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The Problem of Home Reunion.

BY THE MOST REV. THE ARCHBISHOP OF THE WEST INDIES.

[“We must set before us the Church of Christ as He would have it—one spirit and one body, enriched with all those elements of Divine truth which the separated communities of Christians now emphasize severally, strengthened by the interaction of all the gifts and graces which our divisions now hold asunder, filled with all the fulness of God. We dare not, in the name of peace, barter away those precious things of which we have been made stewards. Neither can we wish others to be unfaithful to trusts which they hold no less sacred. We must fix our eyes on the Church of the future, which is to be adorned with all the precious things, both theirs and ours. We must constantly desire, not compromise, but comprehension, not uniformity, but unity.”—Lambeth Conference Encyclical, 1909.]

[“I believe in one Church of Christ in each land.”—R. SPERER in CHURCHMAN, August, 1909.]

THIS article is written at the request of the editor. Assuming that what has been published in the CHURCHMAN on the subject in this series of articles is in the mind of its readers, the attempt is herein made to remove some misunderstandings and meet some difficulties, and to indicate, partly in the light of conditions existing outside the Mother Country, some lines on which action might be taken. The exigencies of space make it necessary to condense as much as possible, and it is hoped this will be accepted as an excuse for such statements as are made without submitting evidence in support of them.

1. *Use of Terms.*—For the sake of brevity some well-known terms are employed which are not always used in the same sense, and the meaning herein attached to them had better be stated at the outset. The term *Anglican Communion* is meant to include all Episcopal Churches, and branches and missions thereof in full communion with the Church of England. The term *Nonconformist* (not a very satisfactory one in the case, but the simplest available) is intended to include the various bodies of British and American Christians not claiming to possess the historic Episcopate. Episcopalians, Presbyterians,

and Congregationalists are referred to as organically inclusive of the various types of British and American Christianity exclusive of the Roman. The terms Roman Catholic and Protestant or Reformed are used in the popular sense of Roman and non-Roman.

2. Discussion on the subject of Intercommunion and Reunion is often arrested by the questions: Why should greater unity be sought than now exists? Why not be content to let well alone? It is sufficient here briefly to suggest the nature of the answers to be given. The proposed unity should be sought because it is the will of Christ, "The Divine purpose of visible unity among Christians is a fact of revelation" (Lambeth Conference Report of 1908, p. 170); because things in Christendom are not well, and cannot be let alone; because a divided Church is ineffective in actual effort and weak in attractive forces; because the present divisions involve great waste through overlapping of effort, often causing three workers to be placed where one would suffice, and leaving multitudes of people and places uncared for; and because many of the things which cause our divisions are dead issues even in old Christian lands, and can hardly be made intelligible to new converts in the West, and especially in the great countries of the East, and are sad hindrances to the increase of the kingdom of God.

3. There is one misunderstanding which prevents full and candid discussion and paralyzes effort. It claims primary, even if brief, consideration. It is the great and frequent misapprehension as to the nature of the Intercommunion and Reunion proposed. Much has during the last twelve months been written in various magazines and newspapers, in which, on the one hand, it has been assumed that the real question is, What are the terms and conditions on which various bodies of Nonconformists can be reunited to the Church of England? and, on the other hand, objections have been made by Nonconformists to projects of Reunion involving any such absorption. As one who took a keen interest in the discussion of this question by the Lambeth Conference and its committees, I call attention to

the fact that the published statements of the Conference do not set forth any such aim ; and I venture to state that if each part of the Conference Report referring to the subject be carefully studied, the reader will be able to realize in its cautious and guarded language that the clear and definite result of the deliberations of the Conference is proposals and suggestions, not for the absorption of existing branches and sections of the Church of Christ by one existing body, but the taking of such steps as may gradually and ultimately weld them all into one great comprehensive body—the living Church of the future.

4. Another and kindred mistake which needs to be got rid of is the assumption, often made in discussion, that the desired unification involves the abandonment and removing out of the way of most, or all, of the special methods in which the work of existing Churches and denominations is organized. No one acquainted with the present facts of Christendom can believe this to be possible. No one who has thought out all that this ultimate unification would mean can suppose that it could be brought about by the elimination or destruction of any of the more important forms of organization which now exist in Christendom. Bearing on this point and on others, English Churchmen especially need to study the whole class of facts which here I can only briefly indicate—namely, the vast preponderance in numbers of other Christians of various Protestant and Reformed Communions in the United States over those attached to the Protestant Episcopal Church, though this branch of our Church is growing rapidly in numbers ; the considerable preponderance of the same bodies in the Dominion of Canada, in the Commonwealth of Australia, and in South Africa ; and the great preponderance of the missionary efforts and numbers of converts by these bodies in the East, and even in India. The unity that is possible, desired, expected, will not be attained by the way of destruction. It will not be accomplished in uniformity, but in variety. Neither will it be by compromise, but by comprehension. As Bishop Doane of Albany has tersely expressed it, it will not be by giving up things, but by giving and receiving

things. In its own way, and within the limits of its own principles, the Church of Rome teaches us a great lesson as to the possibility of great variety in method with a clear and definite unity.

