

OUR CHURCHES

AND WHY WE BELONG TO THEM

BY

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CHURCH OF ENGLAND (HIGH)

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WELSH CALVINISTIC CHURCH

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PREFATORY NOTE

IT might be feared that this volume would emphasize the differences in doctrine and Church government between the various Churches dealt with, and thus tend to separate them further from one another. Such, however, has not been the intention of the contributors. On the contrary, it is hoped that on its perusal the impression left on the reader's mind will be, that the Churches do not differ so much as is generally supposed, and that many might combine with advantage to the progress of Christianity in this country, and throughout the world.

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
(HIGH)

BY

W. J. KNOX LITTLE, M.A.

CANON OF WORCESTER, VICAR OF HOAR CROSS

NOTE

THE Publishers will be pleased to arrange for the separate issue of any of the articles in this volume.

Owing to unavoidable delay the article on "The Church of England," by the Rev. Prebendary Webb-Peploe, has had to be inserted at the end, instead of at the beginning of the volume along with that of the Rev. Canon Knox Little.

I

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

(HIGH)

BY CANON W. J. KNOX LITTLE, M.A.

Present Position of the Church of England

THE present position of the Anglican Church is so remarkable among the various expressions of Christianity in the West, that it is worthy of careful attention. It is, of course, the result of its past history. For this reason those who, like the members of foreign religious bodies, are unacquainted with that history, and have not been accustomed to communions marked by such energy and freedom, find it difficult to understand that position.

The present position of close connection with national life, and immense influence on the character of English-speaking races, is a necessary consequence of its origin. In its first beginnings, it dates back, unquestionably, to the early part of the third century. It was at first a poor and struggling community, yet with evidences of personal saintliness and missionary zeal. Then came the mission of St. Augustine, of Canterbury, and all the various ups and downs of Celtic and

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English Christianity, until things were gradually organised towards the middle of the eighth century.

Vast changes passed over the Church in the Norman period, but in all these, and amidst the power and tyranny of the Norman kings, the clergy alone had the daring to resist their will, and it was the Church of England and her ministers who "handed on the torch of liberty," as it has been said, "amid the gloom of a tyrannical age."

The Church of England may be said to have formed the Parliaments of England. In the struggle of Thomas à Becket with Henry, whatever were Becket's faults—and they were many—the great ecclesiastic withstood royal tyranny. In the reign of Henry III., Parliament came, in a real sense, into being, and became consolidated in the reign following. The organisation was borrowed from the Church; and, in consequence of the English bishops and clergy having thrown themselves on the side of liberty, the bishops sat in the, then powerful, House to represent the Church.

Likewise, in the thirteenth century, it was the Church which took in hand education, of which she has been the staunchest friend ever since. The collegiate life of Oxford and Cambridge, and the vigorous life of the great public schools, dating from the mother and model of them all, Winchester, was due to the efforts of the Church.

If love for liberty, a truly national spirit, and a sense of responsibility as to education, were characteristics of the Anglican Church in the past, none

the less was a steady resistance to the aggressions of the Papacy.

There is an airy way of assuming, among those who do not read history, that before "the Reformation" the English Church was "Roman Catholic," and since then "Protestant." This is, of course, a mere delusion. The English Church is, as she has always been, Catholic. For many years there was over Europe an advance in Papal pretensions and Papal power, and the English Church, like other parts of the Western Church, suffered from Papal domination. There was always, however, resistance to any extreme claims on the part of Rome; and never at any time has there been a Papal Church in England as the Church of the country. The struggle with Rome may be said to have begun, though Roman pretensions were by no means so absurd and exaggerated then as they are now, about 676, when Wilfrid appealed to Rome against Theodore, and this struggle lasted steadily until 1536, when Roman interference with the English Church was finally discarded. The king and the Witan both treated Wilfrid's appeal to a foreign power as a mere impertinence, and—though for a long time, utterly baseless as it was and is, the necessity of Roman Primacy was believed in as a fact—the same thing happened again, and again. In the time of William I., the moment the Roman See attempted to be more than *Primus inter pares*, the Pope was put in his proper place. The same took place, in a more modified way, in the time of Henry I. In the reign of Henry III., Pope and king combined to tyrannise over the Church, but the Church,

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led by the intrepid Grosseteste, resisted. "The cause, the fountain, the origin of all this," he said, "is the Court of Rome." In the fourteenth century, when the Popes were at Avignon, the power of the Papacy collapsed, and the English Church resisted the claims, not of primacy, but of interference and spoliation. The Parliament of Lincoln before this, in 1301, repudiated the interference of Boniface VIII. in the affairs of England, and others followed, so that in 1536, when the final Act of Parliament abolishing the usurped authority of Rome was passed, it was only a concluding act to the steady resistance of the English Church to Papal aggression.

In the same way the Church of England has always been a *reforming Church*. The Church, though divine, is also human, and all things human require reformation from time to time. A characteristic of the Church of England is her constant instinct of *reformation*. All along, her history has been a history of reformation after reformation. Anyhow, from the time of Archbishop Theodore, down to the Oxford movement—*i.e.*, from the seventh to the nineteenth century—she has ever from time to time been reforming herself.

Side by side with the passion for reform, is the faithful Catholic spirit to be noticed from first to last. There were, of course, in different ages, fanatics and innovators here as elsewhere, but however much they may have moved a certain number of men, they never could shake the mass of English Churchmen out of their inherited apostolic ways. The Church, from the first to this

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hour, with all her fearless reforming spirit, seems to have had the conservative instinct of the English people. She may have varied in details, but to the fundamental principles of the Apostolic Church—the threefold ministry, the succession and handing down of ministerial gifts through the apostles from Christ, the seriousness and necessity of the sacraments ministered according to Apostolic order as channels of grace—to these, all through, she has clung with unflinching tenacity.

Another striking feature, all along the history of the Church, is the position and character of the clergy. It has been called “an august ministry.” It has been said by one of the deepest and truest thinkers of our day, that “it is much . . . to be members of so illustrious a public body as the clergy of England.” So it is. But the point is that—after all abatements have been made, and they must, of course, be made in any great Church—the English clergy, on the whole, have always been an “illustrious body.” With all their faults they have shown, *on the whole*, in their lives and work, the fine characteristics of the nation. It has been well said by an able writer, himself a layman—

“On the whole, from the scanty light which we have to guide us, from the paucity of mention of serious offences in the disciplinary canons, except in the matter of clerical marriage”—which we may venture to say was no “offence,” but perhaps a virtue—“from the undoubtedly high character for devotion which England possessed in Europe, from the high-minded and patriotic action usually taken by the clergy in political matters, from the con-

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tinued attachment of the laity, even through the fifteenth century, as shown in the enlargement and enrichment of so many parish churches, from the multiplication of books of devotion and manuals of prayer, we may fairly conclude that the parish clergy of England in the Middle Ages were just as much superior to the standard of their age as it is right to expect clergy to be. If some of them sank into self-indulgence, and some into vice, some rose to unquestionable saintship, many to acknowledged nobility of life, and it is worth notice that it is among the ranks of the parochial clergy that Chaucer finds the most attractive and religious of his characters."

It was indeed a great thing both for the Church and nation that the clergy and laity in those times so well "pulled together." The glory of the Anglican part of the Catholic Church is this, that while faithful to her high calling, as representing the supernatural life and power of Christ, she has been calm and serious and careful as representing the religious life of the nation.

Again and again, king or Parliament have encroached upon domains not theirs. Again and again, the Church has had to stand her ground against the encroaching and sometimes insolent power of the State. Instances innumerable can, of course, be given from history; all men remember the instance of that offensive intrusion into the sphere of religious matters represented by the Public Worship Regulation Act in our own times. As the English clergy had always withstood the wrongful interference of the State, so they withstood it in this last foolish effort of State des

potism. The Church withstood it, and—as must be the case—the Church conquered. The Public Worship Regulation Act, like all attacks upon the Church of Christ by the world, is dead and buried. No one, layman or clergyman, would dream of obeying that futile Act now. Such is a short, and, of course, most inadequate *resumé* of the past. The past is the parent of the present; the present position, therefore, of the Anglican Church is this—

1. Here, in England, we have a great society established by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and His apostles.

2. We have, therefore, the apostolic succession in the sacred ministry, and, consequently, true sacraments secured by the succession.

3. We have a Church faithful to the creeds, faithful, also, to English tradition in the assertion of a proper independence, and especially in a refusal to submit to excessive claims made by the Roman See.

4. We have a vigorous body of clergy, not a *caste*, but citizens as deeply loyal as other citizens to national life, whilst still by their special and high calling, ministers of the kingdom of God, and “stewards of the mysteries.”

5. Again, after a time of undue subjection to the State, and of a lull of deadness and worldliness in the last and the beginning of the present century, revival after revival has taken place, and the spirit, both of careful but steady reform, together with wider expansion and sympathy, and deeper spiritual enthusiasm, has taken hold of the Church.

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At this moment, therefore, her position is this. She is, *par excellence*, the teacher and the true exponent, in the fullest sense, of the Christian religion, with a genuine English tone and temper, to the English people. Her roots are deep in the national life. There are still, as there have been, jealousies felt by some of the other Christian bodies in the country of her position and prestige. These jealousies have arisen, naturally enough, from injustices on the part of the Church in the past, and have consequently contributed towards unjust efforts against her in the present; but these jealousies more and more tend to become softened by the amenities of intercourse, and by the more earnest Christian and philanthropic spirit of later years. The Church is now truly again the Church of the people. Her connection with the State is, more and more, steadily being adjusted. The fogs of the past are sweeping away, and the English nation is more intelligently learning to love their great and ancient Church, as she is more earnestly and diligently doing her duty to the English people. She has never been "by law established." She helped in the past to "establish" the State, and is herself "established" in a position of honour and usefulness by the prescription of centuries. She is at present stronger than ever in the hearts of the large majority of the nation, because she is better understood, and because they feel that their national life and national glories are intertwined with her and sanctified by her. Her present position, therefore, is one of unassailable strength, because she is the religious body which, history teaches us, has mission and juris-

diction from our Lord Jesus Christ to the nation, and because she is more than ever alive to her duties, and, with increasing energy, endeavouring to act according to her responsibilities towards the English people.

Points of Difference between the English Church and other Churches and Religious Bodies in Belief

There are certain variations in belief which mark the Anglican Church from the other parts of the Catholic Church, as well as from the orthodox bodies of Christians which have separated from her.

