Art. VI.—CHURCH REFORM.

IT is not easy in the present day to secure reform in the Church. There was a time, twenty years ago, when Wednesdays in the House of Commons were devoted to ecclesiastical business. Those were the days before the lowering of the franchise, which has had varying effects on the representation of England, Scotland and Ireland, when there was a stronger sense of proportion, justice, duty and moral responsibility than probably now exists. Secularists, Irish Home-rulers, and other groups have modified the tone of the House, and made it more difficult for the business of the Church to obtain a fair hearing. The first thing that is needed is to persuade the opponents of the Church in the House of Commons that it is indeed, in one aspect, the great Christian function of the State, with concerns which directly affect more than half the population of England, and the other half indirectly; that even if its religious character be for a moment put out of view, it exists for the politician as a tremendous agency for social and moral development; and that in any case its affairs deserve at any rate a small and modest amount of conscientious and respectful attention. It is in a high degree unjust to rail at an institution because it has anomalies and abuses to be reformed, and at the same time, when honest attempts are made at reform, to do everything that is possible to defeat and prevent the improvement. The members of the Church do not obstruct Nonconformist legislation, and they have a right to expect a corresponding forbearance in return. I leave it to members of Parliament to decide whether there should not be a Grand Committee of the House to consider and present such ecclesiastical legislation as is brought forward.

The next preliminary remark I wish to make is that, if we are to have any real and healthy self-adjustment of the Church from time to time, there must be a greater unity of opinion amongst Churchmen themselves. A strong and united episcopate is of the very essence of the stability of the Church. It is widely felt, without any party reference whatever, that at a time like the present to appoint to the episcopate men of extreme opinions of any kind is an injury to the cohesion of the Church for which there is no compensating advantage in zeal and piety. The gift which Bishops need at the present hour is pre-eminently what St. Paul calls "governments": the power of wise ruling. It is such men who will win the confidence of the laity, and bring to their minds the desirable conviction that the visible organization of the National Church as an institution partakes of that character of stability which

belongs to the spiritual rock on which it is founded. In these days of opinions strongly divided and strongly developed, it is not at all clear that the Crown is right in confiding to the Prime Minister alone the nomination of Bishops. Prime Ministers may be themselves men of extreme opinions, or they may have no opinions at all, or they may leave the selection to the predilections of their families who have no necessary sense of public responsibility, and may quite conceivably not understand the qualities which distinguish a ruler from a pastor or a teacher. The custom which confines advice to the Crown on this point to the Prime Minister is only a traditional etiquette, and appears to me unsuitable. It would, I believe, be a very wholesome change if four other members of the Cabinet were associated with the Prime Minister in this most critical matter: the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, and either the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or the Chancellor of the Duchy. Such a committee there was in the time of William III. But this is not a matter that is generally before the Church. All that is urged is the supreme importance of a united Church and a united episcopate if reforms are to be pressed and carried.

I.

Patronage Bills.

The first actual reform that must be mentioned is in the system of patronage. Amongst all the rocks and shoals of Parliamentary Sessions it is earnestly to be hoped that a resolute and united attempt will be made to secure the passage of some measure of redress, admitted on all hands to be urgently necessary, through the House of Commons. Many are the efforts that have been made to reform abuses in the system of appointing to benefices in the Church of England. The present Archbishop of Canterbury introduced a Bill for this purpose in 1886, which came to an end with the short-lived Parliament of that year.