5. Another mistake to be guarded against is the supposition that we must see the way clear through all the difficulties which can be formulated before commencing any definite effort to arrange plans for Intercommunion with any who are ready to meet us. This would be a profound blunder. For example, very special and difficult questions must arise whenever these great final steps for the complete Reunion of the Church of Christ are ready to be taken which would include the Greek and Latin Communions. They need not be discussed, because at present the doors are closed. If we understand the Lord's will, that union must eventually come; and it is what we pray for. But we cannot now foresee how it can come except by the way of absorption in the Roman Church, which is impossible both to us and to the Greek Church. All that seems at present possible in that direction, besides prayer and cultivating a spirit of Christian charity, is avoiding doing anything that will justly prove a stumbling-block in the way of this larger unity in the days to come. The right, wise, and most effective course seems to be in this, as in many other enterprises, to follow the line of least resistance—that is, Intercommunion and Reunion between the Anglican Communion and various Nonconformist or Reformed Communions. For convenience this is often called Home Reunion. It may be suggested that in this whole discussion there should be the recognition of what I believe to be a great certainty, that this Home Reunion, wisely achieved in the spirit and methods indicated by the Lambeth Conference, not only will not place a barrier in the way of the greater Reunion already referred to, but in the Providence of God will help to promote it. Nothing is more likely to move the Latin and Greek Churches in the direction of unity than the unification of British and American Christianity together with those **smaller** European Churches whose union is already under dis-

cussion. All the more effective would this be if it included the Reformed European Churches generally.

6. I think it a great mistake to suppose that the question of the Episcopate will prove an insurmountable barrier to reunion. This matter will need fresh study and careful consideration on all sides, which I refer to later in this article. But, apart from the help to be derived from such special study and inquiries, my hopefulness rests on facts at present available. And I say that it is not likely, when other difficulties have been removed, that great difficulty will arise ultimately as to the acceptance by non-Episcopalians of a constitutional Episcopacy as one of the bases of full Intercommunion and of ultimate organized unity. The difficulties in this respect are increased in Great Britain by the confusion introduced into the subject by means of disputable points in connection with State establishment of Churches. Many English Churchmen need to admit some new ideas on this part of the question—and so do Nonconformists. Moreover, it may be taken for granted that if there was any real living movement in England showing approximation to union between established and non-established Churches, the difficulties of dealing with the question of establishment would be minimized, and could be settled without sacrificing the recognition of the Christian religion by the State, and without diverting endowments and Church buildings to secular or semi-secular objects, but keeping them available for existing and further greatly needed Christian work. Nonconformists and Anglicans alike are invited to look at the subject of Episcopacy as an integral part of Church government, from the position occupied by the Irish, Scottish, American, and Colonial Churches now in communion with the English Church. It is suggested that attention be given to constitutional arrangements of the Anglican Church, say in America or the Colonies, not as showing what the Church of the future should in all respects be, but as showing how many practical difficulties, which weigh much with Presbyterians and Nonconformists, especially in Great Britain, could be removed. I will here write from personal experience; but as I begin, I

must call attention to the fact that the whole Anglican Communion owes much to the American Church for leading the way in the organization of a national Episcopal Church on constitutional principles apart from a legalized connection with the State. The Church of Jamaica, with which I have a responsible connection as Bishop of the Diocese, has (through certain circumstances) been more favourably placed for, and has more definitely required development of, the kinds of organization here suggested for consideration than other dioceses in the West Indian province of which I am Archbishop, and perhaps than most other dioceses elsewhere. The Jamaica Church is, I believe, as strongly episcopal in all that concerns the essence and practical working of Episcopacy as any part of the Anglican Communion; its organization secures the rights and legitimate authority of clergy or presbyters as fully as any Presbyterian Church in Christendom; and it also secures the rightful authority of the lay people as fully as any Congregational Church in Christendom. I would put this in another way, and in this comparison I recognize Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist as representing the three main types of Church order and organization in American and British Christianity. A thoughtful Congregationalist layman would not say to us Churchmen in Jamaica, Your methods are the same as ours, and in every particular up to my ideals; but he would probably say, They do secure a real living potent voice for the laity, which I could readily accept in Church government. The Presbyterian would say the same as regards the presbyters. Clergyman and layman have each his part and voice as well as the Bishop in the life and work of the Church. This is secured in the local Church meetings for all members, and in the committee appointed in each church or congregation, in the council of the Rural Deanery, in the Synod of the Diocese, in the administrative Boards of the Diocese, and the layman's right and opportunity to exercise a regulated lay ministry is also provided for, several hundred laymen actually doing this. All these arrangements are not merely something on paper, but are