First, with regard to the Roman part of Catholic Christendom, there are differences which are worthy of notice. On all the really deep fundamental truths of Christianity, these two sections of the Universal Church are, of course, at one. After that, however, divergence is observable. *The point of disagreement, which is the most important of all, is the position of the Popedom.* The doctrine of modern Romanism is, that the Pope is an essential factor in the life of the Church. To be in external communion with him is to be in the Church of Christ. To be apart from that external communion is to be out of the Church of Christ—certainly a schismatic, possibly also a heretic. He—such is modern Roman doctrine—is by Divine appointment “vicar of Christ”; he is infallible in his judgments on faith and morals in his own right, and apart altogether from any

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consent of the Church. Without the Pope, in fact, no Church.

The Anglican part of the Universal Church, of course, entirely dissents from this modern and uncatholic view. She believes the Roman See to be an important one, and, were other matters adjusted, would acknowledge there a certain primacy of honour. She holds that Christ appointed three orders of ministers; that there is no Head of the Church but Christ Himself; that the Roman view is a departure from history and the witness of the early Church; that no bishop is infallible, but that the unerring guidance of the Holy Ghost is given to the *whole* Church; that, therefore, such truths as are held in common by *all* parts of the Catholic Church (even though for the time externally dis-united), as, for instance, the three creeds, *are* the Catholic Faith; and that other matters held or professed by merely *some* part or parts, are pious opinions, with more or less truth in them, but that in no case does the revelation or elucidation of truth depend upon the See of Rome any more than upon any other See; that bishops of Rome have, like some others in Christendom, erred and even been heretics, and that the Catholic Faith is that deposit of truth left by our Lord to His Church, which is to be witnessed to, and guarded by, the Church, but which the Church cannot depart from, nor enlarge by fresh revelation, or by any development inconsistent with the original revelation.

The other differences in belief between the Anglican and Roman portions of the Catholic Church arise from two divergent principles which have influenced them. The Roman Church may

be said to *maximise*, the Anglican to *minimise*. The Anglican teaches just what is necessary to be believed for the salvation of souls; the Roman turns pious opinions into necessary doctrines. There is, therefore, in the Anglican Church larger room for *opinion* according to the bias of various minds.

Thus, differences arise on certain doctrines. The Roman Church has lately decreed, as a necessary article of the faith, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mother of our Lord. In the Anglican Church pious persons may believe this, or the reverse, as they please. The Church does not interfere with freedom of opinion, so long as such opinion does not pretend to be a necessary matter of faith, or contradict the revealed truth. Again, from the same divergence of temper, there arises a certain amount of difference as to the sacraments. Both these parts of the Universal Church believe, of course, and teach sacramental doctrine as it is revealed in Holy Scripture and taught by antiquity, but the Roman Church seems to place all the seven sacraments on the same level as necessary for salvation, while the Anglican Church draws a distinction, and considers "two only" (*i.e.* Holy Baptism and the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist) as sacrifice and communion, "generally (*i.e.* universally) necessary for salvation" where they may be had.

Again, there is some difference as to the mystery of the Divine Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar. The Anglican Church denies the *popular* view of Transubstantiation, which apparently obtained in the sixteenth century. This the Roman

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Church would also condemn, but the Roman Church defines the *mode* of the Divine Presence under the term Transubstantiation, used in its proper sense, while the Anglican declines to define the *mode* of the mystery (especially as Transubstantiation, in its proper sense, rests upon a probably untrue philosophy), and contents herself with stating *the revealed fact*, on which both Churches agree—viz., the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of the Lord, in a heavenly, spiritual, but actual and true manner, “under the form of bread and wine.” Such are the chief differences between these two parts of the Catholic Church as to belief, of which the really serious one is the Roman doctrine as to the Popedom.

As to the ancient Orthodox Church of the East, the differences in belief are much more trifling. With the Anglican Church, the Eastern Church rejects the Roman doctrine as to the Popedom. With the Anglican Church, the Eastern Church holds the doctrine of the Real Presence, as taught in Holy Scripture, without assenting to the mode of the Presence being defined as Transubstantiation. In doctrine the chief *apparent* difference is what is known as the *filioque* clause in the creed. It is well known that this clause was introduced in the Western Church without the authority of the councils which drew up the creed. While the doctrine appears, at first sight, to differ from the ancient statement of the creed, as a matter of fact, it is probably merely a different manner of stating the same truth ; so that, as concerning belief, the Anglican Church and the Orthodox Eastern Church would appear to be at one.

As regards the various bodies of Christians, which have been separated from the Anglican Communion, there is much in common in matters of the deeper and more fundamental beliefs. It has been said, "We only part where they deny." For the most part the difference arises from their holding (in the view of the Anglican Church) only parts of the faith, and losing hold of the other parts as they are revealed in Holy Scripture. Having abandoned the apostolic ministry, they have lost hold of the fact and doctrine of the apostolic succession ; belief in many of the sacraments they have abandoned, and belief in what remain, as more or less accepted, sits lightly upon them. The Church has clung more to faith of an objective character, and the separated bodies to one more subjective. In some cases they lay a disproportionate stress upon *one* doctrine, so as to lose sight of another, and thus tend to impair "the proportion of faith," and to narrow the idea of Christ's kingdom. For instance, the Baptists appear to put holy baptism forward with undue prominence, and the Wesleyans' conversion, while all these bodies alike abandon all idea of the sacrament of confirmation, which is stated in the New Testament to be one of "the first principles of the doctrine of Christ." The Church differs from them in clinging to *all* those truths which Holy Scripture reveals and which the Church of the First Age sanctions.

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Points of Difference in Practice

The differences in practice between the Anglican and other parts of the Catholic Church are to be traced, in a great degree, to differences in national feeling and temperament, and to the variations in the religious movements of the sixteenth century.

By national temperament, the English people are at once more grave, reserved, undemonstrative, and more independent, than either the Slav or Latin nations. In the changes of the sixteenth century, and those which followed in Puritan times, the English Church had more sympathy with the Protestant movements on the Continent than either the Latin or Eastern Churches could have, and a greater feeling for religion being *intelligently* embraced, and for a freer play being allowed to individual conscience. The Anglican Church has also been very jealous of any, apparently excessive, honour shown to the Blessed Virgin Mary, from fear of detracting from the honour due to our Lord. Owing to the Protestant influence which told upon her two and three centuries ago, she became used to having fewer Devotions, such as in various ways are practised in other parts of the Catholic Church, and inclined to discard or disuse pious, or edifying, or reverent, or harmless ceremonies—such as the use of holy water, of ashes on Ash Wednesday, of oil (or chrism) in the administration of holy baptism and confirmation, of bending the knee before the Blessed Sacrament, and using the sign of the Cross—and other habits indicative of good manners in

relation to the Unseen. This had the effect of chilling devotion. Other practices also, which are truly Catholic, more or less dropped out, such as prayers for the dead, the proper and unexaggerated invocation of the saints (the once exaggerated use the Anglican Church condemned), and even the celebration of the Blessed Sacrament and Sacrifice as the chief service of the Church ordained by our Lord. These have been more or less revived and replaced in their due position, as has naturally followed from the deepening of spiritual life in later times. Still on the whole the practice of the Anglican Communion has been, and is, less *devotional*, and less likely to encourage Devotions among the people than that of the other two great divisions of the Catholic Church.

On the other hand, her practice is more *congregational* than Rome, and perhaps more intelligent and intelligible than that of the Eastern Church. She has translated the priest's offices into English, and formed from them the matins and evensong of the Prayer-Book, in which the people can join as a public service, both on Sundays and week-days, if they please, although the priests are bound always to recite these offices daily, privately, if prevented from doing so publicly. She has translated her services into the mother tongue, so that the people may readily take part in them, and this not only in the daily offices of matins and evensong, but also in the Mass. In this she differs in practice from the others, and she makes a greater point of the reading of Holy Scripture in the English tongue for the people to hear at all services.

Again, there is in the Anglican Church greater

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freedom in the use of means of grace. Confession and absolution, practically speaking, became *necessary* in the Roman Church at any rate. In the Anglican the sacrament of penance is not obligatory. It is permitted, and in many cases advised. The practice of the Anglican Church in this respect is, "you *may*," or "you *ought*," but never "you *must*."

As to her difference of practice from the bodies of Christians separated from her, the chief one arises from the different conceptions of the Christian Church. They consider that any organisation most suitable to the tastes or habits of their people is as good as any other. The Church believes that Christianity has had a history, and she clings to historical Christianity. Consequently, she feels more strongly the idea of the *worship* of God as distinct from the *edification* of man, and believes that the latter will follow upon the former. The several Christian bodies have never dwelt upon the idea of *worship*. Hence their practice of religious service is chiefly concerned with preaching, and with extempore addresses delivered by the minister in the form of prayers. They, for the most part, recognise and use some religious observance commemorative of the Last Supper, while the Church uses the Holy Sacrament, not only as a means of communion with God and with one another in church, by partaking in common of Christ's sacred Body and precious Blood, but also as a sacrifice of thanksgiving (Eucharist) by which, in union with the sacrifice of the Cross, they "shew" before God the Father "the Lord's death till He come." Hence the dif-

ference in practice so marked between liturgical worship and service by the use of the ancient and appointed forms of prayer and sacrifice, and extempore prayer and preaching, of which the latter becomes the most prominent feature in the religious service of these Christian bodies. *They* have been comparatively inattentive to exact statement of doctrine, though often rich in piety. The Church has felt that for piety not to become *pietism*, there is needed for its support in the long run, a well-defined and exact system of doctrine—*i.e.*, of statement of revealed truth in all its parts.

Points of Difference as to Church Government

The differences in Church government are easily recognised. They are indeed at once obvious. All the divisions of the Catholic Church believe that the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons is of Divine appointment. The *names* have varied as they vary in the New Testament—sometimes apostles, bishops, deacons; sometimes apostles, elders, deacons; sometimes (as time went on, and as the sacred name apostle seemed fittingly retained for the immediate followers of our Lord), angels, presbyters, deacons; then bishops, presbyters, or priests, deacons—but though the names varied, the offices were unchanged. Of these it has been believed that in the office of bishop is inherent certain powers, as the laying on of hands—whether in the sacrament of confirmation, “the ordination of the lay priesthood,”—or in holy orders, the ordination to the priesthood proper, and that with this office is the gift of government.

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Hence, in critical moments, such as at Nicæa, at Constantinople, at Ephesus, the whole Church has held that the bishops meeting in council, were divinely guided to state, or re-state the truth, according to our Lord's promise, and that no council can be œcumenical and of final authority unless representing the *whole* Catholic Church. This the Anglican and Eastern Churches hold.

