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THE CHURCHES OF THE REFORMATION.

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IN approaching the subject of this paper it is important to remember three things. The first is that long before the Reformation of the sixteenth century the Church in countries like England enjoyed a considerable measure of independence. The triumph of Ultramontanism as we know it is a modern development. William the Conqueror politely but firmly declined to give temporal homage to the Pope. Robert Grosseteste, the great Bishop of Lincoln in the thirteenth century, respectfully but flatly refused to appoint one of the Pope's nephews to a Canonry in his Cathedral. "In a filial and obedient spirit," he said, "I disobey, I refuse, I rebel."

The second thing we must bear in mind is that the centuries preceding the sixteenth had seen many attempts at reform in the various departments of Church life. The most comprehensive and drastic was that of John Wyclif (1324–84), who attacked the doctrine of Transubstantiation from the philosophical point of view and gave England the first English version of the Gospels. Thus by the beginning of the sixteenth century England had already been inoculated with the reform spirit, and when the full tide of the Reformation came the English people, having already received a kind of subconscious preparation, were not swept into such iconoclasm as some other peoples were.

The third thing we must not forget is that the Renaissance preceded the Reformation.

> "The Turks came over the sea,
> In fourteen fifty three."

And the capture of Constantinople [1] meant the dispersion of Greek scholars over Europe. They brought with them some of the Greek Classics, and when the West began to learn Greek and to catch again something of the Greek spirit it was as if it rubbed sleep out of its eyes and saw the whole world in the light of a fresh morning. The first effects of the Renaissance may be studied most easily in the life of such a man as Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519).[2] Thought was freeing itself in all directions, and it is important for us to try to realize how free, in some quarters at all events, thought became. Upon the Renaissance as a wide humanistic movement followed the Reformation as a particular expression of it in the ecclesiastical sphere. It was recognized on every hand that the Church needed reform. The re-discovery of an older civilization less hampered by rules and conventions opened men's eyes to some of the anomalies of their own situation. They became aware of much that rested on mere "idle fantasy." Above all, with the

[1] For other factors, see E. F. Jacob, *The Renaissance*, p. 15.

[2] See, for example, the historical novel by Dmitri Merejkowski, *The Forerunner*.

New Testament in their hands, they were brought into touch with a Christian polity "which knew not the name of papacy." "It would be difficult to exaggerate the dissolvent force of the revived study of the New Testament upon medieval Church Order, and its influence in producing the varied experiments of the Protestant societies." The New Testament was studied as never before. The invention of printing "enabled Luther to succeed where Wyclif failed in circulating rapidly a vernacular Bible." The Church herself professed to rest upon the authority of the Apostolic age. Here the Apostolic age came to life again, but speaking with a voice which was not quite the voice of the Church. As between the two voices the Reformers chose what they believed to be the earlier and the more authoritative. It was a voice that, in the New Testament, spoke directly to the mind and to the heart. Sound learning, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, could go to the original sources and find the Truth. Martin Luther nailed his famous theses to the doors of the Castle church of Wittenberg on the 31st October, 1517. In 1536 John Calvin published *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Henry VIII, as is well known, rejected the claim of the Pope and suppressed the monasteries, partly as centres of papal influence and partly for other reasons; but he wished to retain substantially the old tradition. In the latter part of his reign there was some burning of those who could not accept the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Still, Henry believed in sound learning, and in 1537 he authorized the publication of the Bible in English.

The next reign, the short reign of Edward VI, saw the Reformation making great advances in England. Peter Martyr became Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and Martin Bucer the corresponding Professor at Cambridge. The first English Prayer Book was published in 1549, and revised to make it more definitely Protestant in 1552. The Reformation touched the highest classes both in Church and State. Some of the most ardent as well as the best instructed Reformers were to be found among the Bishops themselves. This fact goes a long way to explain why Episcopacy was retained in England but not (for example) in Germany and Switzerland where, in point of fact, the Episcopate furnished no such leaders.

With the advent of Mary came the well-known wave of reaction, stopped and rolled back by the gallant resistance of Latimer and Ridley, Cranmer himself, and many other martyrs. The conscience of the nation was shocked by the burning of such eminent and good men, and henceforth the sympathy of the large towns and the more progressive parts of the country became stedfastly Protestant.

