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# THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1918.

## The Month.

**Facing the  
Winter.** WITH the coming of October, the holiday season may be said to be at an end, and we are all preparing to face the winter which, by common consent, threatens to be one of no ordinary difficulty. It is not, however, of the material side of the problem we are thinking so much as of the spiritual side, and of the way parish work will be carried on. Usually by this time clergy have their programmes all carefully mapped out for the ensuing six months, and everything arranged down to the last button. But in only a very few cases has such a thing been possible this year, for the hindrances are many. With parish halls commandeered; with assistant clergy, and not a few incumbents, gone as Chaplains to the Forces; with lay workers gone—the men to the Army and the women to munition factories or to the land or to some other department of National Service, those who remain at home find it difficult to “carry on,” and we imagine the obstacles will increase as the weeks go by. Yet there never was a time when energetic work in the parishes was more needed than at the present time. Hearts made sad by bereavement long for consolation, and in no way can this be more effectually supplied than by the faithful visitation of the parish clergyman, who brings with him the comforting influences of true religion; young people require more, rather than less, attention, discipline and instruction; parishioners who, in the past, have found help and inspiration in one or other of the many social and religious meetings which rightly have a place in the organisation of every well-worked parish, need as never before the stimulating influence of fellowship and brotherhood; and those attending our services look forward with greater intensity than ever to the uplifting power of bright and hearty services and spiritually-minded sermons. But how can these things be under present conditions? It is impossible to offer any

detailed suggestions as the circumstances of different parishes vary so greatly, but as a general principle it may safely be said that clergy who find themselves handicapped by depleted staffs will do well to concentrate attention upon things that really matter. Especially is it important that services and sermons should be kept up to a high level, so that those who attend public worship shall be really helped and edified. The place occupied by the sermon was never more important than it is to-day. Men and women come to Church hungering and thirsting after that which will minister to their souls' deepest interests, and they are grievously disappointed if they look up and are not fed. They feel their need of the Gospel ; they desire instruction in the Christian faith ; they are asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward. Clergy who recognise this characteristic of the times will find no higher scope for their energies than seeking humbly, sincerely and determinedly to satisfy these needs. The preacher who resolutely purposes that he will make a special effort during the next six months to interpret the mind and heart of God to his people will have no cause for regret if some other branches of his work suffer. But need these other branches be altogether abandoned ? Some curtailment there must be, but with careful organisation the more important of them may be kept going. It would be a sorry business if the effective witness of the Church were not maintained towards both those who already value its ministrations, and those who have yet to be won for Christ and His Church.

In one of those Saturday articles in *The Times* which so many have come to look for eagerly every week, the "Correspondent" dealt recently with the question of Reading the Lessons, and offered, as usual, some shrewd observations and not a little wise counsel. Although it is not easy to assent to all his propositions, his plea for clear and intelligent reading of the Lessons will be readily approved by congregations. "Too often," the writer says, "the Word of God is made of non-effect by careless, indistinct, or perfunctory reading of the Lessons in church. Whoever undertakes this important ministry, whether priest or layman, must train himself so to read the Bible that its message may be readily understood, and thus minister grace to those who hear." It is good to find in *The Times* the Bible spoken

of as "the Word of God" and the reading of the Lessons referred to as an "important ministry." Not always is its importance realised, yet there are chapters—such for instance as that magnificent eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans—which, when read with sympathy and with the note of personal experience, are as impressive and as powerful as any sermon. Do clergy or lay-readers sufficiently realise their responsibility in this respect? Do they appreciate how keenly congregations are vexed and disappointed when the Lessons are carelessly or ineffectively read? To be able publicly to read the Word of God so that its message appeals to the heart is, no doubt, a gift which not every one possesses, but with care, and by prayer, the capacity for good reading of the Scriptures can be acquired. The ordinary rules of elocution are not always applicable. The Bible is a book by itself; it cannot be read publicly in the same way, for example, as one would recite a play of Shakespeare's or a chapter by Dickens. Who cannot recall the reading of Lessons which has been absolutely spoilt by the reader indulging in tricks of elocution under the altogether mistaken notion that they enhance the effect of the reading? The more clearly and the more simply the Lessons are read the better. But it is, of course, of the essence of good reading of the Lessons that the reader understands what he is reading, that he believes it to be the Word of God, and that he has within him that which responds to it as a matter of personal experience.

**"Life and Liberty"** The "Life and Liberty" Movement is taking hold of the imagination of many Churchmen of all schools of thought, but in spite of meetings, conventions and conferences there still seems to be in some quarters some uncertainty, first as to what the movement really means and second, whether the programme, as far as it is understood, is really practical politics. In what way it differs from the Church Reform League or the Church Self-Government Association is not readily apparent. The Archbishop of York has been appealed to by some clergy to say what he thinks of the movement, and his reply is marked by that vagueness so characteristic of the bishops when they wish to avoid giving a definite opinion. He certainly says he is "in full sympathy with its main purpose and desire," but for the rest he indulges in a number of well-meaning platitudes.

It would be wrong, however, to blame the Archbishop for his caution. There are some grave questions upon which it is desirable to know the mind of the leaders of the movement before it is right or wise to pronounce definitely upon it. What, for instance, is their real attitude towards disestablishment? What, again, is their attitude towards "the Romeward drift" within the Church of England?

The new Report of the National Church League has just been issued, and with it is sent out the following important letter from the President, the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Clarke, K.C. :—

I take the opportunity of the issue of the Annual Report to members of the National Church League to call your attention to the gravely important character of the task which lies immediately before us, and to ask for all the help which you can give towards accomplishing it. The crisis with which our Church is now faced is not less serious than that through which the nation had been passing during four years of war. An active and aggressive faction is making every effort to dominate the Church and to impose upon it ideals alien to its whole character. Should they succeed every trace of the Reformation will ultimately be obliterated. By a policy of resistance to all law, ecclesiastical or civil, they have reduced the episcopate to a condition of impotence, until, in the vain hope of securing peace by compromise, the Bishops in Convocation are now taking steps which will concede in principle practically all that is demanded.

The preoccupation of the people of the country with matters concerning the war, and the absence of so large a proportion of the members of our congregations, have been skilfully used to press forward this Romish propaganda until it now demands the most prompt and energetic action if it is to be successfully resisted.

The Annual Report and the papers enclosed with it indicate something of what the League has done, and is doing. Its most important work is that of education—the exposition and defence of the principles of the Reformation, so that the nature of the assaults upon them may be understood. And next to this comes organisation—the bringing together for common action Churchmen who, while desirous of all necessary reforms in the methods and machinery of the Church, are determined to resist all efforts to undermine and Romanise Church doctrine.

The war has rendered it very difficult to maintain our work, especially during the last two years, and we are faced with a large deficit at a time when the cost of the means by which it is carried on has more than doubled. At least £2,000 will be needed to clear our accounts and to provide for the work immediately before us, and I confidently appeal to every member of the League for contributions towards this.

We are certain that so weighty and impressive an appeal will meet with a gracious response. The address of the National Church League is 6 Grosvenor Mansions, 82 Victoria Street, S.W.1.

## The Church of England and Nonconformity.<sup>1</sup>

THE Joint Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, appointed, as will be remembered, to prepare for a World Conference on Faith and Order, issued in about the year 1912 a tract bearing the arresting title, "Unity or Union: Which?" A consideration of the suggested difference between these two words may well form a convenient and helpful starting point for our discussion. The writer of the tract asserted that the two words stand for two different principles, of which he gave illustrations. Branches broken from a tree will die. This illustrates the principle that in the higher orders of being unity is essential to life. Two men working together can cut down a tree faster than one man can cut it down alone. This shows that in practical matters union brings strength. Take again the two words friendship and partnership. Friendship means sharing all the chief things in life for the pure joy of sharing them. It exists because love seeks an object that it may live, because "he who loves not lives not." Partnership, on the other hand, means co-operation with other people for the sake of getting something done in a speedy and successful way. Nothing need be shared by partners except their labour and their profits. Partnership is union for strength; friendship is unity for life.