carried out in fact. I mean that clergy and representatives of the laity do actually exercise their prerogatives and power every year and all through the year. In general and in outline the methods are the same as in other fully organized non-established Churches of our Communion in many lands. Where we differ most from others is, perhaps, first, in the complete working out in practice, in ways suited to our own conditions, what in some places is only partially existent in practice; and secondly, in the arrangements by which the voice of the Bishop, the clergy, and the laity can be heard, and the action of each felt in due subordination to the authority of the whole, so that no one order can be indifferent to the opinion of the other, or over-rule the other in the exercise of inherent or canonical rights, and nothing in the way of practical legislation or regulation can be adopted without the concurrent voice of the three orders, except in those financial matters in which the Synod votes as one body. I think it will ultimately be found that generally there will be little real objection to an Episcopal Church so organized and worked. And I have not read of anyone acquainted with our system who thinks it essentially different from that of other Colonial Churches or the American Church, or different from what that of the Church in England might properly be if it had to be organized with such changed relations to the State as would leave it quite independent of other than that general Royal and Parliamentary authority which affects all Churches and denominations alike.

7. It is a mistake to think, as some do, that the rite of Confirmation will eventually prove to be a serious hindrance to Home Reunion. I do not think that there is any serious objection among thoughtful, earnest Christian people who have had opportunity of studying the matter to Confirmation as an ordinance for spiritual edification based on Apostolic practice. There is objection to its being placed on the level of a Sacrament of the Gospel, or being demanded to be observed as a rite necessary to salvation and as the sole means of securing some special spiritual blessing. But as an ordinance of the

Church, authorized substantially by the example of the Apostles and administered with due preparation and spiritual aims, I doubt if there will be any difficulty in the united Church of the future in the way of that ordinance being accepted very widely at first, and generally afterwards, as a means of grace to be sought by all, and not simply continuing to be used by those sections or branches of the united Church which have held fast to it from the beginning.

8. It need not be expected that any grave difficulty in the way of Intercommunion and ultimate Reunion will arise out of the question of liturgical and non-liturgical forms of worship. Studies as to origins of worship are removing some difficulties. Modern experience is telling in the same direction. One cannot imagine that at any early date, if at all, the existing Presbyterian and Congregational Churches will adopt the Prayer-Book of the English Church; but facts show that there is among them an increased appreciation and a growing use of liturgical forms. The book entitled "Common Worship," published by authority of the Synod of the General Presbyterian Church in America in 1906, indicates clearly enough a conviction of the help obtained by such forms, and also a considerable faculty for adapting and preparing forms for public use which in many ways approximate to the standard set by our Book of Common Prayer. Varieties of methods of worship within the general unity would always need to remain. There would be the use of the present English Church, however modified as the time goes by; the Presbyterian use, the Methodist use, which in many places now includes an abbreviated form of the English Prayer-Book, and other uses, would grow up, a beginning of which has been made in some Congregational Churches; and there would be, by means of fellowship and partial Intercommunion, a gradual approximation in spirit and a realizing of the good in other methods than those in which people have been trained. The Bishop of London has during several years past in his Lenten Mission helped English Churchmen, as well as others, to see the practical benefits of public extempore prayer at special

times. Visits of Nonconformists occasionally to those of our churches where liturgical forms are intelligently and devoutly used enable them to realize the benefits of prepared forms of worship. No well-informed and unprejudiced person will now contend that, however valued and helpful any special forms of prayer may be, they are essential to Christian fellowship and unity. Similarly must thoughtful and experienced persons admit the great value of such liturgies as that of the English Church.

