

THE  
CHURCHMAN

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ART. I.—HOME REUNION.

1. *Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion, holden at Lambeth Palace in July, 1888.* London: S.P.C.K. 1888.
2. *Ecclesiastical Union between England and Scotland.* A letter to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. By CHARLES WORDSWORTH, D.D., Bishop of St. Andrew's. Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace. London: Macmillan and Co. 1888.
3. *Report of the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, October 31, 1888.* Winnipeg. 1888.

OF all the subjects which occupied the attention of the assembled bishops at Lambeth last year, there is not one which is surrounded with greater difficulties, but which, at the same time, if brought to a successful issue, would be fraught with greater blessings, and would more tend to advance the cause of Christ in the world, than the question of the reunion of the various bodies into which the Christianity of the English-speaking races is divided; or, as it is called for the sake of brevity, Home Reunion. The divisions among English Christians which sprang up shortly after the final settlement of the Reformation on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, which were accentuated in the reigns of her immediate successors, and which have largely developed during the last three generations, have wrought an amount of harm which it is impossible to estimate. For a long time the evil was confined to sharp dissensions, attended often with intolerance and persecution, among those who ought to have been brethren. But during the last hundred years the mischief has gone deeper, and has threatened to endanger the maintenance of Christianity itself. Vast as is the injury which has resulted in our own country it is as nothing compared with that which has been inflicted on our colonies. In Great Britain itself we are seriously threatened with the secularization of education and the national repudia-

tion of our holy religion. But in not a few English-speaking communities beyond the four seas these are already accomplished facts. Here we have a provision of the means of grace not, indeed, adequate to the population, but still not grossly disproportionate to it. Even here, however, the efforts of Christians of different communions not unfrequently overlap each other or clash with one another, instead of being marshalled to contend together against vice, indifference, and unbelief. On the other hand, in the United States of America and in the vast areas of Canada, Australia, and the Cape Colonies, the aggregate of the available spiritual resources falls miserably short of the wants of the people, and is recklessly frittered away by the rivalry of conflicting sects instead of being consolidated and economized with a view to being laid out to the best advantage.

The bishops at Lambeth raised the subject of Reunion to a prominence and importance which it could have attained in no other way; but they cannot claim the merit of having initiated the idea. As long ago as 1861 a resolution was carried in the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury praying the bishops to commend the matter to the prayers of the faithful. And in 1870 the House appointed a committee upon it which reported in favour of communicating on the subject with the chief Nonconformist bodies. In 1887 another resolution was passed requesting the Archbishop to appoint a joint committee of both Houses to consider and report on the relations between the Church and those who are in our own country alienated from her communion, and to suggest means which might tend towards the union of all among our countrymen who hold the essentials of the Christian faith. In the Northern Convocation, also, similar proceedings have taken place. It should, moreover, be mentioned that shortly after the Wolverhampton Church Congress of 1867, and in consequence of a suggestion made in the course of it by Bishop Lonsdale, a society was formed to promote the union of Christians on the basis of the Church of England. This was afterwards merged in the Home Reunion Society, which was constituted in London about the year 1875, and has for its object "to present the Church of England in a conciliatory attitude towards those who regard themselves as outside her pale, so as to lead towards the corporate reunion of all Christians holding the doctrines of the ever-blessed Trinity and the Incarnation and Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Nor has the idea been confined to the south of the Tweed, For upwards of forty years the venerable Bishop of St. Andrew's, Dr. Charles Wordsworth, has been labouring to bring about a reunion between Episcopalians and Presbyterians in

Scotland. Again and again has he referred to the subject in his charges; and in the spring of last year, in view of the impending Lambeth Conference, he addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury the letter of which the title is inserted in the heading of the present article. The bishop reminds us that the establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland at the Revolution was occasioned by the refusal of the Scotch bishops to recognise the political situation and pay allegiance to William and Mary. To repair the disunion in British Christianity which resulted from that step would be worth any amount of labour and of legitimate sacrifice. We ought not to shrink from the consequence which it would involve of admitting the existing ministers of the Church of Scotland to be ministers of the United Church on the strength of their Presbyterian orders alone, and without episcopal reordination.