### THE FUNDAMENTAL UNITY.

Let us accept this distinction as sufficiently accurate for our present purpose, and ask ourselves whether it is unity or union which we are seeking in relation to our fellow-Christians. I suggest that we already possess a real, if only imperfectly realized, unity, and that what we want is union. We possess unity. All who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity are already at unity in Him. He is the Vine, we are the branches. He Himself told us that except we abide in Him we have no life in us, and we can bear no fruit. It will be freely and gladly admitted that in all branches of the visible Church there are those in countless numbers who plainly and manifestly have eternal life and are bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are living branches of the True Vine, and in Him they

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the Southport Conference.

are one. The great motto text which always hangs over the door of the tents at the Keswick Convention is literally true, "All one in Christ Jesus."

But this real spiritual unity is only imperfectly realized. We need to realize it more fully, to insist loudly on its genuineness, and to press it to practical service. Because we possess unity, there is the hopeful possibility of going on to create union, if we so wish. It is easy for friends to become partners. Those who share a unity in Christ should be in the right frame of mind to discuss proposals for union; and, as we are coming to perceive more and more, the temper of mind in which people of different views approach each other is the all-important thing. Where there is a desire to sympathize, to understand, to appreciate the valuable elements in the position of one from whom you differ, much can be done. Where, on the other hand, there is a spirit of latent antagonism, a desire to score debating points at your opponent's expense, any sort of conference with a view to *rapprochement* is practically useless. In the political world, alike to our astonishment and thankfulness, very much has been done during the last four years in the way of concerted action for great national ends. But why has this been possible? Just because in face of a grave national danger Englishmen have realized their fundamental unity. The spirit of controversy has, to some extent at least, been laid aside, and there has been a general desire to speed the passage of necessary legislation even when it has not been altogether palatable. What has been done in the State should surely be done much more readily and widely in the Church, because our unity, if we would but realize it, is the deepest unity of all. Romans, Easterns, Anglicans, Free Churchmen of every variety, we are all one by faith in our common Saviour and Lord. We are one Holy Catholic Apostolic Church. Do we then, as a matter of fact, desire to make our fundamental unity a foundation for union? How keenly do we desire this? What precisely do we mean by union?

#### THE DESIRE FOR UNION.

The answer to the first and second questions is easier than the answer to the third. There is a growing desire for union between the different sections of Christ's Church. Not all sections have the desire in the same degree. It is most pronounced in the Protestant denominations—episcopal and non-episcopal—of Britain and

America. Next in sympathy, probably, is the Russian Orthodox Church. Next would come the remoter divisions of the Eastern Church; and last of all, only just awakening in some dim way from her self-satisfied slumber, the Roman Communion. Moreover, within the Protestant Churches the desire varies greatly in strength. It is a desire most keenly felt among the leaders, among the most spiritually minded, only filtering slowly down to the rank and file. But on the whole it is an increasing desire, and the manifest signs of its presence and working are growing. The war has done something to make it grow faster. The English Joint Committee on Faith and Order, in their second interim report "Towards Christian Unity" issued in April, 1918 (it will be convenient to quote these two important reports under this title), write that "the conflict among Christian nations has brought home to us with a greater poignancy the disastrous results of the divisions which prevail among Christians, inasmuch as they have hindered that growth of mutual understanding which it should be the function of the Church to foster, and because a Church which is divided cannot speak effectively to a divided world."

#### UNION OR FEDERATION ?

We pass on then to handle the more thorny question, "What do we mean by the union which we are beginning to seek?" Do we mean that the different denominations are to be merged into one denomination, or do we mean that they are merely to be federated, while retaining their independence and their differences?

Now there is no doubt what the writers of "Towards Christian Unity" desire. In their statement in 1916 they agree "That it is the purpose of our Lord that believers in Him should be, as in the beginning they were, one visible society—His body with many members—which in every age and place should maintain the communion of saints in the unity of the Spirit and should be capable of a common witness and a common activity." In the 1918 statement, after repeating the phrase "one visible society," they add: "The visible unity of the Body of Christ is not adequately expressed in the co-operation of the Christian Churches for moral influence and social service, though such co-operation might with great advantage be carried much farther than it is at present: it could only be fully realized through community of worship, faith, and



order, including common participation in the Lord's Supper. This would be quite compatible with a rich diversity of life and worship."