In 1887 another Bill was introduced, and passed through all the stages in the House of Lords; but the Commons were too busy with Irish difficulties. The Archbishop's Bill of 1893 dropped the principle of Boards of Patronage, which was a feature of former proposals, and limited itself to the direct removal of abuses. It is enough to say here that to forbid the sale of advowsons (the perpetual right to present) was thought impossible, it would be an invasion of a privilege which has existed for more than a thousand years, for which the compensation that would in equity be required would be

absolutely prohibitive, and which, in spite of its obvious anomalies, has, under the light of public opinion, on the whole worked well, and also because the right might in that case be inextricable from paupers or unfit persons. The great scandal of the sale of next presentations was to be absolutely forbidden; and an advowson was only to be sold when there had been two vacancies in the parish since the last transfer. Every particular of such transfers was to be publicly entered in the diocesan registers, and no legal rights were to be acquired until such faithful entry. The countersignature of the Bishop would in future be necessary to the letters testimonial of a minister coming from one diocese to another. Perhaps the most welcome provision of all was that which gives the parishioners the right to object to obviously unfit appointments, on the ground of physical infirmity, embarrassment from debt, and previous misconduct. Donatives, which survive, it is said, to the number of more than one hundred, and which are small parishes in private patronage, to which appointments can be made by mere register, without institution from the Bishop, were to be placed under the same conditions as all other parishes. They have been a frequent source of evasions and abuses. Provision was to be made for enabling the Bishop, on proper legal certificate, to declare benefices vacant where the minister is suffering under such aggravated monetary difficulties as render his work useless. There would also be arrangements for the compulsory retirement of incapacitated incumbents. The Bill further proposed that no presbyter should be appointed to a parish until he has been a year in full orders; perhaps the suggestion of the Convocation of York was better—to change one to two. The Bill did not pass; but it is greatly to be hoped that a measure affecting so considerably the welfare of more than fifteen millions of Englishmen will some day receive a kindly welcome in the House of Commons, especially at the hands of the Nonconformists, for whose advantages so many measures have of late years been passed. Any proposal on so difficult a subject will probably need amendment. Some of the provisions of the existing measure have been gravely criticised. But it is unlikely to pass this year.

II.

The next practical reform which claims our sympathy is that of the representation of the clergy in the Lower House of Convocation.

As I discussed this matter fully in a paper in THE CHURCHMAN a few years ago, I will only repeat that there are four possible sources of authority for the reform of Convocation:

1. Convocation itself.
2. The Archbishop of the Province.
3. The Crown, in virtue of royal supremacy.
4. Parliament, as the governing legislative body of the whole realm. All these four have been separately and individually repudiated by the highest legal authorities.

Here, then, is a fourfold dilemma, out of which there is apparently no escape. What is to be done? Are we actually reduced to an *impasse*, and must we remain in our present situation for ever? A happy solution of the difficulty has been provided by Mr. Philip Vernon Smith in a recourse to the principle of a Declaratory Act. Blackstone says that statutes are either declaratory of common law, or remedial of some defects therein: declaratory, where the old custom of the kingdom is almost fallen into disuse or become disputable, in which case the Parliament has thought proper *in perpetuum rei testimonium*, as a perpetual guide-post of the matter in hand, and for avoiding all doubts and difficulties, to declare what the common law is and ever has been.

Declaratory Acts are rare, and only for great occasions. They have cleared up doubts as to the marriage law. In 1766 such an Act declared the subordination of the Colonies in America to the Imperial Crown and Parliament of Great Britain. In 1783 such an Act declared the right of the Irish people to be bound only by the laws of Grattan's Parliament. In 1865 such an Act declared the resolution of doubts as to the validity of laws passed by the Colonial Legislatures. Here, then, in the doubt as to the authority for the reform of the Convocations, is an exact case in point for a Declaratory Act. In the words of Blackstone, "The old custom of the kingdom has become disputable." The old custom was for the King to determine who was to attend the Convocations; that ancient royal prerogative is now obviously a matter of dispute. What we have to do is to persuade Parliament, in justice to the National Church, to pass a Declaratory Act authorizing the Convocations, with the consent of the Crown, to amend their own composition in accordance with the requirements of the age. Mr. Smith has given a sketch of such an Act:

> Whereas doubts have arisen as to the powers of the Convocations of Canterbury and York to make . . . . ordinances with respect to the representation of the clergy in such Convocations: Therefore, for removing all doubts respecting the same, be it declared by the Queen's most excellent Majesty, with the advice, etc., of her Parliament, that the Convocation of each of the said Provinces has power to make . . . ordinances with respect to the representation of the clergy of the Province of such Convocation, so as every such . . . . ordinance be made with the Royal assent and licence.