While, however, Home Reunion has thus already secured a considerable amount of support in Great Britain, its more strenuous advocates, as might be expected, are to be met with in other countries to which our race has spread, and in which the disease to be remedied is more prominent and productive of more disastrous consequences. Previously to the Lambeth Conference the General Synod of the Church in Australia and Tasmania, the Provincial Synod of Rupert's Land, and the General Synod of New Zealand passed resolutions deploring the evils which result from the unhappy divisions among professing Christians, and requesting the bishops, when they should assemble at Lambeth, to consider how steps could be taken to promote greater visible unity among those who hold the same creed. The Canadian Church and the Church in the United States have gone still further. In 1886 the Provincial Synod of the former appointed a committee to meet any committees which might be appointed by other religious bodies, and to confer on possible terms of union. In the same year the General Convention of the American Church adopted a formal declaration on the subject, which was submitted to them by a committee of bishops. This declaration set forth that the Church sought not to absorb other communions, but to cooperate with them on the basis of a common faith and order, to discountenance schism, and to heal the wounds of the Body of Christ, and that she was prepared to make every reasonable concession on all things of human ordering and of human choice. It affirmed, however, the duty of the Church to preserve, as inherent parts of the sacred deposit of Christian faith and order committed by Christ and His Apostles to the Church, and as therefore essential to the restoration of unity: (1) The Holy Scriptures as the revealed Word of God; (2) the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith;

(3) the two Sacraments, ministered with un failing use of Christ's words of institution and the elements ordained by Him; (4) the Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church. The declaration concluded as follows :

Furthermore, deeply grieved by the sad divisions which afflict the Christian Church in our own land, we hereby declare our desire and readiness, as soon as there shall be any authorized response to this declaration, to enter into brotherly conference with all or any Christian bodies seeking the restoration of the organic unity of the Church, with a view to the earnest study of the conditions under which so priceless a blessing might happily be brought to pass.

The convention proceeded to appoint from among their number a commission of five bishops and five clerical and five lay deputies, with authority to communicate the declaration, at discretion, to the organized Christian bodies of the country, and to be ready to confer with any of such bodies which might seek the restoration of the organic unity of the Church.

Such was the position of the question when the Lambeth Conference assembled in July, 1888. At one of their earliest sittings the bishops appointed a committee to consider "what steps (if any) can be rightly taken on behalf of the Anglican Communion towards the reunion of the various bodies into which the Christianity of the English-speaking races is divided." This committee presented an impressive report on the subject. They had found a strong *consensus* of authoritative opinion from various branches of the Anglican Communion that the time for some action in the matter, under prayer for God's guidance through many acknowledged difficulties and dangers, had already come; and that the Conference should not separate without some utterance which might further and direct such action. They at the same time called attention to the necessity, in dealing with the question, of putting aside all consideration of the Roman Church, since it was clear that no proposals for reunion would be entertained by the dignitaries of that Church without our complete submission to their claims of absolute authority, and to other errors against which we had for three centuries felt bound to protest. In accordance with the recommendations of the committee, the Conference passed the following resolutions:

(i.) That in the opinion of this Conference the following articles supply a basis on which approach may be by God's blessing made towards Home Reunion :

(a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

(b) The Apostles' Creed as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

(c) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unflinching use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.

(d) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

(ii.) That this Conference earnestly requests the constituted authorities of the various branches of our communion acting, so far as may be, in concert with one another, to make it known that they hold themselves in readiness to enter into brotherly conference (such as that which has already been proposed by the Church in the United States of America) with the representatives of other Christian communions in the English-speaking races, in order to consider what steps can be taken, either towards corporate reunion, or towards such relations as may prepare the way for fuller organic unity hereafter.

(iii.) That this Conference recommends as of great importance, in tending to bring about reunion, the dissemination of information respecting the standards of doctrine and the formularies in use in the Anglican Church; and recommends that information be disseminated, on the other hand, respecting the authoritative standards of doctrine, worship, and government, adopted by the other bodies of Christians into which the English-speaking races are divided.

The Encyclical Letter also contained important paragraphs on the subject to a similar effect.

Among the most earnest members of the Home Reunion Committee was the Metropolitan of Rupert's Land, and the subject occupied a prominent place in the address which, after his return from England, he delivered to the synod of his diocese at its meeting in the following October. In that address he gave some very interesting and important details respecting the proceedings of the committee, which are not disclosed in the authorized "Report of the Acts of the Conference." It appears that besides the three resolutions which, as already stated, were adopted by the whole body of bishops, the committee, by a very large majority, determined to recommend a fourth resolution, to the effect that God had been pleased to bless the ministrations of ministers of non-episcopal bodies in the salvation of souls and the advancement of His kingdom, and that therefore a ministerial character should be recognised in them, and provision should be made in such a way as might be agreed on for the acceptance of such ministers as fellow-workers with us in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bishop Machray states that the rejection of this resolution arose in part from a feeling that its terms were ambiguous, and he admits that this feeling was shared by not a few of its supporters themselves. No attempt was made to define what should be considered as constituting a valid claim to the recognition of a ministerial character, nor how the persons who were to be recognised as ministers should be admitted to work as such in the Church. As regards the principle of the resolution, the Bishop of Rupert's Land makes out a clear and unanswerable case for its adoption.