We shall return to discuss some details about this splendid vision in a few moments. Meanwhile we must notice that it is not a vision which attracts everybody. There are those who frankly prefer Federation because they feel that a rich diversity of life and worship is not enough. They want also a rich diversity, or at any rate some diversity, of order, to suit the different temperaments to be found among Christian men. A representative of this point of view may be found in Dr. Griffith Jones, President of the Congregational Union, who, in a postscript to his Presidential address delivered in May of this year, criticized the statements just quoted. He said that he found it difficult to see why uniformity of organic type should be more desirable in the spiritual world than in natural life, where the life-principle realizes itself in a myriad ways. He added: "I think that the Free Church signatories to the report should tell us what it is they have really assented to. . . . While we are earnestly anxious for closer relations with our sister Churches, we are in no way likely, now or at any future time, to sign away our birthright of freedom and autonomy for the sake of comprehension in a visible body."

Now it is incumbent upon us to make up our minds which of these two ideals we want to see eventually realized. Do we want the "one visible society," embracing types of mind and worship within a broad community of order? This is the principle upon which the Church of England is constructed to-day. Or do we want a Federation of differently organized societies? This is practically the principle of the Congregational Union.

It cannot be questioned that Federation upon a large scale would be a great advance upon the existing state of things. How great may well be realized by a use of the imagination to picture on a yet vaster scale the possible scope of such a document as the recent Report—I give it its full title—"Report of Conference of Representatives of the Evangelical Free Churches on Closer Co-operation of the Churches." This document contains first a "Declaratory Statement of Common Faith and Practice," signed by Professor P. Carnegie Simpson. Next comes a draft constitution of a proposed Federal Union between the Free Churches, signed by Dr. Scott Lidgett. The main objects of the union are declared to be the

expression of the essential unity in Christ of the Evangelical Free Churches, and the co-ordination of their activities and resources so as to promote most effectively the extension of Christ's Kingdom. The basis of the union is to be the Evangelical Faith and the autonomy of the Federating Churches. Hints as to the effect of such Federation are given in two subsequent sections upon Evangelization and the Ministry. In regard to Evangelization, information as to the actual distribution of Free Churches in rural and urban areas is to be obtained so as to consider whether something can be done to deal with the existing overlapping. It is suggested that some of the present churches might be turned into buildings for work of a social and institutional kind. Moreover, for the future Free Churches are only to be planted in new areas after common consultation, a hint being apparently taken from the comity so generally observed in the Mission Field. In regard to the Ministry, something like identity of procedure in ordination is in view, and a Committee is "to collect all the facts concerning the methods by which ministers are now recognized in each of the Federating Churches, and to report what, in their judgment, should be the conditions requiring to be fulfilled by ministers of any of the Federating Churches prior to their ministry being recognized by all the others." So far as I have observed, this scheme of Federation has been accepted by the Baptist and Congregational Unions, but rejected by the Presbyterian Synod, the difficulty in the last case being apparently the question of the recognition of non-Presbyterian Orders.

But would such Federation be satisfactory, if it could be so handled as to bring the Episcopal Churches within it? Personally I am inclined to doubt it. I doubt if the Church of England could at the present moment be brought within it without the risk of being broken up. I am not sure that waste and overlapping would be effectually prevented. Still less do I feel sure that Federation is the wiser course when we remember that the ultimate goal is to re-establish union between all the Churches all over the world. There may very probably be utility in establishing a kind of Federation—such as was suggested at Kikuyu—as a temporary measure, but I believe we shall be doing the wisest thing if we direct our main efforts towards paving the way for the more immediately difficult but ultimately more satisfactory goal of the one visible society, embracing its "diversity of life and worship" within a large "com-

munity of worship, faith and order," as proposed by the authors of the two reports, "Towards Christian Unity." We may just notice in passing that this seems to be the ambition of the leaders of the most brilliantly hopeful reunion movement of the day, I mean the movement to form one Church of Scotland. Nine years of negotiations have brought the two great Scottish Churches very close to complete union, and seers like Dr. James Cooper are now casting their eyes towards the Episcopal Churches of Scotland and England as well.

#### THE STARTING POINT.

Assuming then that we hold up as our ideal the "one visible society," where are we to begin operations and what are the terms? The first question is easy to answer. Rome is impossible at present. The Eastern Church is not impossible, but difficult. There is general agreement that the right starting point is within the bounds of Protestantism. And although we watch with intense interest the movement in America engineered by the Protestant Episcopal Church, yet it is practical politics to direct our attention almost wholly to British Nonconformity. Here let me answer a question which some people delight to ask: Which of all the multitudinous sects which flourish in our midst do you include? I would suggest the large and well established non-Episcopal Communion: the Presbyterians, the Baptists and Congregationalists, and the three groups of Wesley's followers, the Wesleyans, the Primitive Methodists, and the United Methodists. The rest may for the present be left out of count.

What, then, are to be the terms of union? Here, of course, we come to the very heart of the subject, and questions arise which are infinitely too big to be handled in a single paper. I can only touch on some of them briefly, and my object will be more to raise questions which will have to be answered than to lay down dogmatic and final positions. I suppose, however, that as Anglicans we may sum up the terms in the Lambeth Quadrilateral, i.e. the Two Testaments, the Two Creeds, the Two Sacraments, and 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 BIBLE AND THE SACRAMENTS.

Now happily no question arises on the most fundamental point

of all, the Two Testaments. Everywhere in Protestantism the Bible is regarded as the final testing ground of doctrine, and the principle underlying Article VI finds general acceptance. Neither is there any real difficulty over the Two Sacraments. It was agreed in the 1916 "Towards Christian Unity" Report that "our Lord ordained, in addition to the preaching of His Gospel, the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, as not only declaratory symbols, but also effective channels of His grace and gifts for the salvation and sanctification of men, and that these Sacraments being essentially social ordinances were intended to affirm the obligation of corporate fellowship as well as individual confession of Him." Similarly in the purely Nonconformist "Declaratory Statement of Common Faith and Practice," to which I referred just now, it is said that "The Sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper—are instituted by Christ, Who is Himself certainly and really present in His own ordinances (though not bodily in the elements thereof), and are signs and seals of His Gospel not to be separated therefrom. They confirm the promises and gifts of salvation, and, when rightly used by believers with faith and prayer, are, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, true means of grace." No true Anglican could want a better sentence than that.

#### THE CREEDS.

There is a little more difficulty over the Creeds, not indeed over their substance, but over their use. In regard to substance, the "Declaratory Statement" asserts that "the Evangelical Free Churches of England claim and cherish their place as inheritors, along with others, of the historic faith of Christendom, which found expression in the Œcumenical Creeds of the early and undivided Church." But there is at present a real difference over the use of the Creeds. The Church of England requires an acceptance of the Apostles' Creed from all candidates for Baptism. The credal requirements for the Ministry are greater still. The Presbyterians share with the Church of England the use of fixed forms of belief. On the other hand, some of the Nonconformist bodies have inherited a deep-rooted antipathy to fixed forms. They do not mind issuing from time to time Declarations of Belief, but they insist strongly that these are declarations and are neither essentially permanent nor are they to be used as tests for other men. The Congregational procedure is typical of this point of view. Most ministers would say

to an applicant for membership that while there was no credal test, yet there must be a tacit understanding as to personal faith in the Saviour for the forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Similarly, when a man is being ordained, he makes a statement of his beliefs, and the presence at his Ordination of the Principal of the College from which he comes is held to be a guarantee that he is loyal to the central and fundamental points in the Evangelical Faith. The upholders of Creeds maintain that a simple fixed form of words does not put a bar in the way of varieties of belief in less essential matters—there are differences among us Anglicans, for instance, on the question between the symbolical and literal interpretation of such clauses in the Apostles' Creed as the Descent into Hell, and the Session at God's right hand of the exalted Saviour, to say nothing of the more burning matters of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of Christ's Body—they would also maintain that a venerable form of words is a valuable aid to the preservation of continuity. The no-Creed men, on the other hand, cannot escape from the belief that a fixed form has a cramping effect—whether it be in Creeds or Prayers—and they also stoutly maintain that Creeds are not essential to the preservation of the substance of the Faith. Indeed, some of them would say that the Faith is much better preserved by the Holy Spirit without assistance from a Creed.

