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THE EPISCOPATE AND REUNION.

BY THE REV. J. R. COHU, M.A., Rector of Aston Clinton.

YOU have honoured me with an invitation to write a paper on :
(a) The Reform of the Episcopate ; (b) Variations within
the United Church.

In other words : Restore the Episcopate to its original constitutional form of New Testament or Reformation days ; so will you reunite the Churches, with their rich variety of religious experience, greatly to the benefit of the United Church and the promotion of the Kingdom of God. This question is not academic, far from it. Your committee has deliberately chosen, framed and worded the subject as above, because the fate of the whole movement for the reunion of the Churches hangs on the spirit in which we face these two topics of episcopal reform and varieties of religious experience. A brief survey of the present situation may make this plainer. In March, 1918, was issued the second Interim Report of a sub-committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order. This sub-committee was appointed partly by an Archbishop's Committee representing our Church, partly by Commissions of the English Free Churches, with a view to reunion. The question this sub-committee was asked to answer was this : " Is it possible for episcopal and non-episcopal Churches to heal their present unhappy divisions and re-unite as one organic Church without surrender of fundamental principles on either side ? " From the outset it was definitely, if tacitly, understood that our Church would hold out for episcopacy. Any break of continuity with the past in the form of a surrender of the historic episcopate, far from tending to reunion, would instantly split the Anglican Church in twain. Hence the sub-committee's answer : We believe that re-union is quite practicable if the non-episcopal Churches are ready to accept the bare fact of episcopacy without any theory as to its character. In plain English the proposal amounts to this : " We are of opinion that the Free Churches can accept the fact of episcopacy *without any surrender of principle* ; all details as to the nature and character of episcopal election, government and power may be left to a later stage of discussion." This is clearly implied by the Report's own words : " The acceptance of episcopacy on these terms should not involve

any Christian community in the necessity of disowning its past, but should enable all to maintain the continuity of their witness as heirs and trustees of types of Christian thought, life and order, not only of value to themselves, but of value to the Church as a whole."

This proposal the Free Churches are seriously considering, but they ask for clearer definition of terms. If I may use a homely phrase, no one likes to buy "a pig in a poke." They fully agree that all Churches must be prepared to make any sacrifice, short of surrender of principle, to promote organic unity. They rejoice at this serious and practicable effort to bridge the gap between them and us. They have no intrinsic objection to episcopal government in itself; it has largely ceased to be the Nonconformist bugbear it once was. Their own Free Church "superintendents," exercising "oversight" or supervision over local churches and ministers in given areas, are but "bishops" under another name. The Free Churches' difficulty does not lie in their being asked to "accept the fact of episcopacy," but in accepting it "without any theory as to its character." Their plea is, and it is a very just plea: "We are ready to meet you more than half-way; indeed, we are inclined to accept your terms, but we want to be quite clear as to their meaning. You ask us to accept the fact of episcopacy, *and not any theory of its character.*" But the "character of the episcopacy" is precisely the one point which is to us of vital moment. We want to know at the outset what is meant by "bishop," whether his power is constitutional or monarchical, whence his authority is derived, and on what basis it ultimately rests. We have no objection to a "bishop," *provided the bishop be representative and claim no divine right*, but on that proviso we take our stand and from that position we cannot budge one inch. Any kind of reunion between the Churches that has not fully faced and settled that vital question will be hollow and transient; if the "character of episcopacy" is left vague and undefined, the old mischief of our present unhappy divisions is sure to break out all over again over that very point. It is just because we are so anxious to promote the sacred cause of unity, to lay its foundation well and truly, that we want a perfectly clear understanding as to the meaning of the terms used. And for this purpose, even though the Interim Report rules it out of the present discussion, a full and frank discussion of the "character of the episcopacy" is essential.