A wide and general application of it would, no doubt, be beset with difficulties; but with respect to the great body of Presbyterians, at any rate, he shares the views of the Bishop of St. Andrew's, and would advocate a temporary suspension of the law of episcopal ordination for the sake of effecting an union with them. And in so doing he relies on the authority of Hooker, who affirms that "There may be sometimes very just and sufficient reason to allow ordination without a bishop;" of Bishop Andrewes, who said, "A man must be blind who does not see Churches standing without episcopacy;" and of Bishop Cosin, who observed, "I love not to be herein more wise or harder than our own Church is, which has never publicly condemned and pronounced the ordination of the other Reformed Churches to be void." Besides adducing these utterances on the subject, Bishop Machray points to the practice of our Church up to the Restoration. Before that date ministers not episcopally ordained were frequently recognised as fit to hold office in the ranks of her clergy. In the year 1610 Spottiswood was consecrated Archbishop of St. Andrew's, and two other persons were consecrated bishops of Scottish sees, without any of them having previously had more than Presbyterian ordination. On their return to Scotland these prelates consecrated the other bishops, and the beneficed Presbyterian ministers who conformed were accepted as priests of the episcopalized Church without further ordination. Again, on the attempted revival of episcopacy in Scotland after the Restoration, conforming beneficed ministers who had Presbyterian orders were accepted as priests without episcopal reordination.

In making this historical sketch, and urging these precedents as authorities for dispensing at a critical juncture with episcopal ordination, the Bishop is careful to guard himself against being misunderstood.

I do not (he says) question the irregularity, but a choice has to be made; and the healing of a great schism, the meeting of our Lord's last wish and prayer, "that all may be one," the inexpressible advantages to the Church, as we in this province can readily understand, seem far to outweigh a loss that can be but temporary.

He endorses and adopts the words of the Bishop of St. Andrew's, who maintains—

It is not a question of the obligation of the law of the threefold ministry or of episcopal ordination. That law has been handed down from the beginning, and will continue to exist to the end of time. But the question is of the power and wisdom of the Church to dispense with the law *pro tempore* in a particular case and for a special end, an end unspeakably great and important.

It is quite clear that unless the Church is willing to exercise her dispensing power by admitting as ministers, upon reunion, those who before that event have received non-episcopal orders,

no corporate reunion with Presbyterians or with any other body of Nonconformists is possible. What orders, if any besides those of Presbyterians, could be regarded as valid would be a difficult question of detail, but one not incapable of a satisfactory solution. It would, of course, be an inexorable condition of reunion that all future ordinations must be episcopal. That is involved in the principle of the historic episcopate which was insisted on by the Lambeth Conference. Happily, however, this condition need not be a hopeless stumbling-block to Presbyterians. For according to our Ordination Service the order of priest is conferred by the laying on of the hands of the bishop jointly with those of the priests who are present; and the conscientious Presbyterian may, therefore, if he pleases, ascribe the virtue of the ceremony to the part taken in it by the latter.

But, besides the temporary and exceptional recognition of non-episcopal orders, it would doubtless be necessary to make some permanent modifications in our Church law before amalgamation could take place on a large scale. This necessity has been generally and frankly admitted by all Churchmen who have seriously considered the subject. The Committee on Reunion which was appointed by the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation in 1870, while not recommending that we should at the outset propose alterations of our existing formularies of faith and worship, contemplated that concessions might subsequently be made as the consequence of negotiations carried on in a spirit of love and unity. The Church in America and the bishops at Lambeth have laid down the Scriptures, the Nicene Creed, and the two Sacraments duly administered as the essential bases of any scheme of reunion; but they do not regard any further concurrence in doctrine or uniformity in ritual as necessary conditions to it. As a matter of fact, we could not hope to effect any considerable reunion without a repeal of the Acts of Uniformity or a considerable modification of their provisions. The prospect of this, however, if rightly considered, may be viewed with acquiescence, if not positively welcomed. For three centuries we have been so accustomed to the idea of uniformity in worship, that we are liable to overrate its theoretical importance. Yet of late, in our mission-rooms and open-air gatherings—aye, and in our very churches themselves—we have quietly set aside the principle, and ignored the strict letter of the law. Apart from the excesses indulged in by Ritualists, the deviations from the old orthodox standard of services which are to be met with in our non-Ritualistic churches are such as would have caused steady-going Churchmen of the last century, or even of fifty years ago, to stand aghast. The change of practice has been resorted to on the ground of the exigencies of the times; and, having gone so far, the path of further development

is made easier for us. It is exactly two centuries ago that a Bill "for the uniting their Majesties' Protestant subjects" was carried by Lord Nottingham in the House of Lords, though it never succeeded in passing the Commons.<sup>1</sup> This Comprehension Bill, as it is called, proposed, among other things, to legalize the black gown as an alternative for the surplice in Divine Service; to render optional the use of the sign of the cross in Baptism; to permit the reception of the Lord's Supper in a pew, without kneeling; and to dispense with god-parents if the parents themselves would answer for the child in baptism. The last of these points has in our day been practically conceded. Possibly the others might not all be now insisted on by Nonconformists as conditions of their return to the Church. But it is evident that no one of them is necessarily excluded by the terms of reunion propounded at Lambeth; and, distasteful as they may be to us personally, we are bound to pause long before we reject them as inadmissible.

There are, however, two other concomitants of Home Reunion which we must be prepared to face. In the first place, it would be no less unreasonable than hopeless to expect that permissive modifications should be made in the ritual of the Church in a direction acceptable to the Protestant Nonconformist bodies, without a corresponding legalization of practices of an opposite tendency which the Final Court of Appeal has decided to be at present inadmissible. To some persons who consider that individual members of a Church are responsible for what that Church permits others of her members to do or to hold, though she does not enforce it upon themselves, this contingency will appear shocking. It is well, however, to remember that this view of duty was not that of our English Reformers. While steadfastly declining to be themselves parties to doctrines and practices which in their conscience they believed to be erroneous, they did not leave the Church on account of the toleration or prevalence of those doctrines and practices within her. Their expulsion from her fold by excommunication, or their (humanly speaking) premature exaltation into the ranks of the Church triumphant, was on their part involuntary. Happy would it have been for the religious history of our country if their example had been followed in succeeding generations. While, however, we cannot recall the past, it is essential to realize that reunion will be impossible unless the principle is admitted that, so long as the Church does not enforce on her members individually adherence in word or in deed to doctrines or practices

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<sup>1</sup> The Bill is printed at length and discussed in an article by the Rev. T. W. Jex-Blake (now D.D.) in *Macmillan's Magazine*, March, 1873, entitled "Church Reform by Comprehension, A.D. 1689 and 1873."



with which they cannot conscientiously comply, they have no right to leave her communion because she may tolerate those doctrines and practices in others of her members.

In the second place, however, it is equally clear that a comprehensive measure of Home Reunion would necessitate a considerable inroad upon our parochial system. This, again, may appear shocking to those who have been accustomed, and with justice, to regard the parochial system as one of the distinctive excellences of our Church. So it has undoubtedly been; yet, like uniformity of ritual, it may have had its day. One thing, at any rate, is clear—that, unless we are prepared to relax something of its rigidity, it is hopeless to expect a general reunion. If all Nonconformist ministers and places of worship are to become amenable to Church law, it will be manifestly intolerable that the incumbent of a parish shall have the exclusive right of regulating all public worship and religious teaching within its limits, and prescribing by whom they may be conducted. It would probably be necessary to create a Standing Diocesan Council in each diocese, which should regulate upon broad and enlightened lines the supply of divine service and of pastoral ministrations throughout the diocese according to the requirements of each parish. Such councils already exist in the American Church, and their establishment amongst ourselves has been advocated for other purposes than that which is here suggested. Wherever a sufficient number of persons were unable to obtain accommodation in their parish church, or were dissatisfied with the ritual or teaching which they found in it, and were prepared to maintain separate spiritual ministrations for themselves, the council would sanction an independent place of worship. Thus the great majority of the existing Dissenting chapels would continue open as before, only in communion with, instead of outside the pale of, the Church of England. At the same time, this incident of reunion will obviously supply an antidote to any practical grievance which might arise from the toleration of excessive ritual which, as already observed, would inevitably accompany it. For Churchmen who disapproved of the mode of conducting service in their parish church would be enabled to set up a separate place of worship for themselves without severing themselves from the National Church or violating her laws.