There followed the Elizabethan settlement, the most succinct account of which is still that written by the late Professor Maitland for the Cambridge Modern History. The principle of nationality in ecclesiastical matters was now established. The Church of England and the Protestant Churches on the Continent were

recognized as standing together on an equal footing as all national Churches. Elizabeth, indeed, insisted on preserving Episcopacy as the form of Church government. The nation remembered that Cranmer and Latimer and Ridley had all been Bishops and accepted the form readily enough; though some, like Parkhurst, himself Bishop of Norwich, regarded the polities of the Continental Reformers as a more perfect model.

The three main forms of Protestantism which had emerged from the Reformation—Lutheranism, Calvinism, and the Church of England—had a great common basis. They

"agreed in rejecting the Pope and the mischievous developments of the Middle Ages, accepting the ancient creeds, and restoring what they deemed to be the primitive doctrine and government of Christ's Church. In this sense they may be each called catholic. They were further agreed on Justification by faith only, and on the supremacy of Scripture." [1]

"The Church is a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, not its final interpreter." The meaning of Scripture is left to Reason to determine. It is assumed that Scripture is clear on essentials and that the Holy Spirit will so far guide every one who truly seeks Him.

As to the form of ecclesiastical government the general principle was accepted that each nation had a right to choose the form most suited to it. Thus Dr. John Whitgift, afterwards Bishop of Canterbury, writes in 1574:

"I find no one certain and perfect kind of government prescribed or commanded in the Scriptures to the Church of Christ, which no doubt should have been done, if it had been a matter necessary unto the salvation of the church." [2]

"I 'condemn' no 'churches' that have appointed any order for the electing of their pastors which they think agreeable to their state, and most profitable for them; for therefore I say that no certain manner or form of electing ministers is prescribed in the scripture, because every church may do therein as it shall seem to be most expedient for the same." [3]

The English retained the historic Episcopate; the Germans and the Swiss did not. The Continental leaders, however, did not object to this retaining of Episcopacy. Calvin, for instance, "held them to be worthy of anathema who would not submit to truly Christian bishops." [4]

At first the tone of the English writers in defending Episcopacy was inclined to be apologetic, but even before the end of Elizabeth's reign the apologetic note disappeared. Its disappearance was largely due to the struggle with Presbyterianism within the English Church. Men of Presbyterian convictions like Cartwright and Travers tried hard to capture the Church of England for Presbyterianism. In the struggle with them the English authorities became convinced of the superiority of the Episcopal form of

[1] *The Church Past and Present*, ed. H. M. Gwatkin, p. 206.
[2] *Defence of the Answer to the Admonition, Works* (Parker Society), I, p. 184.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 369. [4] *Tract. de Reform. Eccles.*

Church government as they themselves had retained it. So Lord Bacon writes:

"First therefore for the government of Bishops, I for my part, not prejudging the precedents of other reformed churches, do hold it warranted by the word of God and by the practise of the ancient Church in the better times, and much more convenient for kingdoms, than parity of ministers and government by synods."

The attitude of Richard Hooker and of the Caroline Divines is similar. They definitely preferred Episcopacy. On the other hand they admit "that there may be sometimes very just and sufficient reason to allow ordination made without a Bishop." So Hooker writes as follows:

"Men may be extraordinarily, yet allowably, two ways admitted unto spiritual functions in the Church. One is, when God Himself doth of Himself raise up any, whose labour he useth without requiring that men should authorize them; but then he doth ratify their calling by manifest signs and tokens Himself from heaven: . . . Another extraordinary kind of vocation is, when the exigence of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the Church, which otherwise we would willingly keep; where the Church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath nor can have possibly a bishop to ordain; in case of such necessity, the ordinary institution of God hath given oftentimes, and may give, place. And therefore we are not simply without exception to urge a lineal descent of power from the Apostles by continued succession of bishops in every effectual ordination. These cases of inevitable necessity excepted, none may ordain but only bishops: by the imposition of their hands it is, that the Church giveth power of order, both unto presbyters and deacons." [1]

In the opinion of Hooker and of the Caroline Divines the circumstances in which the Continental Reformers were placed justified them in departing from the Episcopal tradition of the Church: and they were very far from rejecting Continental orders as invalid. The following letter of John Cosin dated February 7, 1650, speaks for itself:

"If at any time a minister so ordained in these French Churches came to incorporate himself in ours, and to receive a public charge or cure of souls among us in the Church of England (as I have known some of them to have done so of late, and can instance in many other before my time) our Bishops did not re-ordain him before they admitted to his charge, as they would have done if his former ordination here in France had been void. Nor did our laws require more of him than to declare his public consent to the religion received amongst us, and to subscribe the articles established. And I love not to be herein more wise or harder than our own Church is."

Even Laud fully recognized that "the Ecclesia Anglicana and the other Reformed Churches are sisters dwelling in the same Catholic habitation." [2]

This continued to be the official attitude of the Church of England throughout the next century. It will be sufficient to quote Archbishop Wake, who writes as follows (1719):

"The Reformed Churches, though differing in some points from our

[1] *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book VII, xiv, 11.

[2] Durel, *Eccles. Angl. Vindiciae*, p. 355. For other quotations from Laud see Hunkin, *Episcopal Ordination and Confirmation*, pp. 45 f.

English Church, I willingly embrace. I could have wished indeed that the Episcopal form of government had been retained by all of them. . . . Meanwhile, far be it from me that I should be so iron-hearted as to believe, that, on account of such a defect (let me be permitted without offence to call it so), any of them ought to be cut off from our communion, or with certain mad writers among us, to declare that they have no true and valid sacraments, and thus are scarcely Christians." [1]

The Society for the promotion of Christian Knowledge (founded 1698) was at work in India throughout the century and for nearly the whole of that time employed a body of Lutheran clergy. Lutheran ministers were sent out similarly by the S.P.G. (founded in 1701) and the C.M.S. (founded in 1799). In short, in 1859, Dean Goode was quite justified in summing up the position thus:

"It is quite clear, that the original doctrine of the Church of England, the principles upon which our Church was founded, and the opinions of nine-tenths of her great divines, are all in favour of the cultivation of a spirit of brotherly communion between that Church and the foreign Protestant Non-Episcopal Churches." [2]

The Lutheran Churches of Europe are still characterized by Evangelical piety. The War of 1914–18 brought very great economic difficulties to the Lutherans of Germany. The Lutherans of other countries, notably those of the United States of America, came to their assistance to a considerable extent, and their normal activities are by this time partially resumed. I have the following information with regard to the present condition of religion in Germany from a friend of mine who knows the country well.[3] The Churches, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, are now disestablished, but the State collects a Church tax from every one (rich or poor) and hands it over to the denominations to which the individuals belong. Everyone must pay this tax, unless he declares himself to be without religion (which few like to do). In such a case he loses all right to religious ministrations.

Religious teaching in Schools, both elementary and secondary, is common throughout Germany. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant teaching are supplied, and the Jews are exempt. Practically every scholar is ranged in one of these three groups. The Public Bodies pay for the teaching. That in secondary schools is often given by the local clergy, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. Indeed much of their time is spent in this way.

Protestants are usually considered as belonging to either Positive or Negative tendencies. Negatives are advanced Modernists; Positives are not usually Fundamentalists, but are often what we should call Moderate Liberals. The main point, however, is that the Positives hold the Divinity of our Lord in the orthodox sense. While many able theologians belong to the Negative School, the religious life of the country (Home Missions, Foreign Missions, etc.), is very preponderantly on the Positive side. Also it is the Positive preachers who commonly draw the larger congregations.

[1] Quoted Hunkin, *op. cit.*, p. 58. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[3] Rev. G. A. Schneider, M.A., lately Librarian of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

A greater proportion of the population than in England holds aloof from religion: the Socialists almost all do so. On the other hand, the small nucleus of very godly people is particularly sincere, consistent, and lovable.

In the United States and Canada in 1927 the Lutheran Churches had over 2,700,000 communicant members.

For Lutherans in general let Adolf Deissmann, the well-known Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin, be the spokesman. The following words are taken from the concluding paragraphs of his recently published lectures on *The New Testament in the Light of Modern Research*: [1]

"After all, the religious value of the New Testament is contained in this: that this little book brings us into sure contact with our Lord Jesus Christ and His first witnesses.

And this contact with Jesus and with His disciples means fellowship with the living God, means a steady hope for the Kingdom of God and of eternal life, it means forgiveness of sin and salvation, triumph in the midst of affliction, power and help for all good, moral earnestness, self-denial, brotherliness, unity.

Considered historically, the New Testament is the trustworthy record of Jesus and His Apostles. Religiously considered, it proves itself from within by its influence to be the Magna Charta of the present Jesus Christ."

The Church of Calvin survives in Switzerland, where in 1920 Protestants still formed 57·5 per cent. of the population. In France Protestantism, chiefly of the Calvinistic type, showed signs of spreading in the sixteenth century, but the Protestant population was depleted by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. When, much later, ideas of toleration again prevailed, Protestant groups were formed again, and they now number about a million persons, divided under some eight denominations.

Holland is predominantly Protestant, the Dutch Reformed Church numbering nearly three millions of adherents. The government of the Church is Presbyterian.

None of these Churches appears to be conscious of any desire to recover for itself the historic episcopate. Dr. Dibelius speaks for Germany, but his words would probably be equally applicable to the other countries mentioned: "No Protestant Church of Germany," he writes, "would consider the remodelling of its episcopal order on the pattern of the Roman Catholics or the Anglicans even as worth discussing. The practical necessity for this does not exist." [2]

On the other hand, in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, countries which are solidly Lutheran,[3] the succession of bishops has been maintained.[4] The Moravians [5] also have taken pains to preserve an episcopate, though they allow deacons to administer Confirmation and the Holy Communion. The Moravians will be always remem-

[1] P. 192. [2] In *The Reunion of Christendom*, ed. Sir Charles Marchant.
[3] Over 98 per cent. of the population.
[4] They have bishops and presbyters, but no diaconate.
[5] Nunbering in 1928 nearly 81,000 and supporting over 2,300 missionaries.

bered as the first Protestants to declare that it was the duty of the Church as such to evangelize the non-Christian world.

We turn next to Scotland. A very thorough and logical Presbyterianism was established in Scotland under the leadership, first, of John Knox and then of Andrew Melville.

The type of religion set forth in the *First Book of Discipline* (1560) is that of Geneva, the unit being the self-governing congregation, and the great aim of the system the pure preaching of the Word; no complete scheme of Church government being worked out. Such a scheme was fully supplied under Melville's influence in the *Second Book of Discipline* (1577).

In the next century the well-known attempt to introduce Episcopacy and a Book of Common Prayer modelled on the English, failed; but during the Commonwealth the Scottish Church accepted the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Directory of Public Worship. Another attempt after the Restoration to force Episcopacy upon Scotland failed again.[1] Under the House of Hanover the Presbyterian Church enjoyed the royal favour and was treated as a firm ally of the Government. In the eighteenth century there was a good deal of difficulty over patronage, and large numbers of the people quietly left the Establishment and erected meeting houses. Towards the end of that century, under the influence of the brothers Robert and James Haldane, the Church experienced a kind of Evangelical revival. In 1829 Dr. Alexander Duff went to India as the first Missionary of the Church of Scotland. Fourteen years later, in 1843, occurred the famous disruption. Of 1203 ministers, 451 left the Established Church to form the Free Church. With them went a third of the laity and all missionaries except one. The two Churches, of course, did not differ in doctrine but only in the question of the relation between Church and State. Happily the spirit of conciliation gradually prevailed. The leaders of the Established Church approached Parliament more than once in order to secure Acts which might remove the scruples of the other Church. After long negotiations and preparations both the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church resolved on an incorporating union. This was finally consummated at an adjourned meeting of the Assemblies of the two Churches, which was held in the Autumn of last year (1929).[2]

It is time to return to England. We have already referred to the attempt of Presbyterians like Thomas Cartwright and Walter Travers to capture the English Church at the end of the sixteenth century. Though defeated for a time, they and their successors

[1] The present Bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church are direct successors of those consecrated to Scottish sees at the Restoration: but Episcopalians in Scotland are a very small minority—about 60,000, according to the latest statistics.

[2] For Bishop Charles Wordsworth's efforts to promote unity between the Scottish Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches (1880–1893) see Hunkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 74, 107.

did not relax their efforts until at length in 1642–43 Parliament abolished the episcopal form of government as the form of government for the Church of England.

By this time, however, it was clear that those who opposed the Bishops were of more than one kind. As early as 1581 Robert Brown had laid the foundations of the Congregational system and established at Norwich the first Congregational Church outside London. A little later, in 1609, John Smyth published *The Character of the Beast*, setting forth the view that infants ought not to be baptized. Smyth proceeded to baptize himself and some of his friends. He may be regarded as the founder of the Baptist Church in England. On the question of Church government Baptists and Congregationalists were, in the main, agreed. Christ being sole head of the Church, they held that all the members of the Church must be Christian and that the government of the Church must be in their hands, the State having no right of interference.