The Roman Church, while holding this also, has distorted the Divine arrangement by the later idea that the Roman popedom is a divinely appointed office, and that the Roman section is, in fact, the whole Church. Hence, later synods, such as the Synod of Trent and the Vatican, are held by Romans to be œcumenical: while in the belief of the Anglican and Oriental Churches, they are merely Provincial Assemblies, having no more power over the whole Church than the Convocations of Canterbury or York, or than the still less authoritative, though august and impressive, Conference of Bishops at Lambeth. In the same way the Anglican and Oriental Churches differ from the Roman, in that the latter makes the jurisdiction of bishops entirely dependent on the Pope, thereby reducing bishops to the position of mere administrators for the Pope—"the universal bishop"—whereas the other sections of the Catholic Church hold, with the early Church, that jurisdiction is inherent in the episcopal office, to be exercised where the bishop rules over a diocese, and in no way depends upon the Pope, or any other metropolitan, and that such offices as those of the Pope, or any other metropolitan or archbishop, are, like many other offices in the Church, matters of

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ecclesiastical arrangement, of more or less utility, but not of divine appointment. In one of his recent encyclicals, Leo XIII. appears to acknowledge this inherent power in the episcopal office, but modern Roman theologians teach the contrary view, and it is the view practically acted upon by the Roman Church and the Pope himself.

The differences between the Anglican Church and the various separated bodies are still more obvious. These bodies have one and all discarded Episcopacy as of divine institution, and therefore necessary to the right and due external organisation of the Church of Christ. That is *the* fundamental difference as to which the Anglican Church considers them, in this particular, to have departed from the mind of Christ. They have various organisations, originating in the exigencies and opinions of modern times, some in the seventeenth century, some in the eighteenth century, and some in the present century, the great difference being that *they* consider their modes of Church government such as they have found to suit them, matters of convenience to be settled by themselves, whilst the Anglican Church, with the rest of the Catholic Church, considers that there is no choice in the matter, that the mode of government is a part of the revealed and known will of God—*i.e.*, that it has been settled by our Lord and His apostles.

The Presbyterian bodies, indeed, and especially the Presbyterian Kirk in Scotland, seem some of them to have some idea of a necessity of succession. This succession, however, where they hold it, is considered to come from presbyters, a view

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which, according to the immemorial teaching of the Catholic Church, cannot be maintained, and does away entirely with the divine character of the ministry. The Church of England, then, accepts government by her bishops in synod and convocation—a sort of constitutional monarchy, the offices in which are of divine appointment—subject always to the rulings of the great councils of the undivided Church, and under appeal to an Œcumenical Council, when, by the healing of the quarrels of Christendom, such may be held.

Such are the chief differences in the matter of Church government.

The Advantages of these characteristics as to Belief, Practice, and Church Government preserved by the Anglican Church

There are certain advantages as to belief possessed by the Anglican Church. Speaking generally on *all* the points on which we have touched, her advantages might be summed up in such phrases as these: “Liberty within the bounds of law,” or “Freedom, neither despotism nor licence”—advantages, in fact, corresponding to the special blessings possessed by the great race to which the Head of the Church has Himself appointed her to minister. Turning, however, to the question of belief—

1. She has a definite and yet wisely-elastic Rule of Faith—*i.e.*, the revelation of God’s will in Holy Scripture, interpreted by antiquity.
2. She is faithful to the true “living voice” of

the Church. The Roman Church is in the habit of claiming to have a "living voice" in the Pope. No voice can be more difficult to hear, not only from its self-contradictory utterances, but also because when difficulties arise, it is hard, indeed impossible, to get its immediate answer. To search Holy Scripture and antiquity may be difficult and laborious, but to search and find out all the various "infallible" utterances of Popes, to discover which are "infallible" and which not in the innumerable folios filled with Papal encyclicals, bulls, &c., would be literally impossible. There are many points on which we cannot be—and, we may believe, are not intended to be—absolutely certain in this world, on some—and those the important ones—we can. Thus in *every* Catholic Church, Anglican or Roman, or Eastern, whenever the Mysteries, or the Mass, or the Eucharist—by whatever name we choose to describe the "Sacrifice of our Ransom"—is celebrated, *all* hear the living voice in the creed of Nicæa.

Again, in every part is handed on the tradition of the divine sacraments, of the threefold sacred ministry, of the moral law, of the recitation of the Psalter and the Lord's Prayer. Simply, but clearly, the children of the Anglican part of the Catholic Church can hear "the Living Voice."

3. The Anglican Church has, in this regard, the advantage of *minimising* before alluded to. Erasmus justly said that to multiply the number of doctrines is to enlarge the field wherein to sow a crop of heresies. The advantage of the Anglican Church is, that she states clearly *necessary* belief,

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and leaves an open field for pious opinion. Thus she does not allow her children to incur the danger either of innumerably multiplied doctrines as in Rome, or of vagueness and drifting from old landmarks as in the separated bodies.

Advantages of the Anglican Church in Matters of Practice

There are also in the Anglican part of the Catholic Church some advantages in practice.

1. Whilst receiving the decisions of the Councils of the undivided Church as infallible truth, and Holy Scripture as the Word of God, and the testimony of antiquity as its best interpreter—she makes no claim, herself, alone, and apart from the whole Church, to be infallible. She may have made mistakes, and doubtless she has, and every decision she has come to—beyond the revealed faith which she receives, in common with the rest of the Church—is capable of being reformed. This saves her from being in the position of Rome, driven, as she is, to insist on her many mistakes and mis-statements being treated by her children as infallible truth.

2. Again, she lays especial stress on the sanctity of conscience. Thus, in receiving the Holy Communion, her children *may* make their confessions to their priests, but they are not *obliged* to do so. The responsibility of partaking of the Lord's Body and Blood is thrown, and rightly thrown, not on the priest, but on the conscience of the receiver, and the priest has no right to repel

any one, unless in a case where they are known to be living in open and notorious sin.

3. She has, further, the great advantage of the parochial system, and of the duty of the clergy, always recognised by the English people, to visit their flock. There is probably no section of Christendom, so much as in the Anglican Church, in which the pastoral office, as distinct from the sacerdotal and ministerial, is so fully recognised. If the Anglican priest does not exercise the office of shepherd of his people, he, above all men, knows that he is failing in his clear duty.

4. The Anglican Church has the advantage of including several schools of thought, and now, several varieties of ritual. This is as it should be. There is, of course, no advantage—much the reverse—in embittered controversy, and fanatical partisanship. Doubtless of this there has been too much, but the reproach brought against the Anglican Church, because of her varying schools of thought, is in fact no reproach at all. Truth is many sided, and, while men are faithfully within the lines drawn for the witness to the truth, that truth—which is infinite—may present itself to different minds in different ways, and “High Church,” “Broad Church,” “Low Church,” may represent different aspects of one truth.

By this it is not meant, of course, that a sincere and thorough-going Churchman can other than regret *any* insufficiency of belief in the fulness of Catholic faith and practice. What is meant is this, that whilst “Low Churchism” is, indeed, unhappily below a *full* conception of the truth, and a *thorough* sense of the supernatural, and a

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delicate instinct of the fitting, in obedience to the Church's entire injunctions as to ritual ; and, therefore, is an attitude of mind in which men are "under loss ;" still, that "Low Churchmen" are "of the truth," and that the Church gains and more completely does her duty, by making room for such within her borders, if they can (though the possibility may appear sometimes strange to some of us) honestly accept her commands as to practice, and her great statements of truth, to which they subscribe.

Again, the Anglican Church has been found fault with for not insisting on a severer "discipline." It is, however, by no means certain that such is to be desired. The iron discipline of the Roman Church may make a better appearance, but its tendency is to narrow, and, in some measure, cripple the kingdom of God. If in any case men go beyond, or contradict, or fall short of, the Faith, the amenities of intercourse, the presence of the Church's public opinion and common sense, and the action of her "common law," so to speak, are more likely to win them back and put things right than severity and persecution. The Anglican Church is an example of the blessings of these better ways, the Roman an example of the melancholy results of the worse. A further advantage is the use of the English tongue in the public services. No one can have anything but a strong feeling for the old ecclesiastical language of the Western Church—the Latin ; and it might, perhaps, with advantage be more freely used in services, in college chapels, and on other occasions besides the prayers in Convocation, where those who under-

stand it form the mass of worshippers ; but where the Church is to embrace the people, and especially the English-speaking people—now in such vast and increasing numbers throughout the world—there can be no doubt that the services should be in the mother tongue. For this reason, among others, the Book of Common Prayer has endeared itself to our race more than any book of devotions or services anywhere in the world, and there can be little doubt that a great deal of the deep, serious, religious feeling of the English race has to a great extent been fostered by the constant reading in our churches of Holy Scripture in the nervous and stately English of our Church's Bible.

Advantages possessed by the Anglican Church in Church Government

The fundamental advantage in respect of government is, in the case of the Anglican, as of the Orthodox Church of the East, the close following of the apostolic model. The effort of the Roman Church has been to establish a *Monarchia*, and to reduce other parts of the Catholic Church under her rule. In this she has failed both with the great Churches of the East, and with the Anglican Church throughout the world. She has, however, in the case of the Church of Spain, and, after a long struggle, in that of the Church of France, succeeded. By this, the apostolic arrangements as to Church government have been dislocated in the churches in communion with Rome, and a despotism has been established. In the Anglican

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Church the faithful adherence to the apostolic model has insured large liberty together with right government. Archbishops and bishops make no pretence to being superior to the Church, or over-riding her decisions. They, as well as the other two orders of the ministry, are servants of the Church, and bound by her commands just as the priesthood or the diaconate, though, of course, holding a higher and more responsible position, and having the inherent power of government. The other orders of ministry are bound to them not with an obedience to any *ipse dixit*, but with *canonical* obedience, *i.e.*, obedience so far as the bishops' commands do not infringe the canons of the Church.

