

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Prayers for the Dead.

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

MY purpose is not to discuss fully or at length the important question of Prayers for the Departed, but to present, in a concise form, the chief evidence as to the attitude of the Church of England towards this question between 1536 and 1662. I shall therefore offer but few comments upon it, beyond what may be necessary in order to explain its bearing, my desire being to present the undeniable facts of the case apart from what might be thought by some to be *ex parte* explanations of them.

This course has been adopted because, in the interests of the search after truth, it is important first and foremost to recognize the full force of evidence which ever way it tends. Advance in real knowledge has been sadly hindered by the once prevalent habit of viewing history through a certain atmosphere, sometimes highly charged with party opinion. We are, however, making an advance towards a more fearless facing of facts as they really are, before attempting to co-ordinate them and so form more general conclusions. The method adopted will not please those who desire ready-made conclusions which save the trouble of careful thought, but I feel sure that it will commend itself to all genuine students. This paper is, accordingly, a contribution towards a fuller treatment of the subject.

It will be said that we cannot be bound in the twentieth century by the judgment of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This I frankly allow. But, on the other hand, we cannot adequately discuss this question without first gaining an accurate knowledge of the position in which we stand, especially with regard to the meaning of our present formularies. In such knowledge it is to the plain facts of history that we must appeal.

The Ten Articles of 1536.—We commence with the Ten Articles of 1536, which were the first step towards our present Thirty-nine Articles. They reflect a stage of transition, and

were aptly termed, by Thomas Fuller, a "twilight religion." He allows that there are in them "many wild and distempered expressions," but adds that they "contain the Protestant religion in ore, which since, by God's blessing, is happily refined."

In this document it is stated, in an Article "Of Purgatory," that "it standeth with the very due order of charity, a Christian man to pray for souls departed, and to commit them in our prayers to God's mercy, and also to cause other to pray for them in masses and exequies . . . whereby they may be relieved and holpen of some part of their pain." The Article goes on to disclaim all power of defining "the place where they be, the name thereof, and kind of pains there."¹ Here is Purgatory, but observe the attenuated dogmatism with which it is stated.

The Bishops' Book.—In 1537 appeared *The Institution of a Christian Man, or Bishops' Book*, which was drawn up by much the same body of men who were responsible for the Ten Articles, and in it the same article "Of Purgatory" appeared.²

The King's Book.—But in 1543 a more complete and fully authorized form was published, under the title of *The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition of a Christian Man, or King's Book*, which is generally credited with being reactionary, but which, at least in the matter of Purgatory, marked an advance towards the reformed teaching. The use of the word "Purgatory" is expressly discouraged, and in the Article, which is headed "Of Prayer for Souls Departed," it is directed that, such "Masses, exequies, or suffrages . . . be done for the universal congregation of Christian people, quick and dead . . . though their intent be more for one than for another." In addition, abuses brought in by Rome were to be "clearly put away, and that we therefore abstain from the name of purgatory, and no more dispute or reason thereof."³

Two matters here deserve notice. (1) The name "Purgatory" is dropped as expressing a Romish error, and all dispute about it discouraged. (2) Prayer is to be offered, not expressly for individuals, but for "the universal congregation of

¹ Lloyd, "Formularies of Faith," p. xxxi.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 210 *et seq.*

³ *Ibid.*

Christian people, quick and dead," a principle which appears again in the *Dirge* of 1559 and elsewhere. *Special intention* for the souls of the departed is, however, distinctly suggested. This marks the first stage of change.

The First Prayer-Book.—We now come to the prayers for the faithful dead which were retained in 1549.

(1) In the prayer "for the whole state of Christ's Church." "We commend unto thy mercy . . . all other Thy servants which are departed hence from us, with the sign of faith, and now do rest in the sleep of peace: Grant unto them . . . Thy mercy, and everlasting peace, and that at the day of the general resurrection *we and all they* which be of the mystical body of Thy Son, may altogether be set on His right hand," etc.¹

(2) In the Burial Service.

(a) "I commend thy soul to God, and thy body to the ground," etc. (*at the committal*).²

(b) "We commend into Thy hands of mercy . . . the soul of this our brother departed, *N*. And his body we commit to the earth, beseeching Thine infinite goodness . . . that when the judgment shall come . . . *both this our brother, and we*, may be found acceptable in Thy sight, and receive that blessing which Thy well-beloved Son," etc.³

(c) *After thanksgiving for bringing the soul of the departed into sure consolation and rest*. "Grant . . . that at the day of judgment his soul and all the souls of the elect, departed out of this life, *may with us and we with them*, fully receive Thy promises, and be made perfect altogether," etc.

(d) The versicles before the Lord's Prayer ran thus:

"Enter not, O Lord, into judgment with Thy servant,
For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified."

"From the gates of hell
Deliver their souls, O Lord," etc.

(e) "Grant unto this Thy servant, that the sins which he committed in the world be not imputed unto him, but that he, escaping the gates of hell, and pains of eternal darkness, may

¹ Keeling, "Lit. Brit.," p. 210.

² *Ibid.*, p. 333.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

ever dwell in the region of light. . . . Make him to rise also with the just and righteous . . . set him on the right hand of Thy Son Jesus Christ," etc.

(*f*) In the Collect for "The Celebration of the Holy Communion when there is a Burial of the Dead." "And at the general resurrection in the last day, *both we and this our brother departed . . . may with all Thine elect saints*, obtain eternal joy."¹

Thus, in 1549, prayer is direct and personal, and has reference both to the pardon of sins and to delivery from the "pains of eternal darkness." Yet, on the other hand, the soul of the departed is spoken of as having been already brought "into sure consolation and rest," and no thought of a painful Purgatory is retained. The form of words "that both we *and* this our brother . . . may *with* all Thine elect saints . . ." deserves careful attention, on account of the occurrence of the words "and" and "with" in the same phrase, and because after this date, in all *public* prayers, the change from "and" to "with" is universal.

The Second Prayer-Book.—In 1552 the following changes were made, and no further modification occurred until the last revision in 1662.

1. In the prayer for "the whole state of Christ's Church" two alterations appear.

(*a*) In the title "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church" the words "militant here in earth" were added.

(*b*) The whole passage commemorating and interceding for the faithful departed was omitted.

These two changes (*a*) and (*b*) are obviously connected, and when in 1662 the Commemoration was restored, an attempt was made to remove the addition to the title, which had been made in 1552, but it failed.

2. In the Burial Office.

(*a*) In a prayer, newly compiled, though based on older material—"We give Thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased

¹ Keeling, p. 341.

Thee to deliver *N*, our brother . . . beseeching Thee, that it may please Thee . . . shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect . . . *that we with this our brother, and all other departed in the true faith of Thy Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul,*" etc.

(*b*) In "The Collect."

After the words "At the general resurrection at the last day," the words "both we and this our brother," etc., are altered to "We may be found acceptable in Thy sight, and receive," etc.

Notice : (i.) The absence of direct and unambiguous prayer for the departed. It is true that Bishop Cosin regarded the words in 2 (*a*) as prayer for the dead, but they are, to say the least, ambiguous [see (ii.) and (iii.)]. The suggestion, moreover, that "and all other departed" are a direct subject of the verb "may have" is not supported by the Latin Prayer-Book of Elizabeth, where the words are, "Ut nos una cum fratre nostro, *et omnibus aliis*" (not *omnes alii*).

(ii.) The phrase "We with this our brother" is a deliberate change made in 1552. Compared with "We *and* this our brother," "We *and* all they," "Both this our brother *and* we," "May with us, and we with them" (phrases which occur in the Prayer-Book of 1549), this new phrase is, to put it very moderately, at least ambiguous. The grammar leaves it an open question ; its meaning must be decided on other grounds. What is quite certain is that *direct and unequivocal* utterances of prayer for the faithful departed were then removed, and were never restored.

(iii.) The absence of versicles after the Lesser Litany and Lord's Prayer is unique in a service constructed as our Burial Office is. They stood here in 1549 (see above), and contained petitions for the departed. They were omitted in 1552, no others being substituted for them.

The Prayer-Book of 1662.—It will be convenient, for the sake of comparison, to pass at once to the changes made in 1662.

1. In the "Prayer for the Church Militant."

(*a*) There was evidently a marked difference of opinion as to the title, some wishing to omit the words "Militant here in earth."