This period also saw the beginnings of the Society of Friends. George Fox, the son of a weaver of Fenny Drayton in Leicestershire, started preaching in 1647.

All these groups were centres of spiritual fervour, though few of them were altogether free from extravagances of one kind or another. It is greatly to be regretted that they were not treated with more conciliation by the Episcopalians when they came back to power at the Restoration. The action of Charles II's Government in 1662 convinced a great many people that the Established Church would not provide scope for the religious life they felt they needed. On St. Bartholomew's Day a large number of clergy (though the figure often given, 2,000, is probably considerably exaggerated) left their livings rather than conform. They and their followers, the Nonconformists, suffered great disabilities. The generous support given by the Nonconformists to the policy of the seven Bishops under James II, however, led to better feeling. All along the gap between moderate Nonconformists and the party nearest to them in the Church of England had been a narrow one, and a considerable number of them continued to attend services in their Parish Churches as well as their own meetings. Richard Baxter used to speak of Occasional Conformity as "a healing custom." [1] With the cessation of persecution the Nonconformists began to drift back into the Established Church, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century it looked as though Nonconformity would gradually die out.[2]

Then came the Evangelical Revival led by John and Charles

[1] For details and instances see Hunkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 ff. As Dr. C. S. Carter points out (*Ministerial Commission*, p. 94), if the rubric at the end of the Confirmation Service really excluded Nonconformists from Communion in their Parish Churches "there would have been no need to pass an Occasional Conformity Act (1711)" to stop the practice. The enforcement of the rubric itself would have sufficed.

[2] See Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 430.

Wesley. The Church of England, though by no means dead, lacked the vigour necessary to deal with the new movement.[1] The new wine did not indeed burst the bottles, but it was spilled. Yet looking back we may well see even in this spilling the overruling of Providence. For, owing to the Industrial Revolution, great new populations in the North and West of England were growing up beyond the Church's reach; and it may be said that it was because of John Wesley's bold and independent methods of dealing with them that the English nation was kept Christian. The Church of England itself received new life from the Movement. It was an Evangelical Churchman, William Wilberforce, who was the great champion of the abolition of slavery (1807); and the Church Missionary Society was founded in 1799.

But if the effect on the Church of England was considerable, the effect on the Nonconformists was still greater. "In 1676 Dr. Sherlock had estimated the proportion of Dissenters to Anglicans as 1 to 20. At the end of the eighteenth century the proportion had become 1 to 8: in 1880 a careful calculation made it 28 to 72." [2] The Methodists themselves are, of course, taken into account in these figures. They are now found in Great Britain in three main divisions: the Wesleyans with a membership of over half a million, the Primitive Methodists with a membership of over 220,000, and the United Methodists with a membership of over 150,000: but Methodist reunion has already been decided upon.[3] Alongside of the Methodist revival there grew up a new Nonconformist culture, which included not only the conscientious, abstemious business man who spared himself no more than his employees and who had few interests outside his factory and his Chapel, but also philosophers and scientists. Priestley was a Unitarian Minister and Dalton a Quaker schoolmaster. Such men were by religious tests debarred from the older Universities. The University of London was founded largely to meet their needs in 1828; but tests were not abolished at Oxford and Cambridge till 1871.

And so we come to the present day.[4] The principle on which modern movements towards reunion have been proceeding has been, as Dr. Carnegie Simpson puts it, that "*Churches nearest each other should unite.*" "For the Church of England," writes Dr. Head, the Archbishop of Melbourne, "the real task is to bring back to itself the Puritans and Methodists whom it ought never to have

[1] The attitude of the Church at this time is quaintly illustrated by an inscription in one of our Cathedrals to a worthy Canon: "he was an enemy to all enthusiasm."

[2] Hunkin, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

[3] Far larger in numbers is the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, the membership of which reaches a total of over nine millions.

[4] Those who desire brief, illuminating, just, and sympathetic sketches of the history of religion in England may be referred to the chapter on *The Historical Causes of Division*, by Dr. F. W. Head in the *Call for Christian Unity* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1930), and to *The Making of Modern English Religion*, by Mr. B. L. Manning, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge (S.C.M., 1929).

lost." [1] And even if we feel that the chickens have now grown too large merely to come back again under their mother's wing, we may well agree with the Archbishop that it is towards closer relations with the English Free Churches that Anglicans should look and strive first of all.

All of us, members of the Church of England and Nonconformists alike, live in a new age and have not yet adjusted ourselves to it. The study of the Bible and of the history of our own religion and of other religions by modern scientific methods, the advance of Psychology, and the critical inquiries of the philosopher, have altered our outlook and deeply affected our thinking. The new knowledge has dissolved many of the old differences of opinion. Many labels are now obviously obsolete. While the things that cannot be shaken remain, things that can be shaken are being shaken; in the process individuals and groups are re-sorting themselves; and the end is not yet.

Although we cannot see far into the future, we can promote Christian unity by mutual recognition and by realizing our need of one another. First, by mutual recognition. The chief difficulties here have been connected with the ministry. As far as the ministries of the Free Churches are concerned members of the Church of England may take their stand on the declaration contained in a *Memorandum on the Status of the Existing Free Church Ministry* drawn up by the Church of England representatives at the Joint Conference at Lambeth Palace, July 6, 1923.[2]

> " It seems to us to be in accordance with the Lambeth Appeal to say, as we are prepared to say, that the ministries which we have in view in this memorandum, ministries which imply a sincere intention to preach Christ's Word and administer the Sacraments as Christ has ordained, and to which authority so to do has been solemnly given by the Church concerned, are real ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church."

We may take our stand on such a declaration as this, accept its implications, and act upon them. It surely means that at least there should be no bar to what is commonly called " interchange of pulpits " on special occasions; or to the welcoming of members of one Church, at all events in special circumstances, as guests at Holy Communion in another.[3]

Secondly, both we and our Nonconformist friends have to realize that all is not well with either of us. The Church of England with its fine parochial system, its noble liturgy, its venerable buildings, its tradition of awe and self-restraint in worship; planned on

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 103.

[2] The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishop of London (Dr. Winnington-Ingram), Winchester (Dr. Talbot), Ely (Dr. Chase), Lichfield (Dr. Kempthorne), Peterborough (Dr. Woods), Chelmsford (Dr. Watts-Ditchfield), Hereford (Dr. Linton-Smith), Ripon (Dr. Strong), Salisbury (Dr. Donaldson), Gloucester (Dr. Headlam), Bishop Gibson, and the Rev. W. H. Frere, D.D.

[3] This practice, happily, has never entirely ceased. For instances, see Hunkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 107 ff.

a large and generous scale, but now unsteady for lack of support: the Free Churches with their wonderful standard of personal giving and with the splendid participation of their laity in spiritual work, but constantly slipping towards the mere " pleasant Sunday afternoon," and bereft of much that is beautiful in tradition and art.

Both of us alike on the one hand beset by obscurantism and on the other threatened by revolt: both alike labouring under the ever-growing burdens of finance. Is it not true to say that we without them and they without us shall not be made perfect?

Above all, let us all put first things first. Questions of organization, important as they are, can never be of the first importance. There is, and always has been, a deep spiritual union between all sincere disciples of our Lord. The more we think of that and are able to realize that, the brighter glows the hope of dealing successfully with obstructions that lie upon the surface.

In our present confusions an individual may well come to find himself in a false position. If so let him do his best to change the situation or let him move himself. I sometimes think a considerable re-shuffling among individuals will and should take place. Meanwhile, and always, it is for each to be true to the things of the Spirit as they are revealed to him. With regard to the adjustment of details we can afford to be patient: one step at a time; here a little, there a little; while our inmost thought and prayer is the Apostle's: *Peace be to the Brethren, and Love with Faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in Uncorruptness* (Ephesians vi, 23, 24).

The Cambridge Platonists are a subject of interest to many students. They hold a very definite place in the history of Religious thought in England, and quite a considerable literature has arisen around them. They were the subject of the Hulsean Prize Essay in Cambridge University in 1926. The prize was won by Mr. G. P. H. Pawson, who has published his essay under the title, *The Cambridge Platonists and their Place in Religious Thought* (S.P.C.K., 3*s.* 6*d.* net). Dr. Alexander Nairne, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, contributes a Foreword in which he warmly commends the care and study which Mr. Pawson has devoted to his theme. The Essay brings out the main elements in the teaching of Benjamin Whichcote, John Smith, Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, Nathaniel Culverwel, and some minor members of the School. The author is convinced that there is an essential connection between the spirit of Platonism and the spirit of Christianity. The value of the work of this Cambridge group was that they kept alive the Platonic tradition. They kept a light burning. " Their task was to clothe old truths of forgotten wisdom in new forms, which should give those truths vital expression."