This difference between the two sides, while acute at present, will probably tend to lessen with the growth of mutual understanding, and it would not, perhaps, be too venturesome to prophesy that when the "one visible society," or a stage towards it, comes into being, the acceptance of at any rate the Apostles' Creed, liberally interpreted, will be found to be a condition of membership.

#### EPISCOPACY.

The big difficulty is over the matter of Episcopacy. But while we must not minimize the difficulty, we may, thank God, speak of it in language of the utmost hopefulness.

Let us look at it first from our point of view. We cannot give up Episcopacy. We believe that it is a form of government which can be shown by the most searching historical criticism to have existed in the Church from the end of the first century, even if we do not use the Prayer Book phrase "from the time of the Apostles." We know that it is a form of government still prevalent over the

greater part of the Catholic Church, and to give it up would be to sacrifice our hopes of the ultimate reunion of all Christendom. We believe also that all experience goes to show its practical utility. On the other hand, to use a phrase which brings comfort to the Nonconformist mind, we want Episcopacy and not Prelacy. We want a constitutional Episcopacy. It has been said by Dr. Selbie of Mansfield College that Episcopacy represents the monarchial ideal of Church government, as Presbyterianism represents the oligarchical and Congregationalism the democratic. We want an Episcopacy which freely welcomes and takes up into itself the undoubtedly valuable elements in other systems of government. The Bishop must not be a feudal autocrat. He must be a Senior Presbyter, sitting in the chair of the Presbyteral Body, and exercising his functions with their counsel and consent. The Church of England has never lost one important piece of testimony to the desirability of this. I mean the too little emphasized fact that the Bishop cannot ordain presbyters except in conjunction with presbyters. Similarly it is desirable that, as in early Church days, so now the laity should have an effective voice both in the selection of their Bishop and in the determination of his administrative acts. I would also strongly welcome the re-establishment of a real, i.e., permanent, diaconate, whereby provision might be made for the due recognition and use of the spiritual ministrations of the laity. Such an Episcopacy would not slam the door in the face of the Roman and Eastern Churches, and it would be shorn of most of the features which have caused the non-Episcopal communions to grow up. It would permit them to feel that in accepting a modified Episcopacy they were not turning their backs upon their own history.

Now look at the Nonconformist side. When Dr. Dale of Birmingham wrote in 1884 his "Manual of Congregational Principles," he proved to his own satisfaction and presumably to the satisfaction of the Congregationalists of his day, that the New Testament Polity was congregational and that modern Congregationalism is in all essential features identical with it. Now—in May, 1918—we have had the interesting spectacle of a great Congregational leader like Dr. Forsyth getting up in the session of the Congregational Union and declaring that Congregationalism came into existence as a result of a double fallacy, that the New Testament Church Polity was sacrosanct, and that it was the polity of the Independent

Church. Such a man still clings to the ideal of spiritual freedom, but he wants the freedom of the Great Congregation, not of the local one. He sees that pure local autonomy is impossible, spiritually and practically. To quote his own words: "They must construe their autonomy by unity, and not unity by autonomy, and submit their autonomy to the spirit of the whole Church." This change of front is momentous. Of course non-Episcopalians almost all reject absolutely the High Anglican doctrine of apostolical succession. Some of them inquire also from us Evangelicals why, if we reject that doctrine ourselves, we still cling to the fact of Episcopacy as the necessary and exclusive form of government. But, in spite of the inevitable diversities and cross-currents of opinion, there is just as steady a trend towards a modified Episcopacy among non-Episcopalians as—I think it is true to say—there is a trend away from prelatical Episcopacy amongst us Anglicans. There is a large amount of suspicion of Episcopacy left, even among Presbyterians; but the old direct hostility is dying away, and I believe it would not be far from the truth to say that educated Nonconformist opinion could be summed up in some such sentence as this: "We are not unwilling to accept a modified constitutional Episcopacy if it is made perfectly clear that certain theories of the transmission of grace are ruled out, and if the valuable elements in our own Polities are somehow preserved." Meanwhile we note two things.

On the practical side there is a good deal of Episcopacy-under-other-names among the non-Episcopalians. There are the Moderators or Presidents of the General Assemblies. I believe also that the Baptists and Congregationalists have administrative districts which might just as well be called Dioceses. The Wesleyans have their circuits and larger co-ordinated areas.