Thus in the Black Letter Prayer-Book of 1636, in which the final corrections are found, the title had been altered to "Let us pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church of Christ," the above words being erased. This change, apparently at the last moment, was not accepted, and the words erased ("Militant here in earth") were restored. There is, moreover, a marginal note, "The title to stand just as it was before."

Again, in Cosin's corrected copy (1640-1661), and also in Sancroft's fair copy (1661), a similar proposal is found, with the same significant omission, "Let us offer up our prayers and praises for the good estate of Christ's Catholic Church," a corresponding alteration of the actual petition being made at the close of the prayer (see below).

(*b*) At the close of the prayer the commemoration of the departed was most happily restored, and the form of commemoration brought into line with the changes of 1552. "And we also bless Thy Holy Name for all Thy servants . . . beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom."

As in the case of the title, certain proposals were made as to the words in which the faithful should be commemorated, which bore no practical fruit. In the unfortunate Prayer-Book for Scotland, published in 1637, this commemoration had been restored on the lines of the Prayer-Book of 1549, and it is clear that a similar restoration was attempted in 1662. Thus in Cosin's corrected copy (1640-1661), and in Sancroft's fair copy (1661), this form of words appears:¹ "And we also bless Thy Holy Name for all those Thy servants, who having finished their course in faith, doe now rest from their labor. And we yield unto Thee most high praise . . . and hearty thanks for the wonderful grace and vertue declared in all Thy Saints, who have been the choise vessells of Thy grace and the lights of the world in their several generations: Most humbly beseeching Thee, that wee may have grace to follow the Example of their stead-

¹ Parker, "Introduction to the Revisions of the Book of Common Prayer," p. cci.

fastnes in Thy faith, and obedience to Thy holy Commandments, that the day of the generall Resurrection, wee and all they which are of the mystical Body of Thy Sonne may be sett on His right hand, and hear that most joyfull voice, 'Come, ye blessed of My Father,'” etc.

It was undoubtedly Bishop Cosin's desire to restore the direct form of prayer which had disappeared since 1552, but the proposal was rejected. It would have distinctly enriched our service had this fuller form, with slight modifications, been adopted, as might well have been done without disturbing the balance of expression which had been so carefully adjusted in the former revisions. The revisers ultimately decided to follow the lead of the Scottish Book in restoring the Commemoration, but adopted a different form of words. They happily combined the elements of praise and prayer, without reintroducing into our service any definite and express intercession for the departed.¹

Returning to Queen Elizabeth's reign, we find several documents of importance in this inquiry.

A comparison of the Bidding Prayer in Queen Elizabeth's Injunctions (1559), with the corresponding form in King Edward's Injunctions (1547), reveals the same change which has been noted.

KING EDWARD'S FORM.

“Ye shall pray for all them that be departed out of the world in the faith of Christ, that they with us, and we with them at the day of judgment, may rest, both in body and soul, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S FORM.

“Finally, let us praise God for all those that are departed out of this life in the faith of Christ, and pray unto God, that we may have grace for to direct our lives after their good example, that after this life, we with them may be made partakers of the glorious resurrection in the life everlasting.”

CARDWELL, *Doc. Ann.*, vol. i., pp. 21, 22, and 203.

¹ J. H. Blunt contends that a comma ought to be supplied after the word “Church” in the title of the prayer, and that we pray for “the whole Church,” *part of which* is “militant here on earth.” There is no comma in the authorized copies, and the history, which we have traced, indicates what was the intention of the revisers in both 1552 and 1662 (“Annotated Book of Common Prayer,” p. 379).

Three points should here be noticed :

(i.) In the first clause *prayer* distinctly gives place to *praise*.

(ii.) "They with us, and we with them," gives place to "We with them."

(iii.) The later form (1559) is retained (with merely verbal alterations) in the Bidding Prayer of the Canons of 1603.

It is worthy of notice that the "passing bell" is retained in Elizabeth's Injunctions with certain limitations. "And after the time of his passing, to ring no more but one short peal: and one before the burial, and another short peal after the burial." This bell was originally connected with prayer for the departed soul, but it does not imply any public expression of such a form of devotion.

In the Primer of 1559, issued by the Queen's authority, we find the *Dirge* or "Office for the Dead." The term *Dirge* here includes both Vespers and Matins for the dead. It contains Psalms, Lessons, Anthems, and various direct prayers for the departed, besides others which are for the faithful in general.

Two points deserve notice :

1. The Primer was a book of *private devotions*, and is not intended for public worship. This Office finds place in it, having been directed before the Reformation for use in private, as well as in more public services.

2. There is a clearly marked modification of the prayers as compared with those in Henry's Primer of 1545.

The prayers are *general* for "*all faithful people being departed,*" not *particular*, as in the following from the Primer of 1545: "Graunt unto the soule of *N.*, Thy servaunt (the yeres mynd of whose death we have in remembraunce), a place of rest, the blissful quiet and clereness of Thy light."

Again, there is no prayer for the "remission of sins," nor for the "purging of all sins," as in 1545. The prayers in 1559 are that they "may be graciously brought unto the joys everlasting," "may be associate to the company of Thy saints," and that God may "bestow (their souls) in the country of peace and rest."

There is a note to the *Dirge* of 1559, "that all that is containd therein (the collectes excepted) may as well be applied for the lyvyng as for the deade." Cf. the old versicles which are retained :

" Lord, give *Thy people* eternal rest,
And light perpetual shine upon them."

" From the gates of hell,
Lord, deliver their souls."¹

We now come to the alleged *public use* of the *Dirge* in Elizabeth's Primer.

This is said to have occurred on two occasions :

1. On September 8 and 9, 1559, public obsequies were performed in St. Paul's by Archbishop Parker, assisted by Bishops Barlow and Scory, by the Queen's command, on the occasion of the death of Henry II. of France. The service on September 8 is called a *Dirge* in Holinshed and Stow : and Heylyn makes the same statement.² It has been assumed that this must have been the *Dirge* found in the Primer, which (as has been seen) contains prayers for the Dead, and, if so, we have an instance of public intercession for the departed at that date.

It appears certain that, even if this was the service used, it must have been much modified. Strype, who in his "Life of Grindal" calls this service a *Dirge* ("Grindal," p. 38), in his "Annals" describes fully the character of the service.³ Thus, he speaks of the *prayer* bidden by the York Herald, but adds, "as it used to be called, but now more properly *the praise*" (quoting the words). He also describes the service as partly "instead, I suppose, of the *Dirige*," and partly "perhaps taken out of the *Dirige*," and expressly marks off the ceremonies thus altered from the older funeral ceremonies.

Moreover, the sermon was to have been preached by Grindal, Bishop-elect of London, whose views upon these matters are

¹ Queen Elizabeth : "Private Prayers," pp. 57 *et seq.*

² So also Strype in his "Life of Grindal," p. 38.

³ Strype, "Annals," i., pp. 187 *et seq.*

plainly set out in his sermon at the obsequies of the Emperor Ferdinand. He was ill at the time, and Bishop Scory preached in his stead. Strype describes the sermon, which lays stress on the fact that primitive Burial Services were "to give praise to God for taking away their brother in the faith of Christ: which selfsame order they had now observed, and were about to fulfil and observe."¹ He proceeded to speak of ceremonies now abolished, as being beneficial neither to the living nor to the dead.

Strype's account is based on the records of State Funerals kept at the College of Herald's. I have compared it with the original, which exactly corresponds.²

On the day following (September 9) a Communion Service was celebrated at St. Paul's, the Bishops wearing "copes upon their surplices."³ This is sometimes referred to as an instance of a "Requiem Mass."⁴ There is not a word of such a service in the Chronicles or Histories. Strype does not mention it, but he names the fact that *six of the chief people* (including the three Bishops) *communicated*, which could not have occurred at a "Requiem Mass," where the celebrant alone communicates.

2. On October 3, 1564, a similar service was used on the death of the Emperor Ferdinand. On this occasion Bishop Grindal did actually preach, and his sermon is extant.⁵ The service was in St. Paul's, by command of the Queen. A hearse was erected in the choir, and the choir hung in black.

Bishop Grindal's sermon makes it clear that, if the *Dirge* from the Primer was used, it must have been modified by the omission of prayers for the dead. He defends the service then used against two classes of objectors—those who thought

¹ "Annals," i., p. 190.

² "Ex. Offic. Armiger," J. 13.

³ Heylyn, i., p. 305.