This would obviously be no interference with the independ-

ence of the Convocations, or claim of Parliament to control their measures for reconstitution, but a distinct disclaim of any desire so to interfere or control. It is difficult to see why either the Convocations or Parliament should object to so happy an arrangement. Here are combined all the four possible sources of authority for such a reconstitution.

III.

When the Convocations have been reformed, it should be considered whether it is reasonable that they should continue to sit always in two separate bodies, one at York and the other in London; an arrangement dating from the days of the Heptarchy. By all means let the Convocation of the Province of York continue to transact its own special business in the north for its own dioceses; but let the two bodies meet once a year in London, and sit side by side, as a great National Assembly of the Church, which could speak with the strength of united purpose, like the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and command the interest and attention of the people. To have separate Parliaments for the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy, sitting at Exeter, Oxford, Norwich and York, would not be more unreasonable than the present arrangement.

IV.

When the Convocations have thus been reformed and united, favourable consideration might be asked for the Bill of the late Bishop Jackson of London. Even if we could persuade the Secularists and Nonconformists to treat the business of the Church with the same justice which is given to the measures of Dissenters, such a proposal would appear wise and reasonable. Besides the reluctance of this section of the House of Commons to permit Church reforms, the business of the Empire is so enormously increased that there is little time for the discussion of ecclesiastical matters. Without saying anything as to the composition of the House of Commons, we can but state the fact that that assembly declares itself over and over again unwilling to be occupied with the affairs of the Church. A curious instance occurred three years ago in the treatment of the Archdeaconry of Truro Bill, which was a pure matter of administration, involving no principle, and might have been settled in five minutes. The adverse politicians fell upon it, worried it for hours, and then, with strange complacency, complained of the time of the House of Commons being wasted on such trifles. It is well known that the Queen's Ministers always urgently deprecate the introduction of ecclesiastical affairs, and beg Churchmen to get on for the present as best

they may. It is on principle that a large Nonconformist element objects to the improvement of the condition of the National Church by legislation; and it is well that we should be aware of the fact, and take it home to our hearts. There is, of course, a highly friendly assembly, the House of Lords, with the Bishops in it; but it is unnecessary to say that they cannot pass measures for us without the House of Commons.

It was under these circumstances that in 1874 a prelate of the utmost prudence, caution, and deliberation, the late Bishop Jackson of London, introduced a Bill to the effect that when the two Convocations have, by the authority of the Crown, altered directions and rubrics, and the Crown has thought fit to send such alterations to Parliament, they shall lie on the table of both Houses; and if no address to the Crown be carried against them by either House within forty days, they shall then become law. The Bill was not carried; but it has established a principle to which members of the National Church can with confidence appeal.

It is of the highest importance to remember, in connection with Bishop Jackson's Bill, that whatever you do with the Convocations, or whatever machinery of self-government you might otherwise provide for the National Church, Parliament must ultimately sanction any change whatever, either small or great, just as it would have to sanction any legislation affecting Nonconformist bodies; so that those who fear that the improvement of the Convocations might mean organic changes in the National Church and its formularies are perfectly safe. No such organic changes could, under any circumstances, be made without the consent of Parliament. And that means that no vital changes ever will be made.

V.

A fifth matter which should be kept in mind, though probably we are not yet ripe for the practical recognition of the principle, is that, according to the primitive model, ecclesiastical synods are not complete without the presence of the Lay element. The Convocations of Canterbury and York have lately encouraged the formation of Houses of Laymen, who are consultation bodies, and whose opinion is entitled to great weight. The time ought some day to come when the consent of these representative Houses of Laymen would be necessary to any ecclesiastical measures.

