of motive, and the truly religious spirit in multitudes of those who have taken the other side.

Into so wide an enquiry it is impossible now to enter. Yet it may be permitted, by two illustrations, to indicate the way in which English history may afford the lessons of peace and reconciliation.

First, let us look for an instant at the rise and development of Puritanism, which from small beginnings became a mighty power; and which in a modified form still is impressed on the British character.

The young Churchman, from the one-sided study of history, perchance looks on Puritanism as little more than factious opposition to constituted authority in Church and State. The young Dissenter on the contrary may regard it as simply the protest of religious men against erastianism, and worldliness, and tyranny. The truth is as usual to be found half way between the extreme points.

The Anglican Reformation was the work of men who desired to change as little as possible, to leave the liturgy and all other church arrangements untouched, save so far as excision was absolutely necessary. They sought to maintain the continuity of the Church, and to retain the old worshippers. To some of us this may appear to have been "a more excellent way." But there were thousands in England who from the noblest of motives held a different course. To them the notion of any following of the usages, or any compromise with the adherents of Rome was hateful. Their sympathies were with Knox and the Reformers of Scotland, with Zwingle and Calvin, and the foreign Reformers. Therefore into the spirit of the Anglican Reformers they were, in honesty and conscience, unable to enter; and from the Anglican Church they consequently held aloof. First as Brownists, and afterwards as Puritans and Independents, they drew together for their own simple worship. Rejecting all Church traditions, all patristic teachings, and all ancient liturgies, they held the Book of God to be the only and the all-sufficient guide. Cannot Churchmen afford to admit that

this transcendant reverence for that Book was such as to call forth admiration?: and if this were the main spring of their conduct public and domestic, how can it be denied, even by those of us who hold that Puritans saw half the truth, and not the whole, that Puritanism had a truly religious origin?

Passing to the later history of Nonconformity, it is found in close association with the struggle for political freedom. This was apparent in the course of long contests between the Stuart Kings, and their subjects. For many years the friends of civil liberty were rarely found in the ranks of a church whose prelates were most ardent advocates of what has well been called—"The right divine of kings to govern wrong."

So closely was the Church's cause bound up with that of royalty, that both were levelled at one moment, by the same catastrophe. Often has the conduct of Protector Cromwell towards the Church of England in her time of lowest depression been spoken of. That severity was exercised towards the Clergy is undoubted; but how much of this was owing to their political action, their steadfast loyalty, does not appear so clearly. That was an unsettled, an abnormal period, when the air was full of apprehensions of intrigue and danger; and Cromwell as a ruler, viligant as well as bold, could afford to give small licence to any whose enmity was active, even if they were clergymen. But the laws of prohibition, sternly as they were drawn up, were rarely put in force; and the quiet Anglican unsuspected of plotting against the Commonwealth was unmolested. Exigencies of State might oblige the companion of John Milton to assume for a time a garb of intolerance; but this can hardly have been the real character of him who made the name of Protestant and Englishman to be feared throughout the world.

In 1660 great rejoicings attended the restoration of Monarchy and of Church. The triumphant return of the 2nd Charles ought to have been marked by magnanimity towards the vanquished. The day of St. Bartholomew showed too clearly that the temper of the conquerors was harsh, and the spirit of retaliation strong. Then were cast out upon the world those who during the Commonwealth had entered on the parishes and glebes as the recognised pastors of the dominant persuasion. They were all cast

out, and their wives and children; and great was the distress which followed. This question is by no means free from difficulty. The candid Nonconformist who can bring himself to consider fairly the dilemma, will admit that the solution was not easy. But if these good men could not be left in possession for their lives, at least a decent provision for them and their families ought to have been made. They had entered, not as mere intruders, but in good faith, under the guarantee of a strong *de facto* government. Even if no *modus vivendi* could be discovered, generous terms ought to have been accorded.

The ejection of the ministers, and those dear to them, from their accustomed homes, was more than harsh—it was impolitic; for the sight of all their suffering excited the pity of their countrymen. Efforts were made to provide for the ejected new spheres of duty, and means of maintenance. Chapels were built by sympathetic friends, and so were sown broadcast the seeds of congregationalism. Modern dissent is in no small degree the fruit and outcome of the treatment dealt out to the ejected ministers of 1662, by the chief rulers in Church and State.

Not only then, but in the century following, may Nonconformity, in new phases of revival and success, be charged directly upon those who occupied high places. Frequently have the apathy and want of judgment, manifested throughout the last century, been commented on. Wise and timely action might have prevented that great Calvinistic secession, which has largely influenced England, while it has withdrawn from the Anglican pale almost the entire people of Wales. Still more disastrous was the neglect of the Anglican hierarchy of former years, when Wesleyan congregations began to form and multiply. These were at first all friendly to the English Church. Their Sunday services were held at different hours, and their whole system was one of supplement, not of rivalry: not adverse to the system of the Church. Yet these, the strongest and most promising allies the English Church has ever seen, were not encouraged. Coldly and civilly was their aid declined; and so by force of circumstances, through a neglect which now we bitterly regret, were laid the firm foundations of those great connexions bearing the name of Wesley, which are spread throughout the world.

The general result seems easy to arrive at, if our own deduction from the facts of history be true. Thus, it may be expressed: the divisions amongst English Christians may be largely charged upon errors of judgment of a former age. Little tact or foresight did the prelates show in dealing with new problems of their time. Far be it from us, living in clearer light, to doubt their motives. Yet we may clearly recognise the errors into which they fell.

This retrospect, so far as it has gone, suggests a new and much more careful reading of past history rather on the part of Churchmen; since with our own deficiencies we have most close acquaintance. The growth of nonconformity we trace to causes more or less within the power of such as were in Church and State, the governors of England. Yet the blame not wholly on the one side may be cast. Dissenting students may also well resolve to read again the story; and this time by a clearer light than that of party. Allowance must be fairly made for hours of trial—for questions which involved dilemma and distress. And, if so reading history with the wish to do all justice to opponents, viewing the scene from a central point of just impartiality, dissenters can join with Churchmen in just estimate of the past, its troubles and its results, great will be the gain to all. In a light more clear and an atmosphere more genial, justice may be done to the historic Church of Cranmer, of Ridley, and of Latimer.

When we try to regard fellow Christians with a new interest, and when we strive after a more perfect realization of the message of good-will, helpful it must be to all of us to reflect that many old occasions of controversy and worn-out words of strife have for ever passed away. Many they were—more numerous than the points of present difference which remain. Often and often have angry disputations raged, on matters which are now by us regarded either as of small intrinsic moment, or as of such a kind as to admit of perfect freedom of opinion.

Even in the proper domain of theology points have been much debated, at length and with acerbity, as to which is now observed complete silence—as to which we almost feel indifference. No better illustration offers than that Calvinistic and Arminian controversy, which raged through no small portion of the last century. Not only did this distract the minds and occupy

the precious hours of most useful and holy men, but it gave rise to frequent misunderstandings, and eventual coolness between some who had been firmest friends. Soon after the Wesleys and Whitefield, led by an impulse divine and irresistible, began to preach on the commons and in the market-places of England, they differed seriously—and the cause of their difference was the points of Calvinism. One in heart they had been, as they proclaimed the Good News to thousands of such as would otherwise have never heard it; but as these sowers dropped the seed the enemy sowed the tares; and the tares sprang up in the form of controversial points, on which opinion became more fixed and fierce. Not on material truths and living doctrine, but on hard matters of insurmountable abstract theology. Each of the leaders had his own followers, possessed of no small dialectical and literary skill. Pamphlets without number, and even volumes, issued from the press, full of arguments on those "five points" which none of us now care to keep in memory. A foremost combatant was Toplady, whose titles to reverence are the authorship of the "Rock of Ages," and the aid that he gave to the pious Countess of Huntingdon. Even this good man allowed the Calvinistic points to warp his judgment. By them was he betrayed into language which would now be considered ferocious and unseemly. Fletcher of Madely, John Wesley's dearest friend and designated successor, on the other side devoted a large part of a life which was all too short, to the convolutions of a discussion which from its nature could never reach an end, and which was wholly without profit. Men of this kind, "salt of the earth" they were in their own generation, were found willing to give up their time, their peace of mind, and their dearest friendships, merely that they might prolong what we now know to have been a mere *logomachy* or war of words. Not that the topic was not worthy of their thoughts: in all past ages, from the days of St. Augustine downwards, there have been minds reflective, well stored, apt to meditation, for whom such lofty mysteries have had a strong attraction. Into such questions we of this age may not pretend to penetrate. The bounds of knowledge stand around, as high and firm as ever. Our vision is as limited as theirs. Yet one distinct advantage we possess—that of well knowing that the time is all wasted which is

given to problems in themselves insoluble. More accurately do we gauge our capacity; more distinctly do we realize the shortness of our allotted time, when it is compared with the extent of even that portion of our work which lies nearest to our hand.

Some controversialists of old would not admit that many things lay quite beyond the powers of feeble human nature to comprehend. They rather deemed it the right and privilege of the "elect" to know and understand things hidden from us, for ever and by design; yet they might well have been content, taking example from St. Paul, to "see through a glass darkly," when turning their eyes towards the unrevealed, or the dimly visible. When so enlightened a man as Toplady laboured to prove that uncounted millions of our race are born into the world only to pass into eternal burning, that reproof was lost upon him which was uttered by the Master in reply to the memorable question—"Are there few that be saved?"

Controversies of this kind are like extinct volcanoes; to us they are but memories of troubles which have long since ended. Yet they are warnings that it is well to exert our energy, limited in all ways as it is, only in the direction of the useful and the practical. On our present subject they have, perhaps, this special bearing—that the tale of questions on which Christians, holding to the creeds, are likely to dispute and differ, is actually year by year becoming smaller. From the long list of theological strifes of the past, we may now eliminate such as relate to matters of no present interest; also those wherein full freedom of opinion, and diversity of action, is now by common consent allowed. To put this in another way—a Churchman and a Dissenter who met together about a hundred years ago, for friendly comparison of notes, and for the drawing up of the catalogue of points on which they differed—these would have made a list immensely longer than would now be made.

How would their successors of our own time deal with such a list? First, they would strike out all questions of the kind we call insoluble. Next, they would strike out many questions which, by time and public opinion and improved legislation, have been settled, and which therefore no longer appear in any category. Next, they would strike out all questions as to which the

Churchmen of this day claim greater latitude or freedom of opinion than was claimed then. The Churchman might well refuse to discuss with a Dissenter, *in that character*, any matter on which there is now full freedom of opinion within the limits of the Church.

Then the list would be further reduced by the group of minor questions, relating to outward form and conduct of worship, in which Nonconformists have been for many years past approximating to the Church. May we not draw a hopeful inference from the fact that the field of dispute is becoming, year by year, more narrow? Supposing that two litigants, who at one time believed that the border land between their estates, which was the cause of their dispute, contained a hundred acres, were after accurate survey to find that the disputed plot had shrunk to no more than ten acres; would there not be a better prospect of an amicable settlement? When the matters of dispute are dwindling, may not agreement be regarded as nearer within reach?

Again, there is a slow yet visible process of approximation, which may be clearly seen by those who take the trouble to look for it. A hundred years ago there was rigid uniformity throughout the English Church—a dead level as regarded acts of worship. Now there are wide (perhaps too wide), varieties to be found, at least so wide that every one who chooses to make the search may find his own ideal of worship realized. The change has been in both directions—change towards stateliness, and towards simplicity of worship. In our cities and our larger towns he who desires them may find brief and simple services; such are appointed not alone for those whose time is limited. Efforts are made to meet the aspirations of such as prefer complete and utter contrast to the Roman ritual. In some places forms of prayer are almost dispensed with; and lay-preaching is not quite unknown. When the clergy found that many of their people resorted to that watch-night service, which Wesley copied with other things from the records of the primitive church, then there began to be watch-night services in churches. The iron bands of a life-repressing uniformity have been at last cast off; and there is now much liberty of action, within rational bounds, for every useful end.

And if form and stateliness are no longer distinguishing marks of the English Church, simplicity has ceased to be the note of Nonconformity. Such aids as fine architecture, costly decoration, and elaborate music may afford, are now resorted to in all directions. Further proof need not to be adduced to win your assent to the proposition that many old prejudices, besides that against the use of organs, are worn out and laid aside; and that under the influence of growing taste, and common sense, English Christians have approached much nearer to each other in the estimate of that which is admissible in worship. It is a fact of happy omen that Christians are now bending their minds rather on the *effect* to be attained than on the particular *methods* to be used. The latter are nothing worth unless they serve to bring us nearer to the former. It is, in truth, a matter of indifference whether a religious service be stately or simple, except so far as it helps forward Christians in the right path. And differences, not to be effaced or forgotten, differences of education, of taste, and of natural temperament, forbid attempts at rigid uniformity. Diversely constituted minds must be influenced, if at all, by modes which also are diverse. No philosopher, no apostle, would dare to treat human minds as mere pieces of mechanism cast in one mould. That different methods are allowable plainly appears from words of the Apostle of the Gentiles. To the Jews he became as a Jew. To those destitute of law as one free from its trammels: He was made all things to all men, that he might by all means gain them over . . . . .

From this we learn not only that variety of methods is admissible, but that we ought to be extremely tolerant of the methods used by others. All varieties of worship, within legitimate bounds, are allowable, provided that they tend to edification. In the reunited Church of the future, which none of us may live to see, provision will surely be made for varieties of taste, as well as of age, strength, and mental culture.

Another consideration which will help the Churchman to think more kindly of nonconformity is this. Untold good has been wrought in the Colonies and dependencies of England, and elsewhere through the world, by Nonconformist missionaries. Take the case of the American States. The Church of England was

unable to occupy the ground, owing to legal difficulties at that time connected with the extension of the episcopate. The colonists, to say nothing of the natives, were, year by year, becoming more alien from christianity; and grave dangers threatened the future of a magnificent continent with its rapidly increasing population. With characteristic impetuosity some adherents of Methodism made good their footing there, without one thought of rivalry, but merely possessed with the grand idea of winning and holding new territory as pioneers of the Cross. This was no isolated act. The three great Missionary Societies which Nonconformity has founded, and liberally maintained, have entitled themselves to the glory and credit of many such enterprises. All that they have accomplished has been so much gained for christianity. These great societies, with their large and well administered revenues, may be said to fill the highest place, when, from the Churchman's point of view, the special merits and achievements of nonconformity are considered.

The Church of England owns her two societies, which are to be mentioned with all honour. Not to their discredit, be it said, that their work has been too limited. Considering the wealth of England, it must be admitted that they receive ludicrously small support. Their resources even now are out of all proportion to the number and worldly position of their nominal patrons and lukewarm supporters. Personally, above all the Missionary Societies, I prize the venerable S. P. G., founded under the auspices of the illustrious William III., and of which John Wesley, in his early days, was a missionary. It has never shunned to wear the visible impress of episcopacy, a denoting mark which never can be effaced or modified, still less concealed, and concerning which there never can be left an "open question." This ancient society, active as it has ever been, has proved unable to take possession of the fields, and to reap the harvests, for never has it had means and appliances at command for one hundredth part of the work. Therefore its members, looking at what Nonconformity has done, may say with the Apostle, That in whatever way Christ is preached, there is good reason for rejoicing.

At home, also, there have been nearly parallel cases—large populations of miners, fishermen, artizans, growing up in virtual

heathendom. For such the parochial system long made no provision. The old machinery being inadequate, it was a simple alternative of what by the Churchman is deemed to be irregular ministration, or of none. To those who, disregarding toil and opposition, rushed in to supply the void, and stay the plague, honour is surely due.

While reflecting that Christianity at home and abroad has been largely promoted by those who bear the name of Wesley, the temptation is strong to remind them of the special reasons for appeal to them. Between Wesleyans and the Church which their Founder loved, the chasm never was wide. If other Christians claimed Calvin as the exponent of their views, if they objected on principle to forms of prayer, or to the baptism of infants, if they felt invincible dislike to the union of Church and State, if they were unable to accept episcopacy, at least no such determinations were ever arrived at by the connexion founded by Wesley. To none of these opinions are they corporately pledged; while there is, of course, as within the Church of England, ample liberty of private opinion. Far from objecting to the use of forms, they have a Prayer-book, which differs in a few expressions only from that of the Church. Even in church government the difference seems slight, when it is remembered that in America their framework is that of an episcopalian church, and that in England, although the title of Bishop has never been assumed, chief-pastorship or oversight exists. It is hardly exaggeration to say, that if a Wesleyan and an "Evangelical" Churchman were together to attempt a list of the matters in difference between them (omitting those preferences which may distinguish one from any other member of a church or sect) the sheet of paper would be found a blank. This identity of view on the important points, and on most of the unimportant, cannot but suggest a thought of the strength and predominance which the Wesleyans have it in their power to add to the "Evangelical" party in the English Church.

Granting for the time that usage, which acquires the force of tradition and even of law, may long keep Christians apart in their worship, it is to be observed that Christian fellowship may, to a high degree, be found a community of good works. Here there

is freedom; for no rules, however stringent, need prevent a man from becoming a public spirited citizen—a kindly neighbour. In working for the happiness of his poorer brethren and for the improvement of his locality, he is free to join with those who dissociate themselves from him in religious worship. It seems to follow from St. James' definition of true religion, that there may be a brotherhood of truly religious men, in acts of charity.

There never was a cause more holy than that of opposition to the slave-trade, and later still to slavery. In that long struggle were combined Christian men and women of no one church or denomination. The same may be said of the Bible Society, on whose platform, year after year, have met those who, not separated in heart, have been thrown into different walks of daily Christian life. Of such occasional meetings and their effects it would be difficult to speak too highly. But in our own time have arisen new opportunities for helpful and friendly intercourse.

The health of towns, the science and art of Sanitation, seem to call for the combined exertions of all ranks of intelligent men. Cleanliness, which is but one of the items of the sanitary code, has been declared to be "next to godliness." This was the saying of one who would have rejoiced to see the day when it is possible to make a town healthy, and so prolong the average duration of life.

Next to life and health is the education of the young. As all the religious denominations are interested in this, it is unnecessary to say more than to suggest that a considerable amount of religious training has often been given in undenominational schools. Even in Ireland the "scripture lessons" of the large-hearted Archbishop Whately were used in the national schools, by Protestant and Catholic children alike, for many years. The final withdrawal of this book was simply owing to the growth of Ultramontane influence; one of the effects of which has been to lessen intercourse and mutual help in charitable enterprises, and even in the social life of modern Ireland.

Another pressing question, on which Christian ministers should take counsel together, is the increase of intemperance. They have to show, in opposition to the oft-repeated cant of the day, that legislation may do much to increase or to remove temptation. Only by

combined action will Parliament, in which the opposing interests are strong, be induced to improve the licensing laws.

Then the laws attempting feebly to repress cruelty to animals are insufficient; and the dumb dependents of man suffer much from neglect, and from brutality, and from questionable claims of science. Here is a question of humanity, on which Christians of all the churches and sects may well deliberate and unite their strength.

Again, the administration of relief to the poor—whether under the sanction of law, or according to the more erratic impulses of charity. Here is a large question, on which a diversity of opinion and of practice tends to mischievous results. The circumstances of localities differ, to an extent which excludes the idea of uniformity throughout the land. It should, therefore, be the object of the religious and charitable of each district, after full deliberation, to put into force such methods as would ensure instant relief to the deserving poor, while drawing a sharp line between them and other applicants for relief. Were this done, we should no longer hear of death from starvation on the one hand, or of professional mendicancy and successful imposture on the other. Arising out of charity there is at present much failure and waste, which may be ascribed to the want of concert and system amongst the charitable.

Another question which seems to require the attention, not of one section, but of all the sections of good people, is what has well been called "systematic beneficence." Christians have from time to time borrowed much from Judaism, sometimes too much. But there is one Hebrew rule which they have carefully omitted to transcribe or to obey—that of contributing in strict proportion to their resources, for charitable and religious purposes. "Honour to whom honour is due." The Society of Friends and the followers of Edward Irving have probably been most alive to this duty; while elsewhere it has been left too much to individual feeling. If general principles, and rules of action could be agreed on and enforced, we should hear no more of empty wards in hospitals, of charities languishing for want of funds, of the deaf ear turned to pressing cries from foreign shores for missionaries, of burdens of debt (which ought to involve disgrace) on unfinished Houses of Prayer.

The list might be prolonged of questions which might properly engage the joint attention of Christians, and in all of which the homely fable of the "Bundle of Sticks" seems to have direct application. These have been given as illustrations, not as implying that any particular conclusion would be of necessity arrived at. For the present argument it is not necessary to assume that public mischiefs call for specific remedies. You are not asked to believe that poverty has been ended and mendicity made a thing of the past at Elberfeldt; or that the evils of the liquor traffic have all been met and vanquished at Gothenburg. But you are earnestly invited to consider whether the time has not come when public evils ought to be carefully examined by the combined intelligence of the Ministers of religion, chief employers of labour and others in responsible stations, in each locality.

Apart from the direct value of such deliberations, there is the certainty that, when bent on common enterprises, the hearts of men are more closely drawn together, that many unsuspected virtues are brought to light, and that some unworthy prejudices are for ever dispelled. Even though there be frequent difficulty, and occasional failure, the results must be wholly good of bringing Christians nearer, in a community of thought and of toil for the benefit of their fellow men.

In conclusion, there are some other considerations, and of deeper import, which are closely connected with this topic; but which will fall more appropriately to the share of Ministers of religion to enforce. Without meditation and prayer, all attempts to bring nearer together those who value the Creeds must assuredly fail. I only venture to touch very briefly on two passages of Holy Writ, which have to us at this moment more than ordinary significance.

The Churchman will never forget the texts which speak of Unity: there are perchance others which he may well ponder oftener over. He will remember that in the earliest days of Christianity there was mention of one not visibly enrolled amongst the disciples or following with them. The name of the first Nonconformist has not reached us; and all we can know of him is that although not outwardly joined to the little company, his soul was joined to their cause. In the Master's name he sought to share

in the good work. It is likely that St. John was on this occasion but the spokesman of his fellows, who, at that time, were but imperfectly trained, and narrow in sympathy. The complaint was uttered, not by St. Peter warm of temper, or by St. Thomas slow of belief: but by St. John the most cultured member of the Apostolic College, taught not only on the philosophy of the wisest of the Greeks, but in the higher wisdom of Him on whose shoulder as a dearest earthly friend, he was privileged to rest his head. The reply of the Master, that it may never be forgotten, was recorded by two of the Evangelists. St. Mark (departing from his usual brevity) gives us the rest of the conversation, which ends with a warning to such as consider themselves the "salt of the earth." They are warned that the salt may lose its specific goodness, and that even the "elect and precious" must ever cultivate peace. This seems intended as a perpetual lesson to those who deem themselves the most highly privileged.

Later in his long career, St. John, who first observed on Nonconformity, was to enforce and exemplify the lessons of Christian love. It was his to write for us that prayer and prediction of unity, the answer and fulfilment being still delayed. This was spoken by the Master, not of his immediate followers only, but of all who should believe in His word. The words imply that the acceptance of the good news by the world was to be contingent on unity amongst Christians. At some point of time they were to be one "that the world might believe." After the lapse of more than eighteen hundred years Christians are still disunited; and the world, deeming that a fact adverse to the character which they assume, and the claims which they advance, refuses to believe. We are told, year after year, that cultivated Hindhus, as well as more ignorant heathens, speak of the state of Christendom as fatal to the success of Christian missions. Nor are nearer home the credentials believed in, of a cloud of messengers who are apt to magnify, rather than to deplore, their want of harmony and concerted action.

At a time when the air is full of "wars and rumours of wars," and even the journals have assumed a sanguineous hue, we may venture to close this paper with an illustration taken from fields of battle.

Suppose that several forces, arrayed under different flags, are striving to hold one fair territory in the face of bitter and numerous assailants. Suppose that the defenders, instead of consulting and planning together, hold aloof each from each, whether from pride or from hereditary or personal dislike. What would all observers say of them?

The application of this is not far to seek. Never were more intellectual or more dangerous foes arrayed against Christianity in its true and only character of a Supernatural Religion resting on a Divine Revelation. Secularism, to use the least offensive term, is increasing daily, not only amongst the flippant and half-educated, but in the lecture-rooms of ancient seats of learning, and in other centres of intellectual life. In the days of the Psalmist it was only muttered, and then by foolish lips, "There is no God." Now this is said openly by learned professors. Mr. W. R. Greg quotes approvingly from Strauss and Renan, as he calmly argues that the "Creed of Christendom" is a delusion. A concrete and dogmatic system is sought to be undermined, cut away from its supports, put into an alembic of critical chemistry, refined away with contemptuous approval, volatilized until nothing is left but a phrase like "sweet reasonableness"—the odour of a fading flower.

May we not affirm that the time has come for consolidating the defences, and for uniting the defenders? The re-arrangement of forces, and the plan of a new campaign must be committed to those who are equal to a task so arduous. But the first duty, and one in which the least of us may bear his part, is to realize the exact position in which we stand, and to strive after a new condition of brotherly esteem and confidence. Not until Ephraim shall cease to envy Judah, and not until Judah shall cease to vex Ephraim, can the tribes of the true Israel face the enemy with united front, and raise that banner which shall point the way towards victory.

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