⁴ Pullan, "Book of Common Prayer," p. 121. The examination of Lord Halifax before the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline by Lord St. Aldwyn (Chairman) goes fully into this matter, and deserves careful attention. Lord Halifax did not further contest the point (Evidence, vol. iii., pp. 372 *et seq.*).

⁵ Parker Society, "Life of Archbishop Grindal," pp. 1-33.

“there is too little done,” and those who thought “there is too much.” Against the former he argues at length that Scripture nowhere directs such prayers. One class of malcontents had said, “Here is an honourable memorial . . . but *here is no prayer for the soul of Ferdinandus.*” This could not be said of the *Dirge* of 1559.

The other side alleged that the service “came too near to the superstitious rites abrogated.” Grindal replies: “Here is *no invocation or massing for the dead*, nothing else done, but that is godly: first singing of the Psalms, afterwards reading of the Scriptures, which put us in remembrance of our mortality and of the general resurrection, with doctrine and exhortation. All which things tend to edifying of the living, not benefiting of the dead.” And again, “Purgatory gaineth nothing by this day’s action, or such like, but rather receiveth a blow.”

It is, accordingly, beyond dispute that while these services form a precedent which it would be fair to quote as an instance of a service not under the Act of Uniformity, they cannot justly be described as services containing public prayer for the dead.” It is to be hoped that we have, in the interests of fairness and truth, seen the last of these misleading statements.

Further evidence, which confirms this view, is found in two Latin forms of service published in Elizabeth’s reign (1560), and entitled “In Commendationibus Benefactorum,” and “Celebratio Cœnæ Domini in funebribus, si amici et vicini defuncti communicare velint.”

These are for a semi-public use, and in the prayers of both services the cautiously worded form of intercession adopted in 1552, and retained in 1662, is employed.

The words used are: “*Ut nos . . . una cum illis ad resurrectionis gloriam immortalem perducamur*” (*In Commend. Benefact.*).

“*Ut nos . . . una cum hoc fratre nostro . . . regnemus tecum in vita æterna*” (*Celebr. Cœnæ*).

On the flyleaf before these services the following quotation from St. Augustine is given:

“Curatio funeris, conditio sepulturæ, pompa exequiarum, magis sunt vivorum solatia, quam subsidia mortuorum.”¹

The following passages are from the second part of the “Homily of Prayer,” published in 1571. They are adduced as clearly indicating the mind of those who drew up the “Second Book of Homilies” in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and show that it was the purpose of Bishop Jewel and the other leaders of the Church that the public teaching of the clergy should proceed on these lines :

“Now to entreat of that question, whether we ought to pray for them that are departed out of this world or no. Wherein, if we will cleave only unto the Word of God, then must we needs grant, that we have no commandment so to do.

“Let these and such other places be sufficient to take away the gross error of purgatory out of our heads: neither let us dream any more that the souls of the dead are anything at all holpen by our prayers, but as the Scripture teacheth us, let us think that the soul of man, passing out of the body, goeth straightways either to heaven or else to hell, whereof the one needeth no prayers, and the other is without redemption.”

The argument in the latter passage is doubtless open to question, the words “heaven” and “hell” being employed without sufficiently careful definition, but the quotation puts beyond doubt what was the view taken of such prayers by leading Elizabethan divines, and throws at least an important sidelight upon the facts already adduced. Personally, I believe that the words have an authority beyond this use of them, but I do not wish to press that now, for my desire is, as far as possible, to ascertain what is beyond dispute.

In the seventeenth century prayers for the faithful dead are found in books of *private devotion*, such as those drawn up by Bishop Andrewes and Bishop Cosin. This being so, it is all the more significant that, in his *Public Office* for the Consecration of Churchyards, Bishop Andrewes deliberately cut out those parts of the old Office which contained prayers for the dead.