Some of you may conceive, that to postpone this question is not enough, and that all idea of Lay representation in our National Synod should be at once and for ever repudiated. But are such persons fully aware of the strong arguments which may be urged on the other side? Do they keep in

mind that the first Christian Synod consisted not only of the Apostles and Elders, but also of the Brethren? Are they aware that in the early Ecumenical Councils, although there were no Lay Deputies, there was a most effective Lay representation, consisting of the Imperial Commissioners or Assessors, *Judices Gloriosissimi*, who took a leading part in framing and enacting the Canons promulgated by those Assemblies. Has not the principle of Lay representation in Ecclesiastical Councils been adopted in our Colonial Churches as well as in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States? And is it not generally acknowledged that no Delegates are wiser and more cautious, and more opposed to needless innovations than the Lay Deputies, including in their number, as they often do, Judges and members of the Senate or House of Representatives, men of age and learning and station far above the influence of sudden impulse or inflated oratory ?[1]

VI.

A sixth and very important reform, subsidiary to the Patronage Bill, is the proper regulation of the exchange of Benefices. A plan has been prepared by a Committee of the London Diocesan Conference, and has received the warm approval of the most experienced ecclesiastical lawyers. This plan needs no recourse to Parliament, and depends solely on the united consent of the Bishops not to allow any exchanges except those which are publicly registered by the Registrar of Exchanges, whom it is proposed to create. It is remarkable that although the custom of exchanges has largely prevailed for several centuries, no systematic effort has apparently been made successfully to facilitate and regulate exchanges. In order to check the abuses which arose in the sixteenth century with respect to exchanges, chiefly on account of the disproportion in the value of the benefices exchanged, an Act was passed in the thirty-first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, under which it was enacted that "certain fines should be imposed if any in the exchange or resignation of benefices gave or received, directly or indirectly, any sum of money, a pension or benefit whatsoever." But unfortunately under this Act, and it is the only Act relating to exchanges, no official registrar was appointed to control exchanges. The result has been that agents who are self-appointed, and who are not under Episcopal direction, arrange almost exclusively the exchange of benefices in every diocese in England and Wales. The committee have critically examined and tabulated the lists of four of the principal exchange agents, and found that 1,406 benefices had

[1] Archdeacon John Sinclair's "Charges."

been entered for exchange of the net annual value of £389,913, with a population of 2,341,149 souls. The committee trust the conference will consider that these exchanges, so vast in their magnitude, may be transferred as speedily as possible to an official registrar episcopally appointed and controlled. In order to accomplish this transference it is not needful for the Archbishops and Bishops to appeal to the House of Commons or the House of Lords for Parliamentary powers, or to submit their proposals for a prolonged debate in the Lower Houses of Convocation or the House of Laymen; but by a resolution distinguished for its simplicity and its stringency—namely, "That no exchange of benefices shall be sanctioned by the Bishops unless conducted by the official registrar under Episcopal authority"—the reform, so sweeping in its completeness, will immediately be accomplished. It will be a reform which at one stroke will terminate the abuses and the anomalies which have prevailed more or less in connection with exchanges almost from time immemorial; a reform which in facilitating and regulating exchanges will increase the power of the Episcopate and the privileges of the beneficed clergy; a reform, in fine, which the committee believe will be felt in its beneficial results in every diocese, not only in the present time, but in generations to come.

The report from the Committee on the Exchange of Benefices stated: (1) That the committee did not concern itself with any fundamental change with regard to the sale of advowsons or next presentations; (2) That at present agents, under no Episcopal jurisdiction, almost wholly conducted the negotiations for exchanges; (3) That the custom of exchange prevailed to an extremely large extent; (4) That there were the following objections to the present system:

(*a*) The clergy, on account of the semi-secrecy of the negotiations, may be placed at times in positions of difficulty with regard to their Bishops or patrons, or parishioners.

(*b*) The custom of a three or four fold exchange may under certain conditions lead to compromising complications.

(*c*) When there is a considerable disproportion in the respective values of the benefices to be exchanged, it is possible that a simoniacal arrangement may be suggested.

