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## THE BASIS OF ANGLICAN DOCTRINE AND FELLOWSHIP IN RELATION TO THE OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES.

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**B**ETWEEN the National Church of Sweden and the Church of England reciprocal relations of inter-communion have already been established. As a result of the Lambeth Conference of 1920<sup>1</sup> and of previous approaches, members of the Swedish Church have partaken of Holy Communion in Anglican Churches, and Swedish clergy have given addresses from Anglican pulpits. Two Anglican Bishops, the Bishops of Durham and Peterborough, took part, on September 19, 1920, in the consecration of two Swedish Bishops in Upsala Cathedral, and a Swedish Bishop took part, in Canterbury Cathedral, in November, 1927, in the consecration of the Bishop of Dover, the Bishop of Central Tanganyika, and the Bishop of Hokkaido (Japan). All this is an early result of the general drawing together, and one cannot but rejoice in the establishment of such happy relations between two National and Reformed Churches.

But it is especially interesting to note the appreciation of Anglican Doctrine and Fellowship made by the Lutheran Church of Sweden, based as it is on their reading of the XXXIX Articles. After the appeal of Lambeth, 1920, had been sent to the Primate of the Swedish Church, the Archbishop of Upsala, a long and reasoned reply was made by the Swedish Bishops,<sup>2</sup> a reply which, in my judgment, deserves special attention at this time. The Bishops of Sweden stated that in the question of inter-communion their Church had "not attached decisive weight either to the doctrine of the ministry in general or to what is usually called the Apostolic Succession of Bishops and the questions thereby implied." They referred back to statements which had been previously laid before the Archbishop of Canterbury's Committee with respect to the doctrine of the Swedish Church on the Ministry, quoting among others two passages :

(a) "No particular organization of the Church and of its ministry is instituted *iure divino*, not even the order and discipline and state of things in the New Testament, because the Holy Scriptures, the *norma normans* of the faith of the Church, are no law, but vindicate for the New Covenant the great principle of Christian freedom, unweariedly asserted by St. Paul against every form of legal religion, and applied with fresh strength and clearness by Luther, but instituted by our Saviour Himself. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> Lambeth Conference, 1920, Resolution 24.

<sup>2</sup> April 21, 1922. *Documents on Christian Unity, 1920-4*, G. K. A. Bell, pp. 185-95.

(b) "The value of every organization of the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*, and of the Church in general, is only to be judged by its fitness and ability to become a pure vessel for the supernatural contents, and a perfect channel for the way of Divine Revelation unto mankind."

While the Swedish Church—which is both Lutheran and yet episcopal in form and continuity—is in no way indifferent to her venerable legacy from the past, to her the decisive importance is attached "not to any questions of a more formal character, but to the question whether and how far the two communities agree in these ideas as to the content of that message of Salvation, founded on the divine revelation, which had been committed to both of them." The Swedish Bishops, therefore, in their reply to the Lambeth Appeal, felt impelled to call attention at some length to two points more decisive to them than all others: (a) "The recognition of Scripture as *norma normans* both with regard to life and doctrine"; (b) "The building of our salvation on God's grace alone received by faith."

On these they remarked:

"The first of these principles means to us that in matters of faith no other authority must be put directly or indirectly above or, which is the same thing, on a level with the prophetic and apostolic word in Holy Scripture. . . ."

As to the second point—the principle of faith or grace—they wrote:

"The revelation is throughout essentially a revelation of God's prevenient and unconditional grace, precedent to and independent of all human endeavour—that is a revelation of the love of God, which, while condemning sin, searches for the sinner and restores him with His forgiveness. . . ."

Their summary was:

"Both principles could be most simply combined in this: Between God and the soul, or which is the same to us, between Christ and the faith, nothing, no third principle, no institution, no law, no proper works, must intervene" (p. 191).

And, in warmly grasping the fellowship of the Church of England, they added:

"The same conception is contained in its outlines, so far as we have been able to see, partly in the sixth, partly in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth of the XXXIX Articles. We are convinced that between our branches of the Universal Church of Christ, notwithstanding the shades of opinion that may exist, there is an essential unity in that fundamental conception which we have now briefly indicated, and to which we unswervingly adhere. In this conviction we accept with fraternal confidence the outstretched hand."

This appreciation of the principles of the Church of England made by the Swedish Bishops is, I suggest, truer to the historic position and standards of the Church of England than that which is now apparently being represented to the members of the Old Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Let us take, first of all, the Church of England statement con-

cerning the Ministry. It is one that goes back to a conference between Anglicans and Lutherans. When Henry VIII was seeking a political alliance with the Protestant Princes of Germany, some Lutheran divines were invited to England to confer with Cranmer and others with a view to drawing up a joint confession of faith. The negotiations eventually broke down; but Thirteen Articles (1538) were agreed upon, and the statement in our Article on the Ministry (Art. XXIII) reproduces substantially the form of words deliberately framed in 1538 so as to include the Lutheran ministry within their scope:

“Those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.”

