

ART. V.—REUNION AND ESTABLISHMENT: AN  
APPEAL TO ENGLISH CHRISTIANS.

**I**F the New Testament is to be our guide, the public and national recognition and honouring of the Church by the State is just as certainly part of our Saviour's plan as preaching the Gospel or receiving Sacraments. It is prescribed in terms which ought never to have been mistaken, and in that one book of the New Testament which, as a book, makes a more solemn demand for our acceptance of its teaching than any other. If any man adds to the book or takes away from it, God takes away his part from that tree of life and out of that holy city which the book describes. And one thing in this book is this: "AND THE NATIONS SHALL WALK AMIDST THE LIGHT THEREOF: AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH DO BRING THEIR GLORY INTO IT. And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): AND THEY SHALL BRING THE GLORY AND THE HONOUR OF THE NATIONS INTO IT."

But for most English readers, from the days of Tyndale's translation down to our own times, this passage has been practically taken away from the book, and that by means of an addition to it, the insertion, between "nations" and "shall walk," of the intrusive phrase "which are saved," or "of them which are saved." From 1534 to 1611 there was a further obscurity: instead of "the nations" the words were "the people"—"the people which are saved shall walk in the light of it." And the printed Greek text contained the words τῶν σωζομένων. Even this was not correctly translated. It meant not "of them which are saved," but "of those who are being saved," or "of those who are in process of salvation." That would not have been far wrong. But the printed words are no part of the true text. They crept into the first printed edition of the Greek Testament through the mistake of a copying clerk, who had mixed up an ancient commentary with the words of Scripture. Luther's German translation embodies the same mistake. The Latin translation is right, and so is the Rheims or English Roman Catholic version, which was made from the Latin. But the two great Protestant nations, through their very desire to have their translations made from the original, have in this case, for nearly 400 years, been encouraged by the Scriptures, as they read them, to thrust the fulfilment of this prophecy into some dim and distant future.

The accurate version of 1881, after more than twenty years' circulation, seems to have done little for the right understanding of the passage in question, so far as regards the

great bulk of English readers. Else would it now be possible for leading men among Nonconformists to press for Disestablishment as almost a fundamental principle of Christianity, and for many Churchmen to view the prospect of the English nation and its King withdrawing their glory and honour from the city of God with acquiescence if not approval? A great national error is not corrected in a day.

Still, there have been scholars amongst us who have seen, like the late Professor Milligan of Aberdeen, that *the New Jerusalem is an ideal picture of the true Church now.*

Indeed, when we cease to take away from the book the plain and repeated declarations in the first chapter and in the last, that the things written in it were then shortly to come to pass, that the time was at hand, how dare we say, after more than 1,800 years, that the time is not yet? Did not the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews say, even before the destruction of the old Jerusalem, "YE ARE COME unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"? And had not our Saviour Himself said, standing, an apparently helpless prisoner, before the high priest, "HENCEFORTH ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven"?—another text of Scripture sadly misunderstood. Wiclif was right here, "fro hennes forth"; but the other translations, the Rheims included, give "hereafter." It is true the word "hereafter" used to mean "henceforth." When we ask, in the General Confession, that we may "hereafter" live a godly life, we do not mean after a long time, probably after we are dead, but from this time forward. That was what our Saviour meant when He said, according to St. Matthew, ἀπ' ἄρτι, or, according to St. Luke, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν, *from now.* I suspect that the popular mind could not conceive that our Saviour could have meant what He said—namely, that from that very moment He would be sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven, and that His persecutors should so see Him—a lack of imagination which has probably had something to do with the change that has passed over the word "hereafter." Possibly the coexistence of "henceforth" and an unconscious tendency towards a desirable differentiation of the words may have also helped the change forward.