This is a wise, brave and just plea which we must all endorse. Now what answer are we Anglicans going to give to the Free Church question: What do you mean by episcopacy? What they want to know and we have to tell them is somewhat of this nature: (1) Is the Bishop the representative of the Church, and does he derive all his rights and powers from its members; or does he exercise his authority by divine right, receiving that authority direct from heaven by official and uninterrupted transmission from God to Christ, from Christ to the Apostles, from the Apostles to the bishops their successors? (2) Are bishops the sole depositaries of the Spirit of God, its indispensable channels, so that no ministry or sacrament is valid except that of ministers ordained by a bishop through the laying on of hands? (3) Is the bishop of the *esse*, and not only of the *beneesse* of the Church, that is, is he necessary, not only for the effective well-being of the Church so that its work may be better done, but as essential to the very existence of the Church at all as the one channel through which the Church receives the Holy Spirit? Is "no bishop, no Church" a fact? Must we say that Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Congregational Churches, having no bishops and therefore no channels of the Holy Spirit, lie outside Christ's Church, outside Christ, outside salvation; that they are in the sin of schism, foes to the mind and will of Christ, invalid in their ministry and sacraments, and that even to countenance their existence is a sin?

Within our own Church one large wing gives an emphatic Yes to these questions, another, an emphatic No. How decide between them? There is one final court of appeal for questions of fact. History and its verified facts. Rome does not like history: "The appeal from Tradition to History is treason to the Church" (Manning).

To sketch the origin, growth and development of episcopacy and Church Ministry in this paper is impossible. With Lightfoot, Hort, Gwatkin, etc., as guides, we just state the barest New Testament facts. We do not wish to squeeze the Church back into its New Testament cradle and ignore the value of later development, but our plea is that, in our search for a basis of reunion with Free Churches and our discussion with them, we must bear this in mind: Unless we are prepared to unchurch the Apostolic Church as "invalid," we must insist on nothing as *essential* to a Christian Church,

however expedient it may be, which is not found in the New Testament. The Apostolic Church gives us these as facts and principles.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

Organization. The New Testament stands for the principle that *no form of Church government and organization can claim Christ or the Apostles as its founders* (Hort). The needs of time, place and occasion decide, and it is as the Christian people or Church think best. There was little or no organization in the New Testament Church, and, as to it, Christ and the Apostles just gave broad guiding principles and expected the Christian people to apply them for themselves; e.g., Christ's: "Be ye not called Rabbi, for One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," constitutes the Church a Brotherhood, where no one is above or below other, no one stands between a man and his God. The Apostles added: "Let all things be done decently and in order, and to the edification of the Church." The fact is Christ's return was daily expected. Preach Christ's kingdom, prepare for it, win men into it, was the Church's one aim. All else, organization included, was secondary. Converted souls, not machinery, mattered. Hence the Apostles' reply when urged to organize: "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. Look ye out among you seven men of honest report . . . but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word."

Ministry. The New Testament has a *higher ministry for which the only ordination is that of the Spirit, and a lower ministry of administration to which men appoint.* It is quite true, as Hort says, that there was nothing like our own clergy and bishops;¹ they were not needed, for the congregation conducted its own services. Yet there were two ministries: (1) The "Ministry of the Word," or highly-prized preaching ministry; its ministers were "apostles, prophets, teachers," tied to no Church, not appointed by man, for theirs was a call and ordination of the Spirit, needing no human warrant, for it was patent to all. They were in no sense office-bearers; they were responsible to no congregation of Christians, burdened by no cares of office and no pastoral duties, simply mis-

¹ "Much profitless labour has been spent in trying to force the various terms of Paul's lists into meaning so many ecclesiastical offices. The feat is impossible . . . he is not speaking of Church-officers or posts at all, but of spiritual 'gifts' or functions open to the whole congregation."

sionaries spreading Christ's kingdom wherever the Spirit called ; (2) The "Ministry of Tables"—a quite subordinate ministry for the administrative work of the local Church, e.g., finance, charity, discipline, arbitration, hospitality—*did* consist of local officials like our churchwardens. They are called "presbyters" or "bishops" or "elders"—for they are one and the same—with "deacons" under them. So, though "bishops," "presbyters," "deacons" are in the New Testament, we must bear in mind that whereas they stand for a *threefold* ministry with us, it is a *twofold* ministry in the New Testament, for "bishop" and "presbyter" are identical.¹ It is from this lower ministry that our episcopacy has come. Lightfoot is right: "The episcopate was formed, *not* out of the Apostolic order, but out of the presbyteral by elevation." Yes, from the lowly lay elder, the nominee of the local congregation, will spring a priestly monarchical Cyprian, who will disown his humble presbyteral parentage and claim apostolic pedigree. We can see the first step on that road in the New Testament, in this way. Each local Church had many elders or bishops ; at their councils of elders they needed a chairman ; he would naturally at the Lord's Supper "break the bread" and "bless the cup," for this necessitated one man to do as Christ had done ; he was also responsible for the distribution, through the deacons, of the congregation's "offerings" for the poor. Thus, as (1) chairman of elders ; (2) almoner-in-chief ; (3) president at Communion, this president-presbyter was chief of his peers for the time being. This is the first stage on the road to the later bishop.

Congregationalism. Early Christians felt that *the authority given by Christ to His Church resided in the whole congregation*, and not in any officials. As Hort insists: "The ecclesia itself, i.e., the sum of all its adult members, is the primary body, the primary authority ; the very origin and fundamental nature of the ecclesia as a community of disciples *renders it impossible that the principle should become obsolete.*" In New Testament days the congregation had the first and last voice in all church matters.² Each local

¹ St. Paul only knows *two* orders, "bishops" and "deacons." Similarly 1 Timothy iii. 1-13 passes straight from the needful qualifications of bishops (=presbyters) to those of deacons.

² Of course, they gave due deference to Christ's own chosen missionaries, the highly-esteemed Apostles, but their authority was personal and moral, not official, and they counsel and advise, but never interfere except in cases of gross error or corporate disorder. They claim deference, but will not dictate. See 2 Corinthians i. 24 and 1 Peter v. 3.

Church was self-governing and brooked no outside interference. It was modern congregationalism and even more pronounced, for, the members of the congregation themselves did all the praying, praising, teaching, preaching, without any clergyman. They were democracies without a hierarchy, almost like Quakers to-day.

Laying on of hands in the New Testament carries with it no idea of transmission of the Holy Spirit (Swete, Hort, Plummer). In Acts xiii. 2, the Holy Ghost had *already* marked out Saul and Barnabas, and in Acts vi. the "seven" were *already* "full of the Holy Ghost" before the imposition of hands. It is a benedictory and symbolic act by way of public recognition of an antecedent divine call and qualification for office *already* imparted by the Holy Spirit. "Laying on of hands" could be done by representatives of the congregation or even ordinary members, e.g., Ananias of Damascus (Hort).

Variations within the Apostolic Church, enabling it to reach all types of men, were pronounced. Thus James, Peter, Paul, and their Churches, all loyal servants of Christ, differed on what each called "essentials," yet each gave other the right hand of fellowship and worked together as one united family in God.

Summary. The Apostolic Church was a Brotherhood knit together in unity of heart and spirit. All in it were priests and kings unto God (1 Peter ii. 5, 9), no man before or after other, all "brethren"; there were no clergy, and congregationalism ruled supreme. "Above all, there was no sacerdotal system" (Lightfoot), just as there was no sacrifice but the spiritual sacrifice of prayer, praise, and a holy life. There was a highly-esteemed ministry of the Word without any ordination but that of the Spirit; there was also a lower ministry of administration, man-made "bishops" or "presbyters," mere executive and disciplinary officials.

EVOLUTION OF EPISCOPACY (100-1900 A.D.).

By 100 A.D. enthusiasm was cooling, apostles gone, false teaching growing; the need of solidarity and orthodoxy was imperative and urgently called for strong "rulers and teachers."¹ The course to adopt was clear: strengthen the hands of the president-presbyter. Thus the lower ministry stepped into the place vacated by "apostles

¹ Already in 1 Timothy v. 17 an "elder" was doubly honoured if he had the "gift" of teaching. It was not essential to his office of elder, but if he had it he could exercise it like any other member of the congregation. After 100 A.D. it becomes a necessary qualification for office.