9. I now venture to offer some constructive suggestions as to various steps which may be taken towards the desired unity. It is not supposed that the misunderstandings and divisions and separations of generations and of centuries can be removed in a year or a decade. It needs to be realized that there will have to be much preparation of members as well as ministers of Churches, of followers as well as leaders. In this respect the difficulties to be removed and the time needed for the process will probably be greater in the old Churches in old countries than in Churches of the same name in new countries and missions. Probably America and its missions, and the larger British Colonies and missions, will lead the way, though with due regard to growing opinion in the old country. In the most conservative places, fifty years of effort in this holy cause will produce great results. The important thing is that every step taken should be in a right direction ; but while cautious as to the lines of advance, we should endeavour to secure that always and everywhere there should be a steady, even though it may be slow, advance. The progress may not be uniform in kind or degree. Speaking generally, it may be expected to begin in increased mutual knowledge of fellow-Christians, their beliefs and practices, followed by some forms of co-operation, then partial and then full Intercommunion, and then organic unity. Referring, then, to the Intercommunion and Reunion of the various sections of the Anglican and Reformed or Protestant Communions, the problem will be how so to unite them all that they may constitute and be always able to act as one

visible force against the foes of Christianity, of truth, and righteousness. As already said, and here again emphasized, this will not be accomplished by destroying the various present combinations and sub-organizations, though many would become obsolete, and be, by common consent, discarded. The large comprehensive Church of the future times will need to utilize every form of worship and organization, and individual and corporate service, that has been found useful, or that has won for itself the affection of Christians anywhere. The unity must come by all that is realized as valuable in these various organizations being retained and co-ordinated with other arrangements. It cannot come by the surrender of anything deemed valuable, but by its retention and by the communication of it to others. No doubt, however, a clearer vision and wider experience of fraternity and fellowship would in time do much towards so moulding opinion and practice that in many things there would be a gradual approach to uniformity of method.

10. It is submitted that the following things of a private and personal nature can be attended to without hesitation at once : The cultivation and the manifestation in our life of the sense of true brotherhood with all those who have been baptized into the name of Christ and have learnt to love and serve Him. Utilizing all opportunities of sympathizing and working together with other Christians, when this can be done without failure of duty and loyalty to the Church to which we belong, or injury to the consciences of brethren with whom we are more closely attached by Church fellowship. Constant prayer for unity. Conference and prayer, especially with small groups of other Christians. Study of Christian history, and especially study of the beliefs and practices of those of other Christian bodies. Avoiding proselytizing efforts, but aiming at a larger authorized co-operation between existing bodies of Christians, and being ready to aid our own Church as a whole to take the next possible steps.

11. The following forms of public and official action are suggested for consideration :

(1) A certain amount of federation for purposes of social

and Christian work in which most Christians can join is possible. This exists already in many places, and can and will be largely developed.

(2) The next step would probably be some amount of Intercommunion where difficulties had been smoothed away by previous knowledge and experience in co-operative work. Probably there could be authorized and regulated interchange of pulpits, while yet avoiding the difficulties inherent in the final settlement of the question of what constitutes a regular and valid ministry.

(3) The next step to be taken in favourable cases would probably be full Intercommunion. This would mean, not the breaking up of existing organizations, but it would include the sharing by ministers and people in the ministrations and services of other bodies with whom Intercommunion had been established, as necessity or convenience required; and also the regular transfer of clergy and laity from one Church to another as circumstances or individual tastes and needs suggested or required, without sense of separation or defection. That stage could not be reached until important questions concerning the doctrine, discipline, the Sacraments and the ministry of the Church had been so settled between the bodies thus arranging for Intercommunion that no difficulty would arise on that score. And such settlement would involve, not acceptance of particular theories as to the origin of the ministry or of every detail of doctrine, but (we will suppose) it would involve as much agreement thereon as now exists between those different sections of the English Church whose loyalty is not questioned.

(4) As regards these first steps, the easiest and most natural approximation to the point of Intercommunion and final complete organic unity may be exhibited mostly by making beginnings with those Churches which are of the same general type in some principal matters. For example, the Anglican Church may probably first reach the point of Intercommunion with other Episcopal Churches, such as the Moravian and the

Scandinavian Churches, when certain difficulties have been overcome. Various bodies of Presbyterians may find it easiest to reach the point of Intercommunion with those bodies who favour the general Presbyterian idea of Church government. The various bodies whose fundamental views of Church government are Congregational may find it easiest to combine together. In some cases, however, there are other considerations than Church government which would probably prevail over similarity of Church government, and make it easier to coalesce with other bodies ; as, for example, in America, some sections of Congregationalists might find it easiest to combine with the Protestant Episcopal Church.