I cannot, within the limits of this paper, show in detail how St. John's great vision of the New Jerusalem is indeed the Divine "ideal of the true Church now." Suffice it to say that when a man ceases to look upon God as a law-giver whose existence he cannot deny, but would if he could, and discovers that He is what Christ reveals—our Father who loves us—we

have a new heaven and a new earth far more excellent than if the Creator were to supply us with new constellations and new fields, such as men have who go to South Africa. And as to there being no more sea and no more death, do we not remember how our Saviour said that they who heard His word, and believed Him who sent Him, had passed out of death into life? how St. Paul declared that those who were in Christ were new creatures? how for them the old things were passed away and become new? how Isaiah compared the wicked to the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt?

But the vision of the New Jerusalem in chaps. xxi. and xxii. comes after the vision of judgment in chap. xx. Yes, but the "camp of the saints and the beloved city" stand upon the earth in chap. xx. before the judgment, and the judgment recurs in chap. xxi. 6-8. The visions are successive, but the facts are contemporary. While Christians should rejoice in their inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, having washed their robes, and come to the tree of life, and entered in by the gates into the city, that is not their only experience. They are still sojourners and pilgrims, and have frequent need of feet-washing. In spirit their camp is the city on Mount Zion. By the flesh their city becomes too often a camp in the wilderness.

The grand prophecies of Isaiah may help to remove a difficulty which some may raise when they find me resting the Scriptural case for Church Establishment upon a single passage of holy Scripture. Such prophecies as that in Isaiah xlix., vers. 22, 23—"Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth and lick the dust of thy feet"—or the magnificent 60th chapter, were never fulfilled on any but the smallest and coldest scale in the subsequent history of the Jews. There are people still, I suppose, who look forward to a literal, or, at least, a substantial, fulfilment of these and other like prophecies in some future establishment of the Jews in Palestine. They may be right. But meantime I find our Lord applying the opening words of the 61st chapter directly to Himself. His Apostles and others in the New Testament make free application of these same prophecies to their Master. And, what seems to me to settle the question in hand, St. John's description of the New Jerusalem, including the 21st chapter of the Revelation, and five verses of the 22nd, only thirty-two verses in all, quotes or refers to Isaiah more than twenty times; and the very passage on which I am laying so much stress in the Dis-establishment controversy is little else than the 60th

chapter of Isaiah christened—lifted, that is, above the prophet's local horizon and made universal. "And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." "The wealth of the nations shall come unto thee." "And strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee." "Thy gates also shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations, and their kings led with them." If the Revelation is not an inspired commentary on these and other passages of Isaiah, we had better give up comparing Scripture with Scripture.

This being so, I deny that the obligation of the nation to recognise, protect, and honour the Church rests upon a single passage of Scripture. The New Testament takes up the story of the Old. Simeon in the temple with the babe Jesus in his arms spoke of Him as the means of salvation for "all peoples" (R.V.) of whom the "people" Israel was one. Our Lord's favourite title was Son of man, of the political man equally with the husbandman. His Gospel is to be preached to all the nations. When He shall come in His glory—that same coming, apparently, as He told the priests three days afterwards they would immediately see—"before Him shall be gathered all the nations." He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." What wonder, then, that the nations shall walk amidst the light of His holy city, and they and their kings—that is, the nations in their political capacities—shall bring their glory and honour into it? Did not our King do so last August, when he was crowned in what may fairly be called the cathedral church of the Anglo-Saxon race, and by the chief Bishop of our English nation? In the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth and all nations of the earth were to be blessed. This is done in proportion as every family takes its place in the city of God, and every nation walks in the light of that city, and brings its national honour and glory into it.

Besides the prophecies of Isaiah referred to above, there is also a remarkable prophecy of Jeremiah's (chap. iii. 16, etc.) about *Jerusalem without the ark*, and all the nations being gathered into it. Is this the germ of "I saw no sanctuary (*ναός*) therein: for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are the sanctuary thereof" (Rev. xxii. 22)? It is a pity, perhaps, that the revisers have retained the word "temple," though that is rather inexact than incorrect. The sanctuary was reserved for the priests alone. It contained the ceremonial lights, the reserved bread, the altar of incense, and the localized presence of Deity. The second temple did, indeed, contain no ark; but the Presence was believed to be