And (5) That the following advantages would be secured by the regulation of the exchange of benefices:

(*a*) A registrar, or registrars, ecclesiastically appointed, would be recognised in every diocese for the exchange of benefices.

(*b*) The clergy desiring exchange could *openly* and yet without publicity register their requirements.

(*c*) *Frivolous* exchanges would be checked or discouraged, and *reasonable* exchanges would be facilitated.

(*d*) No arrangement in the exchange of benefices leading to legal or other complications could be made.

VII.

I have already mentioned a sufficient number of reforms. But as it is desirable to have clearly before us what we want, and as I desire to make my list to some extent complete, one or two more may be mentioned. The recent creation of Parish Councils for civil administration reminds me of a plan which has been frequently discussed, and which has my warm sympathy for the creation of similar bodies from among the members of our congregations for ecclesiastical purposes. I quote from a charge of the late Archdeacon Sinclair, of Middlesex:

"In a certain sense most of us already have Church Councils; we have School Committees, District Visiting Committees and other voluntary committees of various kinds to assist us in our parochial work. Some of you have taken a further step, and have established councils to be consulted generally on the affairs of the parish. Such councils have been found useful; but the question now is, not whether voluntary parochial councils can be made useful, but in what light we are to regard councils instituted by Act of Parliament. The declared object of an influential body, including members of the Legislature, is, "to give the Laity in parishes, by means of a representative organization, some voice in the introduction of changes in the Church services within the law, and facilities for taking further part in the local administration of the Church."

Here the question arises, By whom are these Church Councillors to be elected? If by the whole body of Ratepayers—that is, by Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, as well as by members of the Church—the proposal would be the most preposterous and the most mischievous that could possibly be devised. I think, however, it is intended that the right of choosing the Church Councillors should be restricted to members of the Church.

Let us, then, consider for one moment the constitution of the only legally established Church Councils we are acquainted with, viz., the Kirk Sessions of the Establishment in Scotland.

Vacancies in the Kirk Session are filled up by the votes of the remaining members. The Minister in general recommends a Candidate, and his recommendation is accepted. The name of the Candidate, is then submitted to the congregation of the Parish Church. If any objection is alleged, a day is appointed for considering it. An objection, however, is hardly ever offered, and within ten days the successful Candidate signs the Confession of Faith, and is solemnly ordained an Elder.

Among the chief duties of the Kirk Session is the collection and distribution of alms.

All processes for the censure or excommunication of the lay parishioners must originate with the Kirk Session.

The Kirk Session has no control whatever over the Minister in his performance of Divine Service.

At all meetings of the Kirk Session the Minister must be present, otherwise all its proceedings are invalid.

Such is the constitution of a Presbyterian Kirk Session.

A Church Council of this description seems wholly unobjectionable. It has long been useful and popular in the North, and there appears to be no reason why it should not acquire the same usefulness and popularity in the South.

I see no necessity, however, that members of Church Councils, like members of Kirk Sessions, should receive any kind of ordination; nor that they should have any power of censure or excommunication; nor do I wish that they should all be Communicants; for it is not desirable that the receiving of the Holy Communion should in any case be a necessary qualification for the exercise of a privilege. It would suffice that they should be unquestionably members of the congregation.

The Churchwardens of the Parish should officially be Church Councillors, and exercise their powers in conjunction with the majority of the Council.

To such Councils might be transferred the right of patronage, where they might be willing to raise sufficient funds to compensate the patron, and he should agree to part with his privilege. Among the recommendations of this plan, one of the most obvious is, that the plan is undeniably fair and honest, recognising the legal rights of Patrons, and giving them the compensation they are entitled to.

Another recommendation is, that the plan would give the people the influence, which in primitive times they unquestionably enjoyed, in the appointment of their own ministers. There cannot be a doubt that they exercised a *veto*. When a candidate was named they answered with an audible voice ἄξιος or ἀνάξιος, worthy or unworthy. If they pronounced him unworthy, their veto was decisive, and extinguished his pretensions. The *si quis* still read in our churches may be regarded as constituting a protest against the abolition of the people's ancient right. Father Paul Sarpi, in his learned work, "De Beneficiis," insists that "according to the rule established by the Apostles, Bishops, Priests, and other ministers of the word of God were elected by the whole body of the faithful." He quotes the Roman Pontiff St. Leo as affirming Holy Orders to be in-

valid, when the Bishop granted them without the people's concurrence.

It is clear, then, that to give the Laity in some form an influence in the election of their ministers would be an assimilation to, and not by any means a departure from, the rules and principles of primitive times.

Another recommendation of this plan is, that the Church would acquire greater popularity when it became known that in the case of hundreds of parishes now in private patronage, the Laity might at any time secure the right to choose their own Church Council, if they thought fit to make a certain pecuniary sacrifice.

A further recommendation is that when the parishioners had acquired the right of patronage they would take a greater interest in Church affairs, and would not listen with any patience to proposals for the disendowment or disestablishment of the Church.

As regards the Clergy, it would form a recommendation of the plan before you, that under the new system presentations to benefices would be always given freely. They would never be sold. No transaction, approaching to the nature of simony, would be necessary in order to obtain preferment.

I shall only add this further recommendation, that the religious principles of the Incumbent appointed by a Church Council would in almost all cases be in accordance with those of the great body of his parishioners.

If I am asked what number of Church Councils would be likely to succeed in raising the funds required for the purchase of the advowson, I answer, I cannot tell. The number depends entirely on the degree of excitement which may arise upon the subject. In Scotland, shortly before the great disruption, an organization, under the name of the Anti-Patronage Society, was formed for purchasing the rights of private patrons, and handing those rights over to the parishioners. It so happened, however, that excitement on the subject was only then beginning to arise. The subscriptions given were moderate, and the society proved a failure. It was unable, notwithstanding numerous appeals for funds, to purchase more than one advowson. After the disruption, however, the excitement rapidly increased—it became intense and unparalleled, and carried all before it. The Free Kirk, constituted on Anti-Patronage principles, raised an aggregate of funds sufficient, if so applied, to have purchased many times over all the private patronage in Scotland."

VIII.

There is yet another matter which I wish to mention. The present rigid view of the law that a benefice is a freehold, and in no sense a trust, dates mainly from the creation of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council between thirty and forty years ago. The new court showed plainly that they regarded a benefice not in the light of a trust or office as we should have expected, for which certain qualifications, moral and doctrinal, were required, but simply as a freehold of which the owner could only be deprived on his conviction as a criminal for a statutory offence. The court accordingly directed their whole attention to the mischief they would inflict on the accused by depriving him of his freehold. If, however, they had directed their attention to the fact that he also held a trust or office for the benefit of his parishioners, they would have been thoroughly alive to the mischief which those parishioners must suffer from having over them for the rest of his life an unsuitable, improper, or inefficient minister. The legal recognition that a benefice is a trust as well as a freehold would be a reform of no small dimensions. A freehold for life in the command of a regiment or an ironclad is at once seen to be an obvious absurdity. The decision of the fulfilment of the trust could be safely left to the Bishop, and his diocesan synod properly constituted with a due lay element, and an appeal to the courts of civil law. If this reform alone were carried, the Church could dispense for the present with almost every other. The presence in every district of the country of some inefficient, incompetent or unworthy parish clergyman is the real secret of any political weakness and unpopularity in the Church.

IX.

There is yet one matter more with regard to benefices—I mean the union of those which are very small and ill-paid. If you insist on having a separate vicar for every little hamlet, or for the ancient town parishes from which the population has ebbed away, you cause a great waste of force, you promote a class of clergymen who have nothing to do, and who do, if possible, even less, and you create poverty, misery and discontent. Every diocese has scores, sometimes hundreds of such minute parishes, many of them quite close to each other. Every bishop laments that he has not power to unite them. The superfluous parishes in the City of London, in Norwich, in Lincoln, or along the South Downs, are instances. The obstacle is twofold: the variety of patronage, and the expense of private Acts of Parliament. What is needed is a Royal Commission and a General Act.