Various disadvantages in some of these respects in the Anglican Church

That there are some disadvantages, some matters which admit of improvement in the Anglican Church, every loyal Churchman would readily admit. The Church, as we have seen, believes that infallible power of stating the meaning and bearings of revealed truth rests with *the whole* Catholic body, not with any one part of it. The Anglican Church is, therefore, open to improvement in her own arrangements from time to time. Some disadvantages are observable in her, arising in great measure from the struggles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The great evil for many parts of the Church, and not least for the Anglican, have been

“Acts of Uniformity.” By pressing these too violently, there is no doubt that unnecessary separations have been caused. A more generous and statesmanlike attitude at the time might have prevented the Wesleyan schism, and, even in recent days, it was only the loyalty and determination of the faithful clergy and laity alike, which hindered some further breach at the time of “the Ritualistic controversy.” Men now begin to see that unity, not uniformity, is what is needed in, what has now become, a world-wide communion. In so vast a Church as the Anglican, there is needed unity in the great matters of the Faith, with large latitude, according to the needs of many men, in matters of devotion and ritual. The relation of the Church to the State is an immense blessing in England, to the country, and to the daughter and sister Churches elsewhere; but, in consequence of it, in modern times the State has at times tried to encroach upon the spiritual sphere, and though always resisted, and in the main defeated, when assuming functions not by right belonging to her, yet at times she has crippled the Church’s usefulness, intruded upon her unworthy or unsuitable persons for the highest offices, and hindered her from needful reforms. These things, however, settle themselves in time with patience, and in consequence of that loyalty to the Church which on the whole has marked the clergy and the faithful laity. That wide common sense, which seems to be one of the best gifts of the English race, together with their love for fair play, have (notwithstanding occasional spasms of unreasoning prejudice) in the long-run prevailed.

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The silencing of the Convocations for long, and—even now when they are restored to their rightful position—the necessary slowness in large reforms needed to make them effective, the efforts of the civil power, supported too often by Erastian ecclesiastics and laymen, to assume to itself functions belonging to the Church, and many unsatisfactory features in patronage—these, and other things of the same kind, have hindered the Church's usefulness.

Again, invaluable as the Book of Common Prayer has proved itself, not only to the Church of England, but to the whole English race, in inducing a sober and solid piety and a wise and deep religious temper, it still may be doubted whether the use of the priest's office—*i.e.*, of matins and evensong as the only regular congregational services, apart from the Mass—has proved to be the best thing for the poor. The poor require something simpler, more fervent, more expressive of their subjective and inarticulate yearnings. What has been invaluable for the well-instructed and more cultured children of the Church, has often proved too stiff and cold for them, and needed large supplementing; hence, among other reasons, the Church lost the poor to a great extent, though now she is recovering them with her reviving life. The Puritan, and then the Erastian and the fanatical and political Protestant temper, left their marks upon her. The beauty of art was for long banished from her Churches. Thus an injurious stiffness and hardness prevailed, quite unlike what belonged to her in the past, and this accounts for the feeling, even now not wholly obliterated, which

devout people have been conscious of on revisiting an English, after being accustomed to a foreign, cathedral, that they were returning to unfurnished rooms; as well as for the unhappy necessity, for long felt, and even now not in all cases swept away, of warning young men to look upon the arrangements of college chapels, and even cathedrals, as things not to imitate but to avoid. We have had to lament a certain want of poetry, and of a real sense of beauty. Things, however, have wonderfully improved. If the religious ferocities of two and three centuries ago have still left "the trail of the serpent" across the Church, still there has been a reawakening in the last fifty years unexampled in Christendom, touching every department of philanthropic and charitable effort, and of religious work and worship. We cannot, unthankfully, forget the unexampled blessings, even when we honestly acknowledge and bewail our disadvantages. There was an egotistic habit among us of calling all this "simplicity," when, in fact, it was ineffective stiffness, a too utilitarian and even secular temper, which made men lose sight of the essentially supernatural powers of the kingdom of God; and also an effort—far too general among English ecclesiastics—to make up for want of real reverence by an excess of pomposity. These have been sorrows and disadvantages in the Anglican Church; for nothing but living and energetic truth and effort, as distinct from respectable appearance, can advance the work of the kingdom of God.

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The Forward and yet Conservative Attitude of the Anglican Church

Notwithstanding such faults which all Catholic-minded Churchmen must sorrowfully acknowledge, yet much has been mended and much is being improved. One important feature in the Church is her careful conservative temper as to all that is of faith, and all that is valuable in her inherited traditions and ways, together with her living and increasing sympathy with all that is good in the temper, and all that is evident in the needs of our own days. In this she shows herself as *the* society which holds mission and jurisdiction from her Lord, the great Head of the Church, to the English-speaking races. She throws herself into popular movements;—witness the action of the Bishop of Durham and others in the strikes in the North; witness her wise efforts in the temperance cause; witness her noble endeavours in penitentiary work, and in the advance of the cause of purity by the “White Cross Guild;” witness her innumerable struggles in behalf of goodness, in guilds, brotherhoods, sisterhoods, societies for the sick, the poor, the working men, and so on. She is conservative in the best sense, and in the best sense progressive, more and more earnestly showing in the highest of all causes at once the balance and enterprise of the English race.

The Mission Efforts of the Anglican Church

There was a dead time when the Church was quite inadequate in her efforts for mission work. That time, thank God, is gone. The development of mission work in the Church during the last half century is remarkable. At home, by mission vigour, spiritual life has been aroused or deepened in a most striking manner ; and abroad in our colonies and dependencies, and elsewhere, a new departure has been made. Plenty, indeed, remains to be done. Far more young English priests, vigorous and faithful, are needed to help our Colonial Churches, far more apostolic bishops, who will not only tarry for a time in distant and difficult places, but live and die for the work there. Much remains to be done, but much has been done, and the Anglican Church more and more is doing her duty at home and abroad in mission work.

The Position of the Anglican Church as to Reunion

One of the most encouraging features in the Anglican Church is her providential position as regards reunion. Reunion now is, so to speak, "in the air." Religious men think of it with greater seriousness than ever they did. Some are, indeed, even now, inclined to say that *external* reunion is scarcely desirable, and that Christian bodies *are* united where, in these, men love God. This is true, *and* it is untrue. It is true, in so far as we know that sincere followers of Christ,

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even if they are imperfectly embracing some points of His revealed will, are yet "in Christ the new creation." It is untrue, because Christ has instituted a visible, not merely an invisible Church; because the divisions of Christendom hinder the advance of the kingdom of God, and because, when our Lord prayed "that they all may be one . . . *that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me,*" His desire must have been for a visible union, as the greatest ground for the world's ignorance of Christ's mission, and scoffing at His claims, is found in the disunion of Christendom. This is now more clearly seen, and if men have faith in God they will never be discouraged by difficulties. The Anglican Church is so providentially placed that she can stretch both hands out to welcome to reunion. Her strong Catholic position enables her to welcome the ancient Eastern parts of the Catholic Church, and the Roman part of Western Christendom. She is that part of the Catholic Church sent to the English speaking race ages ago by our Lord through apostolic missionaries. She has preserved the apostolic succession, and therefore has security for the validity of her sacraments. She has been faithful to the creeds and traditions handed on by the undivided Church; she has been specially faithful to Holy Scripture, and has given to the English race throughout the world the noblest translation of these Scriptures ever made.

To the Eastern Church she draws every day closer, and once they more completely understand one another, there will be, we may well hope and believe, comparatively little difficulty in bringing

about intercommunion. The Roman Church is at present the great difficulty for reunion in the West. There is unfortunately a small schismatic Roman body in England, who, being subject to foreign ecclesiastical rule, having invaded the Catholic Church in England, and being essentially un-English and Latin in their worship and their ways, have found it necessary for self-preservation to keep up an old and unhappy quarrel, and to misrepresent the Anglican Church. Lately, there seemed some hope of larger and wiser views in Rome, but the leaders of the Latin sect in England triumphed. Pope Leo XIII. naturally depended upon these for information, being of necessity himself ignorant of the bearing of things. They had attacked the orders of the Anglican ministry by every possible expedient. Fable after fable, which they had encouraged, had to be abandoned, and at last they again shifted their ground, and succeeded in prevailing upon the present Pope to assail the Anglican position from a new point of attack. For the Roman Church this has been unfortunate. They are now more than ever discredited. "Out of darkness He bringeth light." The ill-judged and ill-informed attack, published in the name of the Pope, has been met by the charitable, courteous, and unanswerable encyclical, *Sæpius Officio*, of the English Primates, and all men are able now to see—what has always been known to theologians and students of such questions—that, whilst there may be some hesitation as to the validity of Roman ministration in England, where they are in a schismatic position, and have neither mission nor

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jurisdiction—of the Anglican succession, mission, and jurisdiction there is not the shadow of a doubt. There appears, of course, little hope for reunion there, but the attitude of large-hearted foreign Roman Catholics on this question is very different from that of their more bigoted and narrow-minded brethren in England, and the time may come, in God's good providence, when Rome may repent herself, and take a less arrogant and a truer attitude. When that time comes, the Catholic position of the Church of England will help towards the desired result.

On the other hand, the Anglican Church can well hold out a hand to welcome the orthodox separated bodies. On one side she has deep sympathy with them in many ways. She knows that part of the blame for the division lies at her own door in the past. She knows that in many cases they have done noble and pious work. She holds that *every* baptized Christian is baptized into the Catholic Church, and only mourns that so many have forsaken the ministrations of the appointed ministry, and are therefore "under loss" while not acting as members of the Catholic Church into which they have been baptized. A time may come, in God's good providence, when the serious and religious members of these bodies will be drawn again to the mother Church, when their ministers will seek for ordination from apostolic hands, and fight for Christ under apostolic jurisdiction, when *all* will again receive communion at the altars of the Church, while still ministering to those who desire it according to their accustomed modes in their chapels, no longer divided, but

united to the one body; and when the Church, with the reinforcements of these, her once separated brethren and children, shall go forth more strong than ever to do battle against sin. For that day, faithful Churchmen long and pray. Vested interests, social jealousies, settled habits of thought may defer the desired consummation, but, in the long run, these will be no match for patience and faith and prayer. The Church is now a great force to help to such reunion, and she is learning more and more to win the beatitude of the peacemakers.

With all her faults, it is a subject for thanksgiving that God, in His goodness, has given such a part of the Catholic body to be the divinely accredited teacher of our great race. Every man in her communion may well be thankful to God for such a calling. The duty of the Church, clergy and laity alike, to which she is more and more arousing herself, is faithfulness towards God, and work, and love, and self-sacrifice for the advancement of His kingdom among the English speaking races—the greatest people in the world. “Show Thy servants Thy work, and their children Thy glory.”