behind the veil. That veil was rent in two from top to bottom when the true Sacrifice was offered by the true Priest. The sanctuary was then destroyed, and in three days it was raised up in the Body of Christ. But in the Christian Church, which, in another, but practically identical, sense is Christ's Body, there was to be neither *ναός* nor *ιερεὺς*, neither shrine nor priest. Living Christians are sanctuaries of God, both corporately (1 Cor. iii. 17) and individually (John xiv. 23), but not their lifeless walls or pyxes, except as God is everywhere immanent in His works (Col. i. 17). There were no chancels till Transubstantiation grew up and, as the Bishop of Salisbury says in his "Ministry of Grace," p. 103, "changed the solemn Eucharist from a home-like communion feast . . . into a drama."

I am not Goth enough to wish to destroy the magnificent choirs of our cathedrals or the beautiful chancels of our parish churches, but I do wish to see restored in them or outside of them the primitive ritual, according to which the president of the congregation officiated behind the holy table, facing the people, while they stood facing him and taking their full share in the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Some day this should be done by a lawful revision of the rubrics. And I appeal to all English Christians who dislike ritualism as reviving the errors which our Reformers were burnt for rejecting, I call upon them, Nonconformists especially, to lay aside their anti-Scriptural project of Disestablishment, and rally round the old Church of our common and grand nationality. It is because the Puritan element has so largely drifted away from the parish churches that the Oxford dreamers have been able so far to fulfil their dreams. Professor Drummond went astray when he wrote his "City without a Church." The City *is* a Church, and the sum total of all true Churches.

Our churches are not temples, but synagogues; our ministers are not priests of sanctuaries, but elders of congregations. It is a pity that the word "priest" has become ambiguous. In its etymology it is a protest against official priesthood. It is simply the English form of presbyter or elder, as bishop and deacon are English for "episcopus" and "diaconus." The elder was an officer of the synagogue, not of the temple. I cannot go further into these details. But may I hope that some, whom at first I could not carry with me when I contended that Disestablishment was forbidden by Scripture, may be disposed to consider my contention more seriously when they find that the same Scriptural ideal which insists upon Establishment leaves no room for medievalism either in doctrine or in ritual? Disestablishment is a policy of despair.

Next I must affirm as a matter of absolute certainty that

*the New Testament gives neither example of, nor warrant for, two or more Christian churches in the same locality, independent of one another, and drawing their members and adherents from the same population.* No one will dispute the absence of example. And as to warrant, surely our Saviour's solemn prayer for the visible unity of all who believed in Him should of itself close that question. The prayer was offered as the closing act of His ministry immediately before He went out to meet His death. The unity He prayed for was to be like that of Himself with His Father, and one purpose of it was to be that the world might believe that the Father sent Him. The world sees us disunited, a very chaos of Christians, and it does not believe. Here in England the condition of our towns and villages is appalling. The great bulk of our fellow-citizens are neither Churchmen nor Dissenters. They "go nowhere." But yes, they do go, wherever our foreign missions go, and counteract the Gospel which, but for our divisions, they might be propagating.

There is in the New Testament, as I have said, no instance of actual secession and the setting up of a rival Church. But there are very vehement condemnations of that factious spirit which tends to secession. The factious members of the Church at Corinth are described, on account of their factiousness, as carnal—that is, of the nature of mere animals. And divisions are classed in the Epistle to the Galatians (ver. 20, R.V.) among the vilest sins. Even at Laodicea where our Lord was disgusted, and at Sardis where the Church was dead, not the slightest hint is given that the few decent Christians who remained might or ought to secede and form themselves into purer communities.

Now, in England, long before any of our present secessions were heard of, our cathedral and parish churches covered the whole land but for some extra parochial places due chiefly to the monastic system. And I ask whether these churches as a whole, or any of them in detail, have ever been worse churches than the Church at Corinth or the Church at Sardis, as described in the New Testament; and so much worse that, while in those churches the remedy was more union and strengthening the things that remained, in our English dioceses and parishes it has been the bounden duty of the seceders to secede, and of their successors to remain in secession. At Corinth the communicants boasted that one of their number was living in incest; some of them got drunk at the Lord's Table; some denied a future life, and so on. At Sardis the Church had a name to live and was dead. If it was wrong at Corinth to say "I am of Paul" or "I of Cephas," can it be right in an English parish to say "I

am of Wesley" or "I am of the Pope," and to say it, as the Corinthians did not, in unabashed secession?