12. As regards the deep underlying questions concerning the ministry of the Church, the recent labours of the Bishop of Salisbury and others are preparing the way for a better understanding of the question from the historical point of view. I venture also to call attention to the Bishop of Bombay's appeal a year ago to Oxford and Cambridge scholars for a reliable book setting forth in a non-partisan spirit the results obtainable by investigation as regards the origins and the development of the Church's ministry ; and it may be hoped that the appeal will be responded to. Those of us who live in the distant parts of the earth, and have to act in various ways, and even to lead in some things, are most anxious in such leadership to avoid a single step that would need to be retraced. For this we need both Divine guidance and all the fresh light which our more learned brethren at home can furnish us.

13. There has been no intention in what is here written to provide a scheme or plan of Intercommunion and Reunion. One aim has been to make it as much as possible supplementary to other articles which have appeared in the *CHURCHMAN* down to that for August, which is the latest number I have seen. Another purpose has been so to present the case that the article might help to remove objections and difficulties and misunderstandings which come to my knowledge from various sources, not so much in these regions as in the Mother Country

and other parts of the world. In the constructive suggestions the endeavour has been made to meet the complaint heard from many places and persons that proposals for action are usually so vague and indefinite, or one-sided and partial, as to leave the impression that, after all, nothing feasible can be suggested, and nothing practical can be done.

14. The prayer is often offered "that unity may come in God's good time"; and one often hears the statement that "the Church will be made ready for the desired unity in God's good time." These pious desires and expectations need to be qualified by the caution that we take care lest that time should come and we be not ready to recognize it, and lest we should let it slip by while we remain unheeding or hesitating over our opportunities. Some of us seem to hear even now the echo of the Saviour's words, "O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace!"

APPENDIX.

EXTRACT FROM SERMON ENTITLED "PARTING WORDS," PREACHED AT OXFORD, OCTOBER, 1908, BY THE BISHOP OF BOMBAY.

"What I desire to emphasize is that while the views of learned men are divided so widely on the history of the origin of the Episcopacy, it is impossible to find language about it which all those whose Reunion we desire to see could heartily join in using. Now, it lies with men who can be content to retract their own past asseverations if they turn out untenable, who are willing to approach the question in the spirit of scientific history, who can die to themselves, their opinions, and, if they are unhappy enough to belong to one, their party, and give themselves up to the truth—it lies with such men, I say, to provide a basis for Reunion by studying over again the whole question of the origins of Episcopacy, with its bearing on the validity of ministry and Sacraments, and by presenting to the Church a dispassionate, scientific, scholarly statement on the whole subject. If such men can be found anywhere, it should be in the Universities. I call upon the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to set themselves to the task, and to complete it in four or five years, that the book may be in the hands of all those throughout the world who are longing for union, and that it may be well discussed and digested before the next Lambeth Conference. This book should consist of at least three parts—the first historical, a review of the evidence about the origin of Episcopacy and about the early history of the ideas of the validity of the ministry and the validity of the Sacraments; the second, also historical, treating the question, How has Episco-

pany justified itself as an institution? the third, theoretical and dogmatic, an inquiry into the true meaning of the conceptions of the 'validity of the ministry' and 'validity of the Sacraments.' The third part might not do more than clear the way for future discussion. The two former ought to achieve so sober a statement and estimate of historical fact and probability as to be generally accepted. If such general acceptance were attained, the treatise for which I appeal would take an important place in the foundations of the great edifice of Reunion."



Mr. Gladstone as a Churchman.

By EUGENE STOCK, D.C.L.

THIS year—1909—has been a year of centenaries. Darwin, Tennyson, Fitzgerald, Selwyn, are but the most conspicuous of several historic names of men who were born in 1809. And as the year closes—on December 29—will be commemorated the birth of one of the greatest of Victorian statesmen, W. E. Gladstone. There is truth in the proverbial application of our Lord's words, "Your fathers killed the prophets, and ye build their sepulchres"; and the generation in which so many Christian men honestly believed that Gladstone was either a Jesuit or an infidel, and in any case a traitor, is succeeded by a generation in which the very same type of men seem more and more inclined to appeal to his memory against the wicked innovators of the present day. Indeed, it is scarcely a new generation. One may hazard a fairly safe guess that newspaper articles on December 29 will appear in his praise, the writers of which had no words too hard for him only a few years ago.

With Gladstone's political career these pages are not concerned. But with him religion—whatever may be thought of his particular views—was always dominant; and his centenary affords a convenient opportunity for reviewing his attitude and action in regard to religious questions, both those appertaining to current Church controversies and those belonging to per-