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BY THE
REV. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

II

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

BY ROBERT F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

Early Converts to Congregationalism

THERE is a curious chain of conversions in the early history of English Congregationalism, which has often set me thinking. Barrow and Greenwood were, in 1586, prisoners in the Clink for their Nonconformity, and contrived by some surreptitious method, conveying the sheets in an empty milk jug and the like, to get a treatise on their Congregational principles published in Holland. They themselves were suitably hanged by Queen Elizabeth's government, and their Congregationalism was—happily disposed of?—not at all; the book persisted in living, and had such elements of vitality that Francis Johnson, a zealous clergyman, felt it his duty to undertake its refutation. But in attempting to refute, he was convinced by, the book, and became, renouncing all, himself the minister of a Congregational church, for which he was arrested and sent to the Clink. Whereupon Henry Jacob, the vicar of Cheriton, undertook to confute Francis

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Johnson, and in studying his arguments, as unfortunately one must do in order to make a satisfactory confutation, he in his turn was convinced, gave up his living, and became a Congregationalist; and as his own country had at present no room for these principles, except in the Southwark jail, he went over to Leyden and ministered to a congregation of refugees there. At last, in the milder days of King James, he returned to Southwark, "to continue the testimony by the confessors and martyrs in the immediate scene of their sufferings."

I have sometimes wondered whether conversions of this kind would not be frequent to-day if any one attempted to confute the principles of Congregationalism. At present they convert few because no one assails them, and they are not of the aggressive and dominant type, sallying out on all occasions to make proselytes. In this respect Congregationalists and Quakers draw very near together. They are not of those who "compass sea or land,"—or other Churches and denominations,—to make a proselyte. They cherish no desire to have adherents that are not convinced, and are not therefore tempted to use secondary temptations to bring converts into their fold. The cause is in each case the same. The Church is viewed as the Society of the Holy Ghost, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost is not administered by human hands, but only by Divine.

Congregationalists not a Denomination

Congregationalists do not form a denomination in the strict sense of the word. They are rather the negation of denominationalism. Their primary idea is that wherever the faithful followers of Christ are assembled, receiving His word and observing His ordinances, there the Church in its entirety is. Thus a Catholic community, or an Anglican parish church, or a Methodist class-meeting, or a Presbyterian Assembly, or a Plymouth Brethren meeting, may each and all be, according to the Congregationalist view, the Church of Christ. If the conditions are fulfilled which secure Christ in the midst, if the Christian spirit is there, and the Christian fruits are produced, we may fully and freely recognise the notes of the true Church—*Ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia*. But it is hardly possible for men to be denominationalists, or to have a strong denominational bias, when their essential principle is to recognise the Church of Christ in all denominations. Thus the only Congregationalist Missionary Societies are the London Mission, or the Evangelical Continental Society, or the Bible Society, or other Societies which are by their constitution undenominational. The Congregationalist is ardent in the defence of his cardinal idea, but is cool in the support of his denomination. He prefers general and public movements to his denominational movements; and his newspapers and magazines may be anything you please so long as they are not denominational. Let a magazine be called *The Congre-*

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gationalist, or a paper be called *The Independent*, and it is at once almost impossible to persuade Congregationalists or Independents (the names are interchangeable) to be subscribers to it.

To persons who are nothing if they are not Churchmen, Roman or Anglican, and to strong denominationalists like Presbyterians, Methodists, or even Baptists, this attitude of the Congregationalist is inconceivable. The Churchman thinks that this is the denial of the Church: if you are to find the Church wherever Christians are united in worship and service—good heavens! you might have the Church anywhere, in the hold of a ship, or in the cellar of a slum, yes, or in a catacomb, or in an upper room, or in the house of Philemon, or on the mountain side where the Master first called His Apostles about Him. The denominationalist thinks that this is a slackness or indefiniteness of principle. He seldom observes that it is, on the contrary, a firm adherence to principle, to the principle, viz., that one must by no means confine the Church of Christ to a special form, or organisation, or creed, but must be prepared to recognise His Church wherever one can recognise Christ Himself.

But undoubtedly this feature which makes us suspect to the Churchman and the denominationalist, is precisely the one which has a unique charm for us who have been brought up in the spirit of this creed. Our reason, for example, for not belonging to the Episcopal Church, is that it is too narrow in its idea; it requires us to hold the doctrine, *Ubi Episcopus, ibi ecclesia*; and with us it is a rooted conviction that, while Christ

is often where the Bishop is, He is also just as frequently where the Bishop is not. Our difficulty in entering the other denominations is that we find there a certain exigence of denominational loyalty; one is expected there to be a thorough-going defender of the system and its Divine rights, one is to regard Conference or Synod as a conclave hardly less authoritative than a bench of Bishops, or a Consistory; and we find it hard to breathe in that kind of atmosphere; we have been accustomed to range over all the Christian world, and to see Christ at work under all the forms. We have never lost the sense of the Church's unity; for us she is one, and has never been divided. Our Church is of the kind from which there are no dissenters, against which there are no Protestants; and that one Spiritual Church being our Mother, we cannot contract our retina to the proper appreciation of these secondary authorities. The Catholic Church, Roman or Anglican, is too provincial for us. About the former there is the faint and acrid smell of the Middle Ages; about the latter there is a wholesome English smell, but it is English and not world-wide. We cannot understand a Christianity which must establish a chaplaincy of its own, with special priests and prayer-books, in every Christian city where Englishmen resort; we stand amazed at the little starveling company of summer tourists who gather round the droning chaplain, when they might be worshipping with fellow-Christians in the large national worship of Switzerland, Germany, or Scandinavia. It is the point on which Anglicans always misunderstand us.

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They wonder how, in the presence of so august a Society as the Church of England, we can seriously claim that our Congregational Churches, which are but of yesterday, are wider, more catholic, and inclusive. They do not observe where the difference lies. The English Church is a big Church, but not big enough to be *the* Church in England, as Anglicanism requires us to believe. Congregational Churches are much smaller, but they never suppose that they are *the* Church, and thus *the Church* to Congregationalists means something vaster, more varied, more catholic than it does to the Anglican.

Our Idea of the True Church

We do not, I trust, harshly criticise Catholics or denominationalists, but for our own part we have to go our own way. When once the vision of the true Church, undivided, indivisible, has dawned upon our eyes, we cannot rest content with Catholicism or denominationalism. In that true Church we live, and we decline all arbitrary restrictions on its limits.

That such a position has its fascinations, any sympathetic reader will admit; and if the sympathetic reader chance to be familiar with the typical Congregationalist writers—not to mention living authors—Dr. Binney, Dr. Dale, and Baldwin Brown; or across the Atlantic, Horace Bushnell and Henry Ward Beecher—he will at once recognise how this spirit breathes in all these writers, and makes them the teachers not of Congregationalists only but of the Universal Church.

The Authority is the New Testament

But it is not enough to maintain that the position has its fascinations. We must be able to give a better account of ourselves than that. The question is reasonably asked, What is our foundation, what is our authority, how do we defend ourselves against the denunciation of the Catholic Churches, and the gentle derision of the denominations? Now, when I give as the answer that we appeal to the New Testament, I give the answer which every Church, except the Roman, gives: the Roman is peculiar in her idea that she is the authority for the New Testament, not the New Testament for her; but every Church appeals to the New Testament; the Presbyterian is strong in its reference to the Presbyters; the Methodist is equally decisive in his contention, though unhappily the only *μεθοδεΐα* mentioned by name is of the wrong sort (Eph. iv. 14; vi. 11); and the Baptist appeals to the New Testament for everything except his name.

*Hic liber est in quo quærit sua dogmata quisque,
Invenit et pariter dogmata quisque sua.*

But Congregationalism in modern times had, as a matter of fact, its origin or resuscitation in the study of the New Testament and the observance of the organisation and practice of the New Testament Church. The remarkable rise of Congregationalism in Sweden in the last quarter of a century did not come from any connection with the Congregationalists of England or America, but simply

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from the re-discovery of the New Testament.¹ Hatch has established the fact that the organisation of the Apostolic Church was Congregational; and recently Professor Ramsay, to mention only one of the many authorities that at the present time recognise the Congregational basis of those early Churches, writing of Acts xv. 2, says: "It is meant that the congregation appointed the delegates to Jerusalem; and the reader is expected to supply the nominative, though it has not occurred in the immediately preceding sentence. It seemed to the author so obvious that such action was performed by universal consent"—the very essence of Congregationalism—"that he did not feel any need to express the nominative."²

One may cheerfully recognise that every system finds its authority more or less in the New Testament. "Thou art Peter," inscribed in letters twelve feet long round the dome of St. Peter's, is sufficient proof that the New Testament sanctions the Pope. "Whosoever sins ye remit are remitted," is proof enough that the curate of my parish could, if he would, remit all my sins; the word βαπτίζω sufficiently establishes the necessity of dipping the believer under the water. But when the Congregationalist appeals to the New Testament, he does not cite a text here and there to establish the usages of his Church; he adopts the view, which is peculiar and yet capable of some rational defence, that the actual organisation of the Apostolic Church not only has in it all the

¹ See the address of Dr. Waldenström at the International Congregational Council of 1891. P. 26 of the Report.

² *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 66.

essentials of the Church, but does not admit of additions without serious peril. And he traces the corruptions of Christendom to additions and changes which were undoubtedly early, and even sub-apostolic, but were none the less the beginning of perversion and the seed of error. He falls back therefore on that primitive organisation as the *norm* to which we must return when the growth of tradition and the slow accretions of time have paralysed the visible Church. There are happily many other denominations which accept and use the same principle, and the Congregationalist recognises his Congregationalism in many places far beyond his own borders. But the Catholic Church, Roman and Anglican, does not admit his principle, and he finds it often a stern and afflicting struggle to establish it against the authority and prestige of Catholicism. Still the conviction deepens that the Primitive Organisation, instead of being the mere starting-point from which the line of development was to proceed, was in itself a consistent and complete idea from which it is perilous to depart even by a hair's-breadth. That is to say, whatever development time and circumstance may demand, it must never be of the kind which would neutralise the fundamental ideas of the Apostolic Churches. If all the members are priests, the Church may not develop in a direction which will rob the greater number of their priesthood. If all the members are baptized with the Spirit for the various functions of the Church, the idea must not be admitted that the Spirit's Baptism is specialised to a few. If one is the Master, even Christ, and all the rest

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are brethren, the Church must not develop in such a way as to make an Order "lord themselves over the flock of Christ." If the autonomy of the congregation, acting with the presence of Christ, is the very constitution of a Church, no organised system can be admitted which robs the congregation, however poor and small, of its autonomy.

The New Testament read, not through the Fathers

The custom of Churchmen is to look back to the Fathers, and through the Fathers to judge the second century, and then through the second century to read the records of the New Testament. The Congregationalist has no objection to study the Fathers, and he finds much food for thought in the second century, but he looks at the New Testament through no atmosphere but its own. Every shred of truth which can be gathered from the previous history, every new light which Schürer, for example, can shed upon the times of our Lord, every discovery which archæologists like Professor Ramsay are making in the circumstances and conditions of apostolic times, is eagerly welcomed. To understand that great outbreak of truth, that rounded orb of religious life and church organisation which is represented by Christ and His apostles, is of primary importance. But to read the New Testament through the distorting atmosphere of the second century, is to read into it a great deal which is alien from its spirit, and to miss all hope of appreciating the splendid revelation in its purity and entirety. It was therefore, and still is, a new

attitude, and one which leads to a strange quickening and revelation, when one depolarises the terms and the ideas of the Church, and reads the apostolic writers simply to understand what they said and what they meant.

Notes of the New Testament Church

Now, I shall endeavour to summarise the characteristics of the New Testament Church which are maintained in the Congregational ideal ; and, as far as it is possible without being polemical, I shall show how the ideas of the second and third centuries were, not a development of them, but a gradual and subtle departure from them.

1. *Holy*.—The first note of the Church in the New Testament is, that it is composed of those who are spiritually regenerate, “born of water and the Spirit.” They are holy (ἅγιοι, Eph. i. 1), enlightened (φωτισθέντες, Heb. vi. 4), clean (καθαροί, John xv. 3). Christ is in them, unless they be reprobate. It is as a society of the regenerate that they hold forth the light in the darkness, and are themselves the light of the world. In the field of the world, they—the Church—are the wheat among the tares. The Church of the second century had concluded that, because Christians are “born of water and the Spirit,” therefore all who have been baptized with water are born of the Spirit. This was not only a departure from the New Testament thought ; it was a reversal of it. In the New Testament men are baptized, *because* they are born of the Spirit. In the second century they are assumed to be born of the Spirit because

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they are baptized. In the New Testament the community rests on the spiritual experience of regeneration. In the second century already regeneration begins to rest on the community. The New Testament Church was a light in the world; the second century Church has become a twilight; if it gives light to the world, it receives from the world a suffusion of darkness.

2. *Democratic*.—The second note of the Primitive Church is, that the community of the regenerate is, like the ecclesia of a Greek city, the sovereign authority. It appoints its officers, but they cannot lord it over the Lord's heritage. The rights of the spiritual citizens are equal, and they minister to one another as the Spirit imparts to them gifts. The community has the power of loosing and binding, and, when assembled together with the Lord Jesus, it is able to forgive or to retain sins (1 Cor. v. 4, 5). By the time that Tertullian wrote all this was changed. The rights of the community were lost, as the rights of a Greek ecclesia were lost, in the usurpation of a tyrant.

3. *Un sacerdotal*.—The third note of the Primitive Church is that which distinguishes Christianity from Judaism, and from all the ethnic religions: there are no priests. In a metaphorical sense, the whole community is a priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5), but within the community there is no order of priests. What they offer as a community is not a material sacrifice, but "spiritual sacrifices" (1 Pet. ii. 5)—viz., their own persons as a reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1). By the time of Cyprian this note of Christianity was lost. The officers of

the community—*episcopi*, or presbyters—were transformed into priests, after the manner of the ancient Jewish economy, and to give them a priestly function, the Supper of the Lord was changed into a sacrifice to offer.¹

4. *Un sacramentarian*.—The fourth note of the Primitive Church was its freedom from the idea of sacraments, as *opera operata*. Baptism and the Supper, accompanied by the Agapé, were institutions, but they were not yet sacraments. St. Paul, so far from thinking that baptism was a means of regenerating, displays a holy glee in the thought that he had baptized next to none of his converts, but had brought them to Christ through the word of faith. The Supper and Agapé, so far from being a sacrament, are not placed in any connection with the minister, or treated as efficacious apart from the spirit and faith of the communicants. But by the end of the third century this was all changed. The material forms were now treated as necessary channels of grace, and grace began to lose all its charm, and a great part of its meaning, when it was identified with material forms which were obviously in many cases quite insufficient to produce spiritual results.

5. *Apostolic*.—The fifth note of the Primitive Church is the presence in its midst of the apostles, the men who had seen the Lord (1 Cor. ix. 1)—men, that is, who, by the nature of the case, could have no successors. When, therefore, the Church is said to be built on the foundation of the “apostles and prophets” (Eph. ii. 20), we are bound to understand that the labours or teaching

¹ Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, pp. 49, 104, 106.

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of these first representatives of Jesus would occupy a unique place in the Church. And this activity of toil and thought, the peculiar apostolic grace, is preserved for all time in the apostolic writings. It was to be the degeneracy of later days which would overlay the primitive tradition of the apostles with a so-called "apostolic" tradition, which in many respects is the negation of what the apostles taught. It is the peculiarity of what are called the sub-apostolic writers that they discover, by their inferiority of thought, and their decline of spiritual insight, how impossible it was for apostolic powers to be transmitted, and how unique and unapproachable the apostolic teaching was always to remain. Hermas, Barnabas, Ignatius, Clement—on whose words the dogma of apostolic succession is supposed to rest—are palpably different from the apostles themselves. It is not a difference of degree, but of quality—

As moonlight is to sunlight,
Or as water is to wine,

so are these feeble, disconnected, and often superstitious writings, to the clear, pure, decisive writings of the apostles themselves. There can be no successors of the apostles until there arrive other men who "have seen the Lord."

6. *Autonomous*.—The sixth note of the Primitive Church is the independence and autonomy of the individual community. The New Testament presents a vivid picture of these early communities, vigorous and responsible, organisms of the Holy Ghost, so divinely led that even apostles interfere with them by entreaty rather than command, and

by the exercise of reason rather than of authority. The individual community, presided over by its appointed officers, called indifferently overseers (ἐπίσκοποι), or elders (πρεσβύτεροι), and served by its younger members, known sometimes as διάκονοι, deacons (Phil. i. 1), sometimes simply as νεώτεροι, or the younger (1 Pet. v. 5), is thoroughly capable of managing its own affairs, exercising discipline, supplanting the heathen tribunals, holding its religious services, ministering to its poor, sending out missionaries, appointing its delegates to conferences or councils, and discharging all the other functions of an autonomous society.

7. *Federated*.—And the seventh note of the Primitive Church is, that the individual communities are knit together, not by a central authority, patriarch, or pope—none of the apostles venture to assume that position, and Peter least of all—but by a constant interchange of sympathy, counsel, or practical assistance, administered by delegates from one church to another. In the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which affords us the earliest glimpse of the Primitive Church which we obtain after the close of the New Testament canon, this system of visitation is seen developed and recognised; but in the New Testament itself, the most striking feature of the Church life is the constant passing to and fro of messengers and epistolary communication, which kept the scattered communities in a free but close relation.

The student of Church history is aware how all these notes of the Primitive Church are gradually lost in the second and third centuries, until, at the beginning of the fourth century, Catholicism was

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firmly established in the place of Primitive Christianity, and the Church of Catholicism, as Harnack says, "was no more a community of faith and hope and discipline, but a political community, which only had the Gospel among other things in its midst."¹

Back to the Primitive Church

Now the ideal of Congregationalism is to get back to the Primitive Church. Its aim is to push behind Catholicism to what was far more Catholic. For it sees in those notes of the Primitive Church just the universal features which mark Christianity as Divine, and give to it the promise of conquering the world. And if we are asked with what reason we appeal to the New Testament alone as our authority, and hesitate to recognise in the growth of historic ecclesiasticism the "temporal mission of the Holy Ghost," we answer that in going back to the New Testament we "build upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone," while the growth of the Church historically can be definitely proved to be a syncretism of Jewish and Pagan practices, of Hellenic philosophy, of Roman jurisprudence, moulded into unity, not by the Holy Spirit, but by the holy Roman Empire.²

It is no doubt this clearness and simplicity of appeal which gives to Congregationalism its

¹ *Dogmengeschichte*, i. 275.

² The steps by which this result were achieved are laboriously traced by Harnack in the *Dogmengeschichte*, but brilliantly summarised by Dr. Fairbairn in his classical book, *The Place of Christ*, &c.

singular charm. It satisfies the logical instinct, it stands squarely on that authority which all are bound to admit, the apostolic records ; it takes account of history, but has a criterion by which it can bring history to the test ; it is not therefore like Catholicism, at the mercy of history, but is guided by a spiritual reality which shines above the onward, though devious, progress of the Church as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

But in speaking of the Congregational ideal, it would not be candid to omit the confession that the actual is very far short of the ideal. If the very principle of Congregationalists obliges them to be charitable in recognising the true Church under all the visible forms that the Church has assumed, the failures to realise their own ideal obliges them to be humble, for no Church system has been so little prosecuted or so slackly served, as this which claims to be built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles.

Congregationalism in America and in the Mission Fields

In America Congregationalism has, since the voyage of the *Mayflower*, held its own as the most thoughtful and the most progressive conception of Christianity for a growing state ; and the success with which it has attacked Japan, and on that unoccupied soil has built up a strong and advancing Congregational system, has proved, as the London Missionary Society showed in the South

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Seas at the beginning of this century, that the Congregational system is now, as in the time of St. Paul, singularly favourable for missionary enterprise. The close connection of missionary enthusiasm in modern times with Congregational Churches, and the comparative ease with which Congregationalists have succeeded in planting genuine native churches and training a native ministry, in South Africa, in Madagascar, in the South Sea Islands, in China, Japan, and even South India, suggest that there was a good reason for it if, in the apostolic days, the Congregational methods were carefully conserved. The Church, when more vigorously organised and stereotyped, may be more efficient in sending out missionaries, but it becomes less effective in converting the heathen and establishing native churches.

Hampered in England

In England and Wales Congregationalism is far more hampered than in America. The stigma of Dissent, and the huge prestige of the Established Church, prevent thoughtful men from studying, or at any rate from accepting, its principles ; yet it can only live among those who will think, and will intelligently carry out its great idea. For the three centuries during which it has been at work in England it has never gone back ; sometimes it has advanced by leaps and bounds ; at other times it has hardly done more than hold its own. We are at present in an epoch of arrest ; and several causes combine to tax the faith and courage of

those who hold the great, but arduous, principles of Primitive Christianity. It may be interesting to mention two or three of these causes.

1. *Theological Unrest*.—For one thing, in an age of theological transition, timid souls are always apt to flee from the high places of the field, and take refuge in the strongly organised systems which do not seem to depend on their theology, and therefore are not affected by changes in it. When the camp is breaking up, and the eager spirits are pressing “back to Christ,” the timid will leave the camp, but will go back not to Christ but to what claims to be “The Church.” Congregationalism must always suffer when the faith in a living, present, and all-powerful Saviour is in any degree dimmed. It “lives by faith in the Son of God.” When that line of defence fails, it has no second line to fall back upon. But if, as all the signs indicate, the theological transition is well-nigh completed, and the Divine Saviour is manifest to the purged eyes of faith more distinctly than ever before, we may anticipate another of those quickened advances in Congregationalism which have occurred periodically during the last three hundred years.

2. *Social Pressure*.—Another cause which has checked advance has been the steady depletion of the ranks by sending the young people of well-to-do Congregationalists to schools and universities, where they drift insensibly away from the convictions of their fathers. The Congregational idea, which rests on a historical basis, on the intelligent study of the New Testament, and on that indifference to “the world” which is a con-

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stant Apostolic theme, can only be brought home to young people if it is diligently taught them. Experience shows that, when it is taught them, they readily and joyfully grasp it. But left to themselves they will inevitably choose an easier and more popular way. Even the apostles never succeeded in winning those who were great and distinguished in the world; and the apostolic ideas are always pitted at a great disadvantage against the sensuous charms, the flesh and blood realities, of the present life. The children must be trained in these high and spiritual and even visionary ideals, if an effective stand is to be made against the "corrupted currents of the world."

3. *The Growth of the Towns.*—Another cause of frustration lies in the rapid growth of the large towns, which has taxed the strongly organised Churches, Episcopal and Methodist, and has for the time paralysed the weaker Congregational system. In the smaller towns Congregationalism holds its own, and there are many towns of from ten to thirty thousand inhabitants where it is an acknowledged and progressive power. But in the large towns, and the more markedly the more rapid the growth of the town has been, it has not been equal to the situation. It has no ground to complain because other Churches have entered in to supply its defects. But if its principles are real and undying, founded in the eternal depths of revelation, the essence and the necessary outcome of Christianity itself, there must be a new and determined attempt, in the power of God, and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to present

the more excellent way to the teeming populations of the great towns.

Why I am a Congregationalist

It seems superfluous, after the survey which has just been made, to even touch on the question, why I personally am a Congregationalist. It is evident that, holding the principles which have been presented, I could not be anything else. But it may be convenient to state which points they are in the general position which appeal to me most strongly and decide me to hold what is, I think, acknowledged to be the peculiarly difficult and discouraging post of a Congregational minister. Briefly they are these:—

1. *Freedom from Tradition.*—I am convinced that if we are to have the mind of Jesus, and to grasp with new power the Divine truths which are revealed in His person, we must not be hampered with the symbols or the formularies of the Councils or of the Synods. The decisions of these assemblies, and the scheme of doctrine which results from them, may be true, and may be some day so restated as to be accepted again by the intelligence and reason of the modern world. But they can never be true for us while they are enforced with the brute weight of authority, and defended not by argument, but by tradition. In proportion therefore as I believe in Christ, and in the fulness and sufficiency of His revelation, I should hesitate to accept any creed beyond the simplicity of His own requirement, “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” I should feel myself

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hampered at every turn if I felt that I had committed myself beforehand to any other statement of doctrine than this. How should I dare to inquire, or after inquiry to change, if my formula were already stereotyped, and I were compelled by loyalty to my Church not to deviate from it? Personally I desire no freedom *from* Christ, and should not welcome a Church position which did not demand in me that all-inclusive faith in Him. But in Christ, and in the liberty with which He sets me free, I would stand fast; and Congregationalism allows and obliges me to do so.

2. *The Charity of the Principle.*—Then the other point, which makes a constant and increasing appeal to me, is the necessary charity of the Congregational principle. When St. Paul thought of a single Church, his mind always travelled out at once to include “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. i. 2). Now I am aware that there are men in every communion who have that broad and catholic spirit. But so far as I know, Congregationalism is the only Church system that requires one to have it, and makes this kind of charity a standard of orthodoxy. I shudder to think of myself in the Church of Rome, condemned to condemn all who are outside her borders. I shrink from the position of an Anglican Churchman, who must incur the charge of disloyalty to his Church if he ventures to show a cordial sympathy with that part of the Christian Church which is not in the Episcopal fold. To think that I should have to exclude Robert Moffat, John Hunt, or William Carey from the “apostolic succession” would shock my under-

standing. And I would rather be a Dissenter, with all the disabilities, than have the favour of the State on condition of occupying this position of exclusiveness.

And though it would not be so impossible to belong to the other Protestant denominations, which after all are divided from one another by little more than a film, there is a certain *ἦθος* in Congregationalism which I have not discovered elsewhere; the sense of being in a direct descent from those who for some centuries have been the champions of freedom in the State and freedom in religion; the subtle workings of John Robinson, of John Milton, of Oliver Cromwell, of John Howe, in the blood; the memory of ancient struggles, the forecaste of victories after which the hands of our fathers have reached out through the ages. This heritage of the English Independents is not splendid in storied buildings and monuments, in flashing names and the deeds which catch the attention of the world; but to them it is splendid with a more spiritual glory; they hold it in solemn recollection of plain and believing men who hazarded their lives for their faith, who wrought wonders, who subdued kingdoms, who colonised continents, who claimed the isles of the sea and the ancient Paganisms for Christ. And though they anticipate from no earthly lips a word of approbation, nor expect their designation to sound musical to earthly ears, but rather look for the old curl of the lip in the smile of the world, they have a deep and secret pride in their ancestry and in their posterity; nor do they doubt that their undying principle, which wrought in the first century for the first victories

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of Christ, will be at work for His latest victories in the last.

Statistics mean Nothing

Concerning the statistics of Congregationalism I must be excused if I say nothing. To number congregations, ministers, communicants, contributions, is contrary to the very genius of the system which I am defending. We as Congregationalists are in a position to understand why it is Satan that is represented as standing up to tempt David to number the people, and why the Lord rebuked the king for his arrogance by slaying seventy thousand of his vaunted hosts. Frankly this is a question to which I can attach no meaning. The most numerous religious body is said to be Buddhism, a creed of futile charity based on a dogmatic Atheism. Really the worse your creed, the more numerous will be its adherents. No *Christian* Church has as many adherents as Islam. The most widely extended and largely supported Church in Christendom is likewise the one which has most deliberately left Christ and the Apostles, and succeeded in literally reversing a large proportion of their precepts. While the world remains so essentially un-Christian, while Christian Europe is an armed camp, and society in Christian countries is still a tissue of conventions, an organised and legalised injustice to the weak, and a hell for the poor, it can be no commendation of a Church to say that it is the largest, the strongest, the most respectable, the most fashionable. These praises are its condemnation. The larger, the stronger,

the more respectable and fashionable it is, the more responsible is it for the existing state of things. I imagine that the flock of Jesus is still a little flock, though He still designs to give them the kingdom. And the presumption is that His standard does not attract the wealth and fashion of the world. "When the Son of Man comes shall He find faith on the earth?"

It is no commendation, therefore, to my mind, when it is said that the Congregational churches are larger and richer than they were at the beginning of the Queen's reign. I do not see what that is to the point. The only statistics which are of any moment are those which cannot be obtained. I should exceedingly like to know if Congregational churches are nearer their New Testament model than they were; if their ministers are more palpably baptized by the Spirit, and their members are more ambitious of exhibiting the regenerate life in the world. If I venture to express my conviction that these statistics, if obtainable, would be satisfactory, I cannot bring proofs, and therefore it is better to hold to a silent faith, and wait for the day when the fire will prove every man's work, of what kind it is.

Congregationalism and Reunion

But on the question of reunion, something must, in closing, be said. How Congregationalists regard that question is of interest, especially in a volume like this, which by exhibiting the spiritual geography of the several Christian societies, should

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show what possibility there is of uniting the islands and continents, and annihilating

The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

It is probably thought that to this question of reunion we are as a rule indifferent, notwithstanding that such leaders of Congregationalism as Dr. Mackennal and Dr. Berry have been as conspicuous in working for the idea as the Congregationalists of the former generation were conspicuous in the strenuous advocacy of Disestablishment.

But the coolness on the subject is apparent rather than real. With many of the impassioned appeals for a corporate reunion, the Congregationalist can have no sympathy. A reunion purchased by the sacrifice of the liberties and privileges for which he has contended at a great cost, would be to him not only unattractive, but mischievous, a step backward and not forward in the progress of the Church. On the other hand, the union which he values is more actual than other Churches seem to realise, and would become apparent to all if all would only adopt his point of view, or, let us say, the point of view of the New Testament.

The English Church is always straining after a reunion with Rome or with Byzantium. She wishes to forget the Reformation. She thinks that by adopting the ritual and practice of those corrupt systems she can at last lay claim to recognition, and be united in the one fold. To the Congregationalist this seems an almost inconceivable hallucination. He knows what was the

condition of the Church before the East and the West were separated. He remembers the grave, but perfectly correct, description of it in the stately pages of Gibbon. And instead of seeing in the united Church which existed from the fourth to the eighth century a goal after which he would strive, he sees in it a prison from which he would eagerly escape. In the West he has some notion of the progress which was made between the eleventh century, when Hildebrand soldered the Church in a strong and impregnable unity, and the sixteenth century, when the solitary monk who shook the world broke the unity. And he is well aware that that progress was towards corruption and decay, and that mighty breach was the condition of all genuine progress. He hears, in the principle which shattered the corporate unity of the Western Church, the trumpet-call to all that has been best and purest and most progressive in the modern world. He cannot hide from his eyes that every country where the undivided Church holds sway is stagnant or decaying; and if you pick out at random the nations which lead the world, they are those where corporate reunion is not attempted. He does not wish to see the English peoples in the condition of the Latin peoples, North America in the condition of South. He is convinced, therefore, that no reunion is desirable which sacrifices the great truths and liberties for which the divisions were made. When Cardinal Manning uttered his ominous aspiration, that he might bow this imperial race under the yoke of Rome, every Congregationalist invoked the shadow of Crom-

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well, felt his sword-hilt, and recognised at once that if that were done, this imperial race would cease to be imperial.

Corporate Reunion not Desirable

If there is a corporate reunion possible which preserves to us the right to think, and to exercise a private judgment; if there is a corporate reunion possible, which leaves to the congregation of believing Christians the autonomy which Christ promised them; if there is a corporate reunion possible which will frankly recognise the standards of the New Testament, and cease to impose as essential what apostles themselves never ventured to impose; if there is a corporate reunion possible which will allow the Bible to have free course and to be glorified, and will frankly recognise the work of the Holy Spirit wherever it is to be seen; then we shall be prepared for the great act of surrender, and leaving our solitary encampments, we shall all joyfully unite in the one visible army of our Lord.

At present they who talk about corporate reunion give no promise of such a reunion as this. To them the ideal of that dark thirteenth century is still valid. Nay, they would thrust us back to the time of Theodosius. Their eyes are still set on the tyranny of a great system, of a creed that is not to be reasoned about but accepted, of a Church that claims to settle every question by authority, and to hold every inquiring mind in a condition of tutelage. If such a reunion were accomplished to-day, the work of separation would have to begin again to-morrow. And the Congregationalist is in

no haste to forfeit those heights and strongholds which his ancestors won, simply to have the struggle over again, with weapons surrendered and lost positions occupied by the foe.

Practical Reunion Feasible

And what weighs with him almost as much is this, that reunion, in the only sense in which it is desirable or possible, can be achieved in a far simpler way. It can be achieved without forfeiting any of the rich results of ancient struggles, and it will be achieved, now or in a better state, when the Son of Man shall be manifested again in the midst, so soon as the basis of unity is found in the Spirit of God, and not in the material forms of time and sense. Is there not a definite meaning to be attached to the terms, "born of the Spirit," and "led by the Spirit"? What a heresy it would be to deny that there is. Apart from the huge opaque gloss of tradition, the idea would be clear as the day. Whoever is born of the Spirit walks in the Spirit, and is led by the Spirit of God. That is the one essential consideration. It is a perilous confusion to treat the condition of the baptized, or the confirmed, or the ordained, as identical with this intense and real operation of the Spirit. Easier, of course, it is to unite in a society the baptized and the confirmed under the ordained than to organise those who are actually born and led by the Spirit. But *cui bono*? What use is it to combine those who are not spiritual with those who are, and to describe them all as born of the Spirit or led by the Spirit? Is that not a libel on

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the Holy One? Does not that make it impossible for a plain man to know the fruit of the Holy Spirit when he sees it?

But make the actual spiritual life the basis of a Church unity and of a visible organisation, and, though it may be difficult, everything is accomplished. They who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God; and as His family, they are one in a unity much more simple and divine than the unity of an organisation. If we could set our eyes on that ideal, and all gaze upon it for a year and a day, we should be fairly ravished by it, and our unity would be attained.

But it will be said that is impracticable. You cannot get worldly men to fix their eyes on spiritual facts. You can only get them to fix their eyes on what they can see—a pope, or a bench of bishops, or a presbytery. And what chance is there of inducing the Catholic leaders to fix their eyes upon it either? Conceive the *Tablet*, and its grave derision, or the *Church Times*, and its boisterous raillery, upon the subject of a union which rests on the one Spirit of God in the hearts of those who are born by the Spirit and led by the Spirit. Yes, in a sense, perhaps, impracticable. But it must always be remembered that religious papers do not represent the religion of a Church or of a nation. These dashing and contemptuous articles are not written by men who have been on their knees, wrestling with God, to know how to utter the truth, and to utter it in love. The writers in religious papers usually write just as the writers in political papers write. They have a *parti pris*. They are writing for a constituency who pay them

for abusing their opponents. Go behind the religious papers, and make for the religious *people*. Touch a man of any creed when he is fresh from his hour of sensible communion with God, and ask him, Is not the basis of the reality of the Spirit the best and surest to build on? Does not this hold out the grandest possibility of union—one Spirit, one Lord, one body; one body because there is one Spirit and one Lord? And there is no hesitation in his answer. There is actual unanimity among all spiritual men when they judge in the Spirit. Impracticable; yes, just as the kingdom of God is impracticable. But it is the peculiarity of the Congregationalist to lift up his eyes to the hills, and to see the city in the heavens, convinced that he will one day see it descending to the earth, and built on sure foundations among men.

To the question of reunion he therefore makes this brief answer: Let me distinguish. If by reunion you mean a union such as there was before the divisions of the Church, I cannot desire it. The divisions are not an accident or a mistake, but a means by which God is moving us to a wider unity. If, on the other hand, you mean by reunion the discovery of the oneness in the one Spirit of God, through faith in the one Lord, I very greatly desire it, but conceive that it has been and is essentially realised, and what is wanted is that spiritual men should open their eyes to see their unity in Christ Jesus.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

BY THE

REV. RICHARD GLOVER, D.D.

III

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

BY THE REV. RICHARD GLOVER, D.D., BRISTOL

THE series of questions, to which the pages of this book supply the answers, grows out of, and the answers will, it is hoped, grow into a catholic feeling of the essential oneness of the Church of Christ. The interest felt in understanding the position held by others springs from a sense that all Christians are brethren, and that the points in which we agree are infinitely superior in importance to those in which we differ. And I expect it will be found that the statements of the reasons constraining the attachment of the various writers to the respective portions of the Church to which they belong will all have common elements, and will all note the same charm of Christ Jesus—will all express the same gratitude for the benefits derived from the witness and fellowship of their fellow-believers, and will all affirm the fitness felt by each writer to mark the branch of the Church with which he is connected for the work committed to her to do.

I am to reply to two questions: Why I am a Baptist?—*i.e.*, Why I observed the rite of Baptism

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by immersion when mature? and why I adhere with grateful love to the denomination which makes the reservation of baptism to believers its distinctive principle?

Beginning this paper on Whitsunday—*i.e.*, the anniversary of Pentecost—it is a pleasing thought to me that my reply to the former of these questions would doubtless be identical with the reply given by those baptized at Pentecost. The constraining love of Christ—the preciousness of salvation—the desire to obey what was felt to be His Will—these were the forces which moved their acceptance of Baptism, and these move mine also.

If the answer to the second question passes into more debateable matter, it yet grows out of this reply to the first, and I seek to give it with all simplicity.

Perhaps it will assist the understanding of the controversy to be dealt with if we mark briefly the history and the general doctrinal testimony of the Baptists.

— Their Past History

Their history is one not very easy to be presented, still less to be presented with brevity, being that of protesting individuals rather than of organized communities. Long after the set of Church doctrine and sentiment had taken the direction of an over-reliance on the external things of religion, many voices still remained pleading for Faith as the condition of Salvation, and therefore of the Sacraments. Only slowly did infant

baptism harden into a usage of the Church. Tertullian opposed it, though from different considerations than ours; asking, "Why the age of innocence should hasten to the forgiveness of sins?" The Emperor Constantine the Great—son of a devoted Christian mother, was not baptized in infancy; nor was the great Gregory Nazianzen, himself the son of a Christian bishop.

There is some probability that the early British Church had not lapsed into Romish views on this subject. For one of the three points on which Augustine insisted in his controversy with the monks of Bangor was that they "should give *christendom* to children;" and Pope Gregory who sent him decreed, "Let all young children be baptized, as they ought to be, according to the traditions of the Fathers"—a decree which assumes some practice differing from that which had become prevalent. The Lollards in England, as the Hussites on the Continent, largely "refused to baptize their new-born children;" denied the necessity of infant baptism for the salvation of children who die in infancy; admitted none to their communion till they were immersed. Wickliffe himself was charged with holding "that baptism does not confer, but only signifies grace which was given before;" and that "those are fools and presumptuous who affirm such infants are not to be saved as die without baptism."

The Albigenes and Waldenses held apparently very widely the same views at the commencement of their history, two of their most ancient confessions (quoted by Ivimey, vol. i. 25, 26) affirming the doctrines we hold. From shortly after the

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year 1400, Baptists begin to appear in the roll of our English martyrs, and increase in number right on to the Toleration Act of 1689. The earliest Baptist Church, if we may call it such, was found on the borders of Hereford, at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Many Dutch Baptists suffered under Elizabeth. It is recorded by Dr. Somes, writing in 1589, that there were at that date "several Anabaptistical conventicles in London and other places." They suffered severely under Elizabeth and James. The first English martyr, who died at the stake for Lollardism in the year 1400, possibly held their Baptist views; the last, who was burned, in 1612, Edward Wightman, certainly did.

The number of Baptists grew enormously during the Commonwealth; and though not burnt at the stake, they yet were done to death in considerable numbers, and the prisons were crowded with them after the Restoration of Charles II. Bunyan was one of those who thus suffered. The imprisonment for twelve years of one of England's purest and greatest sons shows what they suffered. In the general decay of piety that marked the eighteenth century, our denomination shared. But it was one of the first to feel the revival of religion which came at its close. And since that time, leading in Christian missions, we have seen increase of numbers, of vitality, and of unity, till to-day we number in the United Kingdom 360,000 communicant members, while in America the Baptist community is surpassed in numbers only by the Methodist.

It only remains to add that

The Views of Baptists

are on all main points identical with the creed of Christendom. We adore a Divine Redeemer. We rest for salvation on the Saviour's atoning death on Calvary. We hold that man needs the regenerative influence of the Holy Ghost to originate and maintain the Christian life. We rejoice in the Inspiration which makes the Scriptures profitable unto salvation. We join all God's saints in testifying His infinite love as the joy and pattern of our lives. And we are supported by the hope of His everlasting fellowship and glory.

The position in which we differ from believers in general is, that we restrict both sacraments, as they generally restrict one, to those who affirm their desire to observe them, and profess the faith and feeling which these ordinances are given to express. We deny baptism, therefore, to infants, administering it only to those who profess Repentance toward God and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a further difference which is less important, and carries comparatively but little accent;—viz., We administer Baptism by immersion, according to the admitted meaning of the word, and the usage of the early Church and that of the Greek Church to-day.

Such being the position we occupy, I am asked to say why I am a Baptist? If my answer involves some personal statements, my apology must be, that I give it in reply to a personal question, and

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that, moreover, it is desirable that readers should know "the personal equation" of the writer. His history and temperament when known will enable the reader to assess more satisfactorily the force, and understand the meaning of his arguments. Giving my reply in successive statements, I begin negatively by saying—

I am not a Baptist because I was so brought up

I was born and reared amongst Presbyterians, belonging to that branch of the great Presbyterian family that, in my childhood, ennobled itself, by the grandest sacrifice for Christ made by any branch of the Church of God since the Act of Uniformity—the relinquishment by one-half the ministry of the Church of their manse, their incomes, their churches, for the sake of conscience. No change of view impairs the love and reverence I feel for those I was constrained to leave. The Free Church of Scotland, and its offshoots in the north of England where I was brought up, will always live in my memory, as embodying largely Bunyan's vision of The Palