

THE UNION OF PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS.

In the February number of the *Century* magazine, just published, there is a suggestive article in the editorial department discussing the possibilities and probabilities "of a reunion in the future between the Roman Catholic and Protestant bodies."

The discussion of that subject in such a place is peculiarly significant, because the *Century*, though a secular periodical, has always been conducted with special reference to meeting the tastes and steering clear of the prejudices of the average Protestant public. Its original editor, Dr. Holland, was a strict Calvinist, and its chief owner and manager, Mr. Roswell Smith, is a prominent and pronounced Presbyterian.

The *Century* takes for its text the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth, which, it says, brought to view the fact that "the religious reformation of the last four centuries has not been confined to the churches of the Reformers. A constant reformation in discipline, if not in doctrine," it thinks, "has been going on in the Church assailed by Luther."

So premising, this Protestant exponent shows that bonds of sympathy are now joining Catholics and Protestants to a degree which twenty-five years ago could not have been anticipated. It sees especially the growth of a feeling that these two great bodies of Christians need to be united to resist the onset of modern infidelity.

"As the conflict with Materialism and Agnosticism has been waxing hotter and hotter," to use the words of the *Century*, "it must have become evident to intelligent Protestants that they have in the Roman Catholic theologians a strong body of allies, with whom they ought to maintain friendly relations. It is not the Papacy, nor Calvinism, nor Trinitarianism, nor any other secondary Christian dogma, that is now on its trial," it says further, "but whether there is any such thing as religion--whether there is a conscious God and a life beyond the grave, and a free will, and a moral law."

The *Century* also renders just tribute to the exalted ethical standards of the Roman Church, and also to its courage and consistency in maintaining them against all efforts at compromise. It acknowledges, for instance, that "the Roman Catholic doctrine and practice regarding divorce are much closer to the law of the New Testament than those of the Protestant Churches have been." It speaks also of the "earnest effort at the present time to bring the practice of the Protestant Churches a little nearer to the Roman Catholic standard."

All this is in line with what we have repeatedly said. It becomes more and more evident every day that the civilized world is dividing into two classes, the believers and the unbelievers, the Christians and the Agnostics. The separation between them is not like that between Catholics and Protestants, which is caused by difference of dogma and ecclesiastical practice, while both agree on fundamental points of theology. It is total; for modern unbelief does not attack portions of the faith only, but rejects the whole, abandoning faith altogether. In its view, Christianity has no more supernatural basis than the mythologies which it has succeeded.

The ultimate union of all the forces of faith and theology to meet such an enemy, steadily increasing in numbers and audacity, seems therefore to be inevitable. Protestantism needs an alliance with Roman Catholicism to enable it to stand up against the current of modern skeptical thought. It requires the aid of the more steadfast and uncompromising body the more because many of its leading exponents and some of its chiefs who have hitherto been most trusted, are opening the gates of the fortress of faith to the hosts of

infidelity. Even if they are not doing that, they are parleying with them, when there can only be war to the knife between the two.

There is no possible compromise between theology and modern infidelity. The Church must understand that, at the beginning. One or the other must triumph, and its victory will mean the utter destruction of the conquered. While the great contest is going on, intestine divisions must weaken the arm of faith, and we are not surprised that intelligent Protestants desire to heal them.--*N.Y. Sun*.

The above we clip from *The Catholic*, of this city. It goes to substantiate the teachings of the TOWER that the difference between the various daughters and the "mother" is more in *forms, ceremonies* and *interests* rather than in real differences of *faith*. The daughters have adhered so closely to the general plans, precepts and methods of the "mother" in their housekeeping that you can readily recognize her "marks" throughout. ([Rev. 13:16](#).)

As for reform, while there has been some moral reform and advancement in the nominal Church, as well as in the world, yet so far as *doctrinal* reform goes, there has been practically none. The creeds of the daughters, as well as of the mother, are cast-iron--they cannot bend: they must break, or else those held by them continue in bondage to the views of the sixteenth century. Under such circumstances a *doctrinal* reformation is impossible, both to Protestants and Roman Catholics. That which is absolutely true and perfect cannot be reformed; and is not every creed of every sect held up as being *the truth* in full? If not, why make it a test of fellowship at all? Why subscribe to and bind yourself to believe and sustain that which does not claim to be *the truth*?

It is for this reason that we (and God's Word also) are opposed to formulated creeds. They fetter and bind the children of God, preventing growth "in grace and knowledge," and thereby hinder the *reformation* of doctrine, which should continue until we all come to a full appreciation of the revelation of God to man. Thus alone can we walk in the path of "the just," which "shineth more and more unto the PERFECT DAY."

On the contrary, as heretofore shown, the doctrines taught by Luther on many subjects were far in advance of those held by the body of Christians calling themselves by his name. Unknown to the majority of Lutherans, several points of Luther's original PROTEST nailed to the church door of Wittenburg are intentionally omitted by the "authorities" in that sect from the articles now handed them as the original teachings of the HEAD of their Church.

Doctrinally and practically, Protestantism has been drawing closer and closer every year to the parent system. They have made "*an image*" ([Rev. 13:14](#)) which so closely resembles the original that few points of difference are discernable, either by themselves or by the world. But what a wide difference exists between both these *systems* and the doctrines and practices of the Apostles' day!

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