X.

I venture finally to submit certain reforms which I think immediately desirable with the object of healing, as far as possible, the lamentable state of religious discord in Wales.

Resistance to the great injustice and harsh cruelty of the Disestablishment Bill, so obviously dictated by real opponents of the Church, however many who acquiesce in it need not be classed as such, will clearly be vigorous throughout the length and breadth of England. But besides that, it would appear wise to consider some such conciliatory measures as these:

1. Immediate redemption of tithe from small or Nonconformist owners of land, to remove a grievance felt, though sentimental. As everybody knows, the tithe is now paid by the landlord, not by the farmer.

2. The grant of solid and indisputable social standing from the Queen, as fountain of all honour, to the ministers of registered religious communions, with the object of placing their flocks on an equality with "Church" people. Ministers, of course, whether established or not, care nothing about this. But it is desirable in the social organism that every arrangement and position should be clear. The removal of misunderstandings, even in such matters, is a help to the preaching of the Gospel.

3. The retirement of the Rector and Vicar from all purely secular business. In England, where the Church is in a large majority, that position is recognised, and often welcome. But the *ex-officio* presidency in Wales gives ground for dislike and jealousy. This is largely effected by the Parish Councils Bill.

4. The universal formation of cemeteries and burial boards.

5. The representation of the parents of children on school management committees.

6. The absolute cessation on the part of the Welsh clergy of all reprisals on Nonconformist attacks. Churchmen have no right to offer advice to the Nonconformists; but if that policy could be zealously and enthusiastically adopted, there can be no doubt which would be the winning side.

7. The universal cultivation of friendly relations on the part of the clergy towards all the Nonconformist ministers, no matter how bitterly they may feel their conduct. "In honour," all Christians are bound to "prefer one another." Love is the real conquering element, not war.

8. The recognition by the clergy that the great upheaval of the Reformation, necessitated by the degradation of the Catholic Church in previous ages, brought consequences which cannot now be undone, and of which it is the true Christian policy to make the best; asserting the Episcopal principles of

Hooker, Jewel, Laud, Andrewes, Cosin, Bancroft and Hall rather than those of Cyprian.

9. Restitution to the Welsh dioceses of the status of a distinct province, so that, while still remaining, like the Province of York, an integral part of the National Church, they could reorganize some of their customs and institutions freely on indigenous needs and principles. Small national churches or provinces were common in primitive times.

10. A wise and vigorous application of discipline for the correction of any irregularities, which may possibly here and there remain.

I have discussed these subjects at some length, as it may help members of the Church to understand, either through assent or disagreement, what it is that the Church needs to enable it to carry on its great work of preaching the Gospel unimpeded. About some of them the Church is in the main agreed: others are only my own suggestions. Amongst those about which the Church has matured its opinions are:

1. Church Patronage Bills.
2. The Reform of Convocation.
3. The occasional Union of the two Synods.
4. Registration of Exchanges.
5. The Union of small Benefices.

Measures which have been much discussed, but about which I should not be right in saying that the Church is as yet unanimous, are the following:

6. Bishop Jackson's Bill for Church Proposals to lie on the table of the Houses of Parliament.
7. Authority for the Houses of Laymen.
8. Church Councils.
9. Benefices to be considered trusts rather than freeholds.

The proposals which are only suggestions from myself are those for conciliatory action in Wales.

To these different reforms I would invite consideration in proportion to their maturity and general acceptance. All my readers consider the National Church an inheritance of the English nation worth preserving. My own conviction is that if, without altering its principles, its arrangements and institutions could be from time to time readjusted to suit the varying requirements of changed circumstances, that inheritance would have little to fear either from the mistakes of friends or the hostility of open opponents.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.