It is, moreover, certain that Bishop Cosin interpreted the phrase “We and all Thy whole Church” in the first Post-

¹ Parker Society, “Liturgical Services, Queen Elizabeth,” pp. 431 *et seq.*

Communion Prayers as including the departed. He writes: "By 'all the whole Church' is to be understood, as well those that have been heretofore, and those that shall be hereafter, as those that are now the present members of it. And hereupon my Lord of Winchester, Bishop Andrewes, grounded his answer to Cardinal Perron, when he said, 'We have and offer this sacrifice both for the living and the dead, as well for them that are absent, as those that be present.'"¹

In another series of notes, probably not by Cosin himself, we find this interpretation of the same words, "that both those which are here on earth, and those that rest in the sleep of peace, being departed in the faith of Christ, may find the effect and virtue of it."²

The same view is taken in Cosin's notes of the words which *then* stood in the Burial Office, "That we with this our brother, and all other departed in the true faith of Thy Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul," etc. He describes this as "A special prayer for the person departed, as well as for ourselves that remain behind." And again in the other doubtful series of notes, "The Puritans think that here is prayer for the dead allowed by the Church of England, and so think I."³

This is what would be expected from the proposed changes (already noticed) in 1662, which had Cosin's undoubted sanction, and which would have placed this view beyond doubt, by freeing the words from all ambiguity. Cosin's views did not, however, prevail, and the words must be interpreted according to the whole history of the subject.

In conclusion, I venture to sum up what appear to myself to be the results of this inquiry.

1. The history of our formularies marks a distinct and final separation from the medieval *teaching* on Purgatory, and a deliberate disuse of the *name*.

¹ Bishop Cosin, "Works," v., p. 351.

² *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 169, 373.

2. It rightly takes into account the distinction between the doctrine of Purgatory and that of prayers for the refreshment, and for the full consummation, in body and soul, of those who *do rest in the sleep of peace*—such as are found in the early Christian liturgies.

3. In 1552 all direct and explicit prayers for the dead, of any kind, were deliberately excluded from our *public services*, and were never restored at any subsequent revision. Proposals for such a restoration were made in 1662, but were rejected. The statement that such prayers are nowhere forbidden (except in the Homilies) is not complete or fair, unless the above fact is placed side by side with it. The statement that public prayers for the dead were authorized in the reign of Elizabeth must be abandoned.

4. There appears to have been considerable divergence of opinion as to the use of *private prayer* for the faithful dead, such prayer, when adopted, being generally limited to petitions for their light, refreshment, and final perfection in union with our Blessed Lord.

The language of our Prayer-Book on this subject has been most judiciously chosen, and allows for some divergence of opinion. Nothing should be done, *in any Revision or in Forms of Prayer set forth by authority*, to disturb the carefully balanced adjustment of doctrine thus attained. We cannot all see eye to eye on this mysterious subject, and much sympathy must be felt for those who find comfort in the words of the Communion and Burial Services, as expressive of prayer for the full perfecting of all faithful people in the mystical Body of our risen Lord. And equal sympathy should be shown towards those who feel strongly the danger of any return to the form of words used in 1549. The language, whatever its history may be, is studiously general, and wisdom and charity alike forbid a too severe limitation of its meaning. Suffice it for us to hold that all error has been excluded, and that, while with some “their intent be more for one than for another,”¹ we are

¹ Quoted above from the “King’s Book,” p. 18.

able to join in true unity of spirit while we long for and pray for the "hastening of Thy kingdom; that we, *with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy holy name*, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory."



The Problem of Home Reunion.

By EUGENE STOCK, D.C.L.

THE subject is a large one. It involves the mutual relations of Churches and denominations in Canada, in Australasia, in South Africa, in the United States. It involves the future of the rising Native Churches in Asia and Africa. But I confine myself in this paper to the question of Home Reunion in Great Britain. We have all rejoiced over the utterances of the Lambeth Conference on Home Reunion. We might have wished them to go further, but we realize that they mark an important step in advance.

I put aside, for the time, the question of Establishment. Apparently, for the present, the State connection of the Church of England is fatal to any projects of reunion with Nonconformists, so many of whom conscientiously hold that Establishment is in itself wrong, not merely in a political sense, but having regard to the spiritual position of the Visible Church of Christ. For the purpose of the discussion, we must assume either that these objections have been waived, or that the Church has been disestablished.

It is important to distinguish between Union and Intercommunion, which are often confused. There is Intercommunion between the different Churches within what is now called the Anglican Communion; but not Union. If there were Union, the Irish Church and the American Church could not alter their Prayer-Books, which both have done. Both of them, and the Scottish Episcopal Church, are self-governed, and we have no