On the theoretical side we have the far-reaching admissions of the recent report "Towards Christian Unity." The distinguished Nonconformists who sign that report expressly admit that Episcopacy in the greater part of Christendom is "the recognized organ of the unity and continuity of the Church," and that Episcopalians "ought not to be expected to abandon it in assenting to any basis of reunion." On the other hand, the Episcopalians realize that the Holy Spirit has worked through other forms of government for converting sinners and perfecting saints.

## RECOGNITION AND INTERCOMMUNION.

I have deliberately kept myself to what seem to me to be the main issues at the risk of leaving myself little space to deal with two other points which have been much discussed lately. I ought, perhaps, just to touch on them. There is the question of Recognition of Nonconformist Orders. We are becoming agreed to recognize their spiritual validity. There is absolutely no hope of getting one step further until we have frankly accepted that. What it behoves us to do is to accept the spiritual validity and then enter into discussion about regularity. The Nonconformists are quite conscious that while we on our side have, perhaps, been too stiff in insisting on order, they have been much too slack about it, and they are anxious to mend their ways. There are three important points to be borne in mind in dealing with Ordination. There is Vocation, which is inward, the work of the Holy Ghost. There is Recognition of Vocation by the Church. About these two points we are all agreed. The difference arises on the third point, the commission given by the existing Ministry with some ceremony deliberately pointing out him to whom the commission is given. What we want to do here is to discuss the precise value and meaning of the ancient rite of Imposition of Hands, and to ask ourselves in response to what conditions in ordained and ordainers the grace of ordination is given.

There ought not to be any insuperable difficulty in the way of reaching an agreement on this third point, and in discussing ways and means we shall remember that two helpful suggestions have been made. One is that recourse should be had to the historical practice of *per saltum* Ordinations to the Episcopate. The other is Bishop John Wordsworth's idea of joint Ordinations, whereby, for instance, an Anglican presbyter should be ordained by an Anglican Bishop and Presbyters and by some non-Episcopal ministers, and vice versa.

The other point is Intercommunion. This really depends on the recognition of ministry. If the ministry is recognized, the so-called validity of Communion goes with it. The Nonconformists attach great value to Intercommunion as a test of our real desire for a reunion which shall be something more worth having than mere absorption. I think that we on our side must try to get it as soon as possible. But it must be on the scale of the whole Church. It must be duly authorized by the whole Bench of Bishops. Inter-



communion of a local or party kind appears to me to be not only useless, but even likely to be harmful in the long run. We must try the sometimes very successful policy of "squeezing the Bishops" with the nippers of historical facts and practical present needs.

#### CONCLUSION.

Let me, in conclusion, raise the question, "What can we do immediately towards realizing the great end we have in view?" and suggest two lines of answer. The first answer is that we should press very hard the method of Conferences. I do not mean meetings of those who agree for the purpose of listening to papers to support their argument. I mean real discussion Conferences between those who do not agree with a view to a clear and frank interchange of views. Nonconformists, Evangelicals and High Churchmen all want to be there. Half our troubles are due to sheer ignorance and misunderstanding of each other's positions, and only Conferences can clear the mists away. If ever the great World Conference on Faith and Order meets, the way will have been prepared by many Conferences on a lesser scale.

But in a Conference all depends on atmosphere, on the vividness of the sense of friendship and fellowship in the one Body of Christ. How shall this atmosphere be created? I think the answer is, By common work for the Kingdom of God. We have all been stirred recently by reading the Archbishops' Committee's Report on the Evangelistic work of the Church. We see afresh a vision of the call to evangelize our Fatherland. It is a task too great for the Anglican Church alone. We must deliberately share it with the Nonconformists. Let there be common action for this purpose, common action based upon common counsel. Why should there not be local Councils of the Churches, finding out the weak spots and strengthening them, and organizing a great concerted Forward Movement, inspired by common Prayer? Such a joint effort for the Master's Kingdom would bring an abundant reflex blessing. It would deepen our sense of inner unity, and make the difficulties which withstand union begin to vanish away. May God in His mercy hasten the Day when the scandal of our divisions shall cease, and His Church stand before the world as one great Brotherhood holding out the one Gospel of Salvation for all mankind.

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