It remains to consider how far the present attitude of Nonconformists renders the prospects of Home Reunion hopeful or the reverse, since it is obvious that the advances of the Church in that direction are useless unless the desire is reciprocated on their part. It must be confessed with sorrow that as yet there has been no public utterance on the part of any non-episcopal communion indicating a general aspiration for reunion. The

fact, however, can scarcely occasion surprise, for the same spirit which led to the original act of severance conduces to acquiescence in a continued state of separation. Last April the Archbishop of Canterbury, on behalf of the English bishops, sent to Dr. Oswald Dykes, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in England, a copy of the encyclical letter and resolutions of the Lambeth Conference, with a letter assuring him that the aspirations for reunion expressed in them were heartfelt on the part of the whole assembly. Dr. Dykes, in acknowledging the communication, promised to bring the matter to the notice of the Church which he represented, and added that whatever opinions might be expressed respecting the sufficiency of the basis on which the Lambeth Conference declared itself prepared to confer with other Churches on the subject of reunion, he could assure the Archbishop that his Presbyterian brethren would appreciate and reciprocate those fraternal sentiments which had inspired the assembled bishops. The subject was accordingly brought before the English Presbyterian Synod at their meeting on May 3rd, when they contented themselves with approving Dr. Dykes' letter, and deferred the question of taking any further action in the matter. Among individuals a more appreciative disposition is here and there apparent. During the many years which the Bishop of St. Andrew's has devoted to the promotion of ecclesiastical union in Scotland numerous letters in reference to it have passed between him and the leading Presbyterians north of the Tweed. The stringent promise to uphold Presbyterianism which ministers of the Church of Scotland have been required to make on their ordination has operated as a powerful obstacle to their openly espousing the cause. But here and there notable exceptions have occurred. As long ago as 1872 Professor Milligan, the foremost member of a delegation from the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of American Presbyterians sitting at Detroit, after referring to schemes for the reunion of the different bodies of Presbyterians, informed the assembly that there were many in the Church of Scotland who looked forward to a still more comprehensive union, which should include the Scottish Episcopalian Church. Other utterances of prominent Presbyterians in a similar strain are recorded in Bishop Wordsworth's letter to the Primate, which has been already referred to. Moreover, it is a significant circumstance that overtures have of late been made for a union between the Congregationalists and the Baptists. These proposals have not as yet assumed any definite shape; but the fact of their having been made indicates that a desire for combination is abroad which, if rightly directed, may promote that reconciliation of our non-episcopalian brethren with the

Anglican Communion which in the interests of Christianity among all English-speaking races—aye, and throughout the world—is most to be longed after and prayed for. The effect of such a reconciliation upon our conflict with infidelity at home, upon our assaults on Mohammedanism and heathenism abroad, upon the irreconcilable Church of Rome, and upon the degenerate, but improvable, churches of the East, would be simply incalculable. On the other hand, great as are the risks to which we have been hitherto exposed through our unhappy divisions, their continuance in the future appears likely to plunge us into more serious dangers, and to imperil the very maintenance of Christianity as our national religion. May He Who alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men inspire the hearts of Churchmen and Nonconformists alike with a desire for union, and enable the desire to take effect in a wise and prosperous conclusion!

PHILIP VERNON SMITH.



## ART. II.—THE THEOLOGY OF BISHOP ANDREWES.

(Concluded from the July CHURCHMAN, p. 537.)

### II.

AND now, having shown how inconclusive is the language so often quoted from Bishop Andrewes in support of the doctrines of our opponents, we proceed to show how thoroughly conclusive is language which may be quoted from him in support of the true Reformed doctrine of the Church of England.

It will probably be allowed that there is hardly a more conclusive evidence of adherence to the Reformed theology on the subject of the Eucharistic Presence than the figurative interpretation of the words of the institution.

By Lutherans and Romanists alike, by all who maintained the Corporal—or, as it is now called, the Real Objective—Presence, it was consistently maintained that no figurative sense was admissible in understanding the words of our Blessed Lord, "This is My Body." That solemn words, uttered on such an occasion, must be interpreted "ut verba sonant," and must not be allowed any metaphorical meaning—this was the very strong fortress of their position. To admit that such words could admit of a figurative interpretation—this was, in their view, to abandon the true faith of the Eucharist, to renounce a very true part of the faith of the Christian Church.

It would be an error, indeed, to speak of the interpretation