If I have stated these propositions without qualification, that is because I see no other way of stating them truly. The application of the statements to individuals is a different thing. Therein will be needed all mutual respect and thorough-going courtesy, which Churchfolk and Non-conformists alike must learn to call for by diligent prayer. I know well, in my forty-sixth year as a beneficed clergyman, that our parish and cathedral churches are heavily weighted with abuses and anachronisms. But nobody is obliged to approve of them as a condition of Christian fellowship. In matters of faith nothing more is required of anyone for lay communion besides the Apostles' Creed; a simple statement not of theories, but of facts, which may be denied, but cannot be explained away. The clergy are bound by the Prayer-Book and Articles, as interpreted by the courts, but the laity are not. In matters of discipline there must be baptism and confirmation as the introduction to Communion. But baptism is held to be valid by whomsoever administered. Confirmation, according to Scriptural example, is administered by one of our chief ministers. Holy Communion cannot be received in our churches except through one of our presbyters. But no one is bound to profess a belief in confirmation as necessary to salvation, nor in the necessity of a Bishop for its efficient ministration. And if a man believes that the celebration of Holy Communion is restricted to ministers only as a matter of decency and order, no Churchman has authority to forbid him. But he is equally at liberty to believe the contrary. Indeed, a characteristic of the Church of England is not a great number of closed questions, but the great number it leaves open. It gives no theory of creation, inspiration, atonement, conversion, sacraments, modes of worship, relations of Church and State, the orders, ordination, and appointment of ministers, and, indeed, most subjects on which Christians have been used to hold diverse opinions. This does not mean that no truths are important except those which are explicitly stated in the Apostles' Creed. But it means that when the fundamentals, as laid down in that Creed, are secured, the Church thinks it best not to refuse its fellowship for differences of opinion on other subjects.

National churches in times past made a great mistake. They tried to compel all the citizens by force to act as members of the Church. And I do not doubt that Almighty God, who usually teaches men by their mistakes, has allowed Nonconformity to reach its present dimensions in England on

purpose to make persecution impossible. No sensible person wishes to persecute now. That lesson has been learnt. Conformity by compulsion is gone. It is time to pray and labour for free Conformity.

Wait not, my brethren, wait not  
Till they that sleep arise ;  
Wait not till angels waft ye  
To rest in Paradise.  
The glory dwells not only  
Beyond the starry sphere :  
The kingdom is among you,  
Jerusalem is here.

From East to West the nations  
Are walking in her light ;  
Hers is old England's glory,  
And hers our monarch's might.  
Portrayed in glowing vision  
On John's prophetic page,  
Her gates and brave foundations  
Are our long heritage.

Through times of tribulation,  
Through times of fierce reform,  
Through times of peace and plenty,  
Of struggle and of storm,  
One faith in God Incarnate,  
One Lamb for sinners slain,  
Hath linked all times together  
As with a golden chain.

And now, O gracious Father,  
To us in this our day,  
The things Thou hast against us  
Grant we may put away ;  
And walk with Thee where light is,  
In fellowship and love,  
Cleansed by the blood of Jesus,  
Led by the Holy Dove.

'Twas what our Saviour prayed for,  
'Twas what our founders plann'd ;  
Give plan and prayer fulfilment  
Through all this Christian land—  
One church for every parish,  
And all the parish there,  
One body and one spirit,  
One voice of praise and prayer.

Through Christendom's wide borders  
That plan and prayer fulfil,  
Till popes and parties vanish,  
And Christians do Thy will :  
Then shall the heathen seek Thee,  
For all the world shall see  
How good it is and joyful  
When brethren thus agree.

J. FOXLEY.