When dealing with Ministry in general the Church of England, it is clear, deliberately refrained from making any one form of Church government essential to the being of the Church. She took no rigid, exclusive position in such matters.

#### NATURE OF MINISTERIAL WORK.

Further, with respect to the view taken by the Church of England concerning the nature of Ministerial work, we can find some clear indications in the reforming of the Ordination Services. Anyone who will carefully compare the unreformed Latin Services and the reformed English Services will realize the deliberate omission of references to sacerdotal offering<sup>1</sup> and the definite description of the ministerial office in terms of evangelistic and pastoral work among the souls of men. Pope Leo XIII, in 1896, put it from the Roman standpoint as follows:

“In the whole [English] Ordinal not only is there no clear mention of the sacrifice, of consecration, of the *sacerdotium*, and of the power of consecrating and offering sacrifice, but every trace of these things, which had existed in those prayers of the Catholic rite not wholly rejected, was deliberately (*de industria*) removed and struck out.”<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Dowden commented on this that the Pope’s statement was true to the facts. One other remark needs to be made here. To state that the power of offering propitiatory sacrifice is assumed under the general phrase of “ministering the sacraments,” or to suggest that the Preface to the Ordinal, in referring to the “continuance” of the threefold ministry, therefore assumed the continuance of the pre-Reformation doctrine of the priesthood, seems to me to refuse to face the plain issue suggested by the reformed character of the Ordination Services of the Church of England.

#### ANGLICAN ATTITUDE TO THE REFORMED CHURCHES.

Attention may again be drawn to the historic friendliness between the Anglican Church and the Reformed Churches. Cranmer openly

<sup>1</sup> E.g., the omission of the Commission: “Accipe potestatem offerre sacrificium Deo, missamque celebrare, tam pro vivis quam pro defunctis.”

<sup>2</sup> Pope Leo XIII, *Apostolicae Curae*, September 13, 1896.

gave hospitality to Protestant refugees from the Continent. He was the close friend of several Continental divines. Peter Martyr became Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford and Martin Bucer Regius Professor at Cambridge. The Anglican Archbishop frequently consulted them both. The earlier Elizabethan divines (to quote Archdeacon Hunkin):

"follow Cranmer in regarding each national Church as free to choose that form of Church government which seemed to suit it best. But later, under the stress of the controversy with the Puritans who were seeking to replace episcopacy by the presbyterian form of polity, there was a tendency to say that episcopacy—supported as it was by a continuous tradition stretching back (as Cranmer himself allowed) to Apostolic times—was the norm; and that any departure from it was to be regretted, and to be excused only on the ground of some exceptional circumstance."<sup>1</sup>

The Elizabethan Church permitted men holding presbyterian orders of foreign Reformed Churches to minister in the Anglican Church. In 1582 a Scotch divine, Morrison, was given Archbishop Grindal's official licence "to celebrate the divine offices, and to minister the Sacraments throughout the whole Province of Canterbury."<sup>2</sup> The Caroline divines similarly ranged themselves alongside the Reformed Churches. To quote Principal Carter's conclusion after an ample supply of historical evidence, "we find the later, equally with the earlier, Caroline divines professing their willingness to recognize such ministers."<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Sancroft (1688) hoped for "a blessed union of all Reformed Churches both at home and abroad against her common enemies."<sup>4</sup> Archbishop Sharp (1702) declared that, if abroad, he "would willingly communicate with the Protestant Churches where he should happen to be."<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Sanday has concluded:

"The more sweeping refusal to recognize the non-episcopal Reformed Churches is not and can never be made a doctrine of the Church of England. Too many of her representative men have not shared it. Hooker did not hold it. Andrewes expressly disclaimed it. Cosin freely communicated with the French Reformed Church during his exile. Indeed it is not until the last half of the present century [the nineteenth century] that more than a relatively small minority of English Churchmen have been committed to it."<sup>6</sup>

#### THE XXXIX ARTICLES.

Finally, the authoritative doctrinal statement of the Church of England was not unconnected with those of the Reformed

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Hunkin, *Episcopal Ordination and Confirmation in Relation to Inter-Communion and Reunion*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Strype, *Grindal*, i, 402.

<sup>3</sup> C. Sydney Carter, *The Anglican "Via Media,"* p. 193.

<sup>4</sup> D'Oyley, *Life of Sancroft*, i, 325.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, ii, 28.

<sup>6</sup> Sanday, *The Conception of Priesthood*, p. 95, quoted in Archdeacon MacNeice, *Reunion: the Open Door* (Belfast, 1929).