and prophets," by default, and became the governing authority. Wherever an eminent president-presbyter of strong personality arose, from being chief of the bishops (=presbyters), he soon became chief *over* the bishops, *the* Bishop, while the rest of the council of elders retained the original name of "presbyters." Already in 115 A.D. Ignatius so magnifies the bishop's office that Lightfoot calls his language all but "blasphemous and profane." With Cyprian (c. 250 A.D.) episcopacy takes a new, false, extravagant, disastrous form. Hitherto bishops had been constitutional and representative, deriving all their rights and powers from the consent of the Christian community and viewing themselves as priests only as chief representatives of a congregation of priests unto God. Cyprian repudiates the term "representative" and places the bishop above and outside all human origin altogether, even though he owed his election to men entirely. He makes him "bishop by divine right," a successor of the apostles, and himself an apostle, heir to all apostolic rights and powers, sole channel of the Spirit to the Church. Still worse, he makes the bishop absolving and sacrificing priest like a Jewish or heathen priest. Cyprian's Apostolic Succession (a monstrous historic fiction) and his sacerdotal priesthood (a heathen revival) have disastrously affected all subsequent Christianity and proved fatal to the peace and unity of Christ's Church. Henceforth, constitutional church-government is doomed, imperial episcopacy is born. In Cyprian's own day the mischief is still veiled, for even Cyprian is no "diocesan" prelate, though a prince of bishops in his day. A bishop's see was still, in name and fact, only a large parish; there were hundreds of small rural churches each with their bishop; many bishops were humble and lived by their trades as shepherds, weavers, potters, etc.; and all bishops were co-equal and independent. Rome soon stepped in and changed all that. All other apostolical successors soon had to bow to him who sat in Peter's chair in imperial Rome, the Head Apostle and High Priest, and, very soon, bishops' sees are great dioceses, they themselves princely feudal prelates, yet one and all vassals of a Papal Overlord, and Europe is groaning body and soul under sacerdotal tyranny and superstition. Then comes the Reformation with its clean sweep of Rome's lumber. How was it done? The Reformers adopted the one and only safe guide: "Follow the lead of the Apostolic Church and, without slavish copying of a by-gone

day or undue breach of continuity, be true to the principles of Christ and His Apostles ; where they give direct injunctions, obey ; where they leave it to the Church, guided by practical considerations of time, place or environment, to settle its own affairs, the same grounds of policy must be our guide." Thus in the matter of church-organization and ministry, neither our Lord nor the Twelve gave any direct commands, merely enunciated the ideals of "Brotherhood," of "doing all things decently and in order to the edification of the Church," and left the rest to the good sense of the congregation. Therefore, said the Reformers, in these matters expediency must be our guide so long as we remain true to the principles of Christ's religion. As to the Ministry the Reformers took their stand on these New Testament facts : (a) Presbyter and bishop are synonyms ; (b) "Laying on of hands" is benedictory and symbolic, not instrumental ; (c) ministers are the congregation's delegates and representatives ; (d) the placing of bishops above presbyters was for expediency ; has no sanction in Scripture and is certainly not by divine right, but as the Church likes.¹ For good reasons, England retained, the Continental Reformers rejected bishops ; yet the two kept in full communion. Regarding episcopacy as of the *bene esse*, not *esse*, of a Church, both sides would have endorsed Selden's words : "They are equally mad who say that bishops are so *jure divino* that they must be continued, or so anti-Christian that they must be put away. All is as the State (or Church) likes," i.e., now as in New Testament days, each national Church is, rightly, self-organizing as its members decide. Hence both an episcopal Anglican Church and Presbyterian Reformed Churches abroad looked upon each other as equally qualified to be fully recognized as part and parcel of the One Catholic Church. In England for 100 years after the Reformation Presbyterian ordination was recognized as quite valid and Presbyterian ministers were not only allowed to officiate but to hold benefices in¹ the Church of England without re-ordination, with the one stipulation of their subscribing to our Articles. About 1650, a change of attitude set in strongly with Usher's publication of Ignatius' Letters, which

¹ Cf. Hooker : "Let bishops use their authority with so much the greater humility and moderation as a sword which the Church hath power to take away from them" ; and he reminds bishops that they owe their position and office to Church-custom, not to our Lord's appointment (E.P. vii. 5, § 8).

supported Laud's views of the Divine Right of Bishops. From that day the bishop's office and authority have been magnified by a section now powerful in our Church. Patristic theology, with its exaltation of tradition, has proved a powerful ally to these claims. The movement culminated in the Tractarianism of the nineteenth century, and to-day it is at its meridian. Cyprian's Church, with its watchwords: "Apostolic Succession"; "the divine right of bishops"; "no salvation outside the Church"; "no bishop, no Church"; "put the Church (Tradition) before the Books,"—is now firmly planted in England.

Gladly would I have cut out these historical facts, but our whole case hangs on them. For reunion, both sides must put first things first, and only through gauging later developments by the standard of the Apostolic Church can we say what are "essentials" and what secondary. Again we repeat: We do not want to squeeze back the Church into its New Testament cradle or call the New Testament Church perfect. The Corinthian scandals prove it was not. Undoubtedly, the Spirit has inspired the Church from 100-1900 A.D., to develop very useful institutions, but ecclesiastical "will to power" has also led it to invent some very bad ones, e.g., Cyprianic sacerdotalism, branded by Lightfoot as subversive of the root-principle of Christianity. We are well aware that no age is tied down to a servile copy of the organization of previous days, be it New Testament, or Reformation or any other. In matters of organization from New Testament days onwards the question has been, not "What is commanded?" but "What is expedient?" Our Lord gave no commandment as to details; all the more are we bound by His direct injunction that His Church is to be a Brotherhood where all are spiritually equal brethren. Of course, rules and rulers are essential in any society, and spiritual equality does not exclude obedience to such rules and rulers as the Church through its members may set up in the interests of order and efficiency, but they must be constitutional rules and representative rulers; for, as Hort says: "The ecclesia itself, i.e., the sum of all its adult members, is and must be the primary body, the primary authority" (C.E. 229).

So when the Free Churches reply to the Interim Report: "You ask us to accept episcopacy, and not any theory of its character"; but the "character of episcopacy" is the very thing we want to

know; we have no intrinsic objection to episcopacy provided it be constitutional and representative; is yours that?" we can answer, with history to back us:—"You meet us more than half-way, for we own that episcopacy is not essential to a Church, but we prize it as of proved value, and as witnessing to the historic continuity of the Church. As to the 'character of episcopacy,' our Reformation Settlement knows none but a constitutional, representative, non-sacerdotal bishop. Since the Reformation the false Cyprianic view of episcopacy is again being foisted on our Church, and we repudiate it even as you do. One of our own bishops—the Bishop of Carlisle, rightly speaks of it in these words: 'Ignorantly intended (in 250 A.D.) to promote the unity of the Churches, the false and extravagant claims of the Cyprianic bishop have proved a prolific cause of their disunion; and until they are disclaimed and abandoned, the complete re-union of the Churches can never be achieved. Even if it could be achieved by such false persuasions, it would not be worth achieving, seeing that no fabric founded on falsities can be good or lovely or safe.' Your idea of a constitutional and representative bishop is ours and your reunion with us would vastly strengthen the hands of the many clergy and the vast majority of laymen in our Church who are eager to bring Reformation principles into line with the needs of the new age. As to episcopal 'laying on of hands' on your ministers it casts no slur of 'invalidity' on your orders; we recognize their validity; it is merely, as in New Testament days, a public recognition of a divine call for office already imparted by the Holy Spirit.¹ It happens to be the law of our Church, so 'episcopal ordination' is needed for legal recognition as a Church of England minister. But for this law and our deep-rooted objection to 'break of continuity,' many of us would gladly see restored the long-established practice of early Reformation days of allowing Presbyterian ministers to officiate, and even hold benefices in our Church without re-ordination. We do not call your Churches schismatic or your orders

¹ Cf. Bishop of Carlisle: "Manual transmission suited ages when other forms of transmission were scarcely conceivable, not ours when the manual transmission of spiritual gifts is as inconceivable to the modern mind as any other form of transmission was inconceivable to the patristic mind, compounded as it largely was of Jewish and pagan mentality" (*Hibbert Journal*, January, 1919—the quotation in the text (slightly adapted) is from same article).

invalid, or ask you to disown your past. A Church which is Christ's effective organ is His Church, and commands our recognition. 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' is Christ's and our test of a standing or falling Church, be it episcopal, Presbyterian, or Quaker."

Of the urgency of reunion there can be no two opinions. To say nothing of the scandal of our divisions which invites the sneer: "See how these Christians love one another!" or of its disastrous results for our work at home and especially in the mission-field—I want here rather to dwell on the strong plea for reunion suggested by your Committee's heading: "Variations within the United Church," to my mind a most convincing and inspiring plea. S. Paul evidently thought so too. Religious views are largely temperamental and, in his day as now, intellectual, or legal, or emotional ministries each had its followers. Men said: I am of Paul, I of Peter, I of James, I of Apollos. A shocked Paul tells them:—Don't do that! By all means avail yourselves of what best feeds your soul and opens your heart to Christ, but let there be no schism in the Body of Christ; let not the head say to the heart, or the hand to the foot, I have no need of thee. With our different temperaments, we cannot all see eye to eye, but with all our diversities it is one Spirit, one Lord, one and the same God working in us all. James and Peter and I agree to differ on some points, yet we work hand in hand in our Master's cause; do the same, but "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, let there be no divisions among you, but be ye perfectly joined together" in one mind and heart in your one Master's service.

S. Paul is quite right. Here we are Anglicans, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Congregationalists; we do not all think exactly alike, and the Church, the Body of Christ, is all the richer and more effective for our variety of thought; it enables Christ through us to reach men of all temperaments; yet here we are spoiling it all by each seeking our own petty sectional aims instead of pooling our varied gifts in Christ's service. Each of us without the other is lacking, and by not working together we are terribly weakening the effectiveness of the Body of Christ and our own, while if the "whole Body of Christ were fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," we should carry all before us and win the world for Christ.

As the *Church Gazette* for March puts it, the Church wants the

High Church spirit of reverence and continuity, and its corporate sense ; the Broad Church intellect and emphasis on the work of the Spirit ; the Evangelical value of the individual soul and spiritual fire ; the fervour, energy and organization of Wesleyanism ; the spiritual independence and equality of Congregationalists, etc. Each Church has its special gift, experience, testimony to offer ; they all come from the same divine source, and Christ wants them all, for they are not only of value to their own parts of the body but of great value to the whole. It was precisely the close knitting together of such different types as James, Peter, Paul, Apollos into one Apostolic Church that made it such a splendidly effective organ of Christ, winning Jew, Greek, Roman, men of every nation, into Christ's kingdom in one generation ; and none but a many-sided Church can do that. As I said a moment ago differences of religious outlook are largely temperamental. Some like a Church which tells them what to believe and what to do, others cannot be tied down to organization, creeds, or rites ; some love a liturgical service, others prefer the simple charismatic service of the early Church ; some prize the ministry of the Word, others prefer other means of grace ; some insist on the priesthood of the laity, others not.¹ Or look at human nature from another standpoint. Some men are, as we say, all heart, dominating life through the affections ; others make conduct and action three-fourths of life, and for them the will is supreme ; others again regard life as raised to its highest power through the intellect ; while others again look at everything from an aesthetic point of view, and prize the imagination. Now we want to reach them one and all, to gather into Christ's kingdom all these types and varieties of men, and, for that, the Church must

¹ Free churches originated precisely because the Church did not satisfy these various needs and many souls were starved. It was originally a much needed protest against the legalism, ecclesiasticism and secularism of a half-Laodicean Church ; a protest, too, against the people's "royal priesthood" being absorbed by officials ; a serious attempt to revive and reproduce the simplicity, freshness, enthusiasm, inspiration, "royal priesthood" of the Apostolic Church. There is no blinking the fact that the Free Churches have done an immense work for religion. They have fought and won the battle for toleration and for liberty of conscience, and they have not only stimulated the Churches to rivalry in good works but roused the Church of England out of her lethargy into full active life. But now they have achieved their object, why should our "unhappy divisions" continue ? Free Churches see as clearly as we do that divisions once essential for religious freedom are now a source of weakness and hurt the cause of Christ. "Christ is wounded in the house of His friends."

be many-sided. Like S. Paul, it must be "made all things to all men; that it may by all means save some"; there must be some "under the law, to reach those under the law"; some "without the law" (though loyal to the principles of Christ) to reach those "without the law." In plain English, the Church must have within her fold different groups of Christians each facing truth from different aspects, be it that of Peter, James, Paul, or Apollos, yet equally loyal to Christ's principles, and all knit together in unity of heart and spirit. Then we shall have the Body of Christ with all its parts—as distinct as ear, hand, eye, head, foot are to each other—all "fitly joined and compacted," and doing effectively its true work.

This is what reunion means, and can any sacrifice be too great for that, short of surrender of Christian principle? Is it feasible? Of course it is, if our heart is set on it, and if the spirit of good will to others is ours. The Bishop of Lichfield is right: "The reunion of the Churches will come along the road, not of compromise, but of comprehension, and the immediate need is, not that we should pretend to think alike—we don't and never shall—but that we should honestly try to understand and sympathize with one another." It is right that a man should contend earnestly for the truth as *he* sees it, but do let us be prepared to admit that others who "follow not after us," indeed, whose views "pass all our understanding," are also blest by the Holy Spirit and are living branches of the true Vine, real members of the Body of Christ. No two schools of religious thought among us to-day can ever be wider apart than were James and Paul who could not in the least understand each other's standpoint; none the less, each saw the blessing of God resting on the other's work, and, in the true Spirit of Christ, each heartily gave the other the right hand of fellowship. So with us. Some one has quaintly said: "The Catholic must learn to appreciate and value the Methodist prayer-meeting, the Methodist in his turn must appreciate and value the Catholic's reverence and adoration as he kneels at the altar." It is of no earthly use our *talking* of reunion till we are ready to respect other men's consciences, and not only fearlessly insist on what we find to be good and true for ourselves, but also honestly revere what others find to be good and true for them. Yes, let James and Paul clasp hands in right good-will and the whole problem of reunion is solved. We are trusting to-

day far too much in uniformity of organization and machinery, whereas what we need and God wants to see in us is unity of heart and spirit. No cunningly devised schemes and compromises in the way of organization will ever achieve true and abiding reunion, but Christ's spirit of life and love, prompting us to sink self-seeking partisanship for the good of Christ's cause, would give us reunion to-morrow.

My time and your patience are long since exhausted. To discuss the ways and means of reunion would take far too long, so I shall but name them. Perhaps it is as well, for personally I prefer the method, outlook and practice of our Reformers to all others, and plump for the third on the list, an unpopular view to-day. (1) *The Interim Report* with its call to the Free Churches: "accept the fact of episcopacy, and not any theory of its character." (2) *The Bishop of London's proposal* to our first cousins, the Wesleyans: Wesleyan presbyters {to take part in our ordination, a Bishop of ours in theirs. One or more of their superintendents would become bishops, so that Methodist ministers who wished to celebrate at our altars would be ordained by their own episcopate; those who did not so desire would yet be permitted to preach from our pulpits. There would be no absorption by us of Methodism; it would remain an order within the Church (cf. Jesuits in Roman) with its Conference and Class-meetings. The re-ordination of ministers would be without "any theory of the character of their previous orders." (No definite statement is yet made as to inter-communion.) (3) *Bishop of Carlisle's proposal*. It is practically the attitude adopted by our Church at the Reformation and for 100 years after. The suggestion is that there should be immediate "reunion, in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, without any attempt made to intervene in the organization, laws, or institutions of any of the uniting churches." As the Bishop of Carlisle adds, it must be done in the spirit of Ephesians iv. 1-6, or not at all. "Until we are prepared to curse only that which God has cursed, viz., sin, and to hold out the hand of co-equal fellowship to all whom God has blessed, no reunion of Churches worth having can either be attained or receive the divine benediction."