On the question of the Anglican attitude to the Ministries of the Reformed Churches, see especially: C. Sydney Carter, *The Anglican "Via Media"* (1927), pp. 77-105, 181-94; J. W. Hunkin, *Episcopal Ordination and Confirmation in Relation to Inter-Communion and Reunion* (1929); H. A. Wilson, *Episcopacy and Unity* (1912).

Churches of the Continent. Cranmer, who was mainly responsible for the first issue of the Anglican Articles in 1553 (the Forty-two Articles), had at heart the publication of a United Confession of Faith of all the Reformed Churches. The Anglican Archbishop seriously took up this idea,<sup>1</sup> which had been previously constantly urged by Melancthon. Cranmer hoped for a Lambeth Conference in which the chief divines of the various Reformed Churches should meet and draw up a book of Articles and heads of Christian faith and practice to serve as the standing doctrine of Protestants. He approached Bullinger, Calvin, Melancthon. "This object [of a Conference]," he wrote to Melancthon (February 10, 1549), "we are most anxiously endeavouring to accomplish to the utmost of our power." The difficulties of the times, however, frustrated Cranmer's hopes, to which he again gave expression in 1552. It was thus in the atmosphere of friendly approach to the Reformed Churches that the Anglican Articles eventually saw the light, and we are not surprised to find in them connections with Continental Confessions. In keeping with this, we find later that, when Thomas Rogers, Chaplain of Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote his book (1607) on the Articles, it was to show that they were "agreeable both to the written Word of God and to the extant confession of all the neighbour Churches Christianly reformed." Bancroft ordered all the parishes in his province to provide themselves with a copy of this book. If the proposal to dispense with assent to the XXXIX Articles be pressed, it will raise the whole problem of the attitude of the Church of England towards the great questions at issue between Rome and England, and will tend to rob the Church of England of her historically acknowledged place among the Reformed Churches.

A true estimate of the basis of Anglican Doctrine and Fellowship can be made only in the full light of her authoritative statements in the Articles and of her historical attitude as revealed in part by some of the facts given above. With every respect, it has to be declared that a negotiating committee, which in dealing with an Unreformed Church omits to give adequate weight to these principles to which the Church of England has adhered for over 350 years, cannot be regarded as truly representative of Anglican doctrine. The Church of England has, in general, historically ranged itself with the Reformed Churches. Her appeal is to Scripture. In particular, in the question of Episcopacy she has adopted no rigid, narrow position with respect to other Churches, and the fresh investigations of recent times have tended only to show conclusively that the Episcopate was a growth in time and that there is no sufficient evidence that it was instituted by the Apostles.

What, then, are our more immediate hopes in the light of these facts?

1. Firstly, pending the realization of a universal Church based

<sup>1</sup> Cranmer, *Works* (Parker Society, Camb., 1846), Vol. II, 420, 422, 425, 430, 431, 433; Strype, *Memorials of Thomas Cranmer*, I, 584-5, 588 (Oxford, 1812); *Annals of the Reformation* (Oxford, 1824), I, i, 351.

upon Scriptural truth, we hope that Churches which are near to one another in the apprehension of such truth will draw together first. We rejoice in the inter-communion established with one of the Churches of the Reformation, the Church of Sweden. We feel that the reunion of the sister Churches of the Reformation is one of the first possibilities of to-day. It can be said of the Reformed Churches in a far truer sense than has been said of the Old Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox that we "may find such a unity in faith and such a similarity in practice to exist between the Churches that restoration of communion may become possible."

#### A NATIONAL CHURCH.

2. Secondly, it is, I think, true to say that public feeling within this Christian nation looks eagerly for fresh signs of the realization of a vision of a National Church of England truly representative of the Protestant convictions of the nation as a whole. Through recent movements there has come more into prominence the idea of National Churches "enabling the God-giving genius of great nations to find its appropriate expression in the worship and work of the Church." The two largest Christian communities beyond the Tweed have united their forces in a single National Church, and the membership of the reunited Church of Scotland totals, we are told, nearly half of the entire population. In England we are observing with interest the approaching corporate reunion (1931) of the three Methodist Churches. Moreover, Lambeth, 1930, had held out the possibility of the renewal of the Conferences between the Free Churches and the Church of England—it has expressed the hope

"that at an early date such Conferences [as those held from 1921 to 1925] may be resumed with a view to ascertaining whether the Proposed Scheme of Union prepared for the Churches in South India, or other proposals which have been put forward, suggest lines on which further advance towards agreement on questions of order can be made. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Can it be that, under the influence of a new Comprehension Movement the opportunities lost in 1662 and the succeeding decades can be recaptured? It is, in my judgment, a crying need of the time that the unfortunate breaches of Reformed Christianity in England should be speedily healed, and that a National Church should be evolved which would be truly expressive of the Christian feelings of the nations as a whole and which would more effectively influence the national character and life.

<sup>1</sup> Lambeth Conference, 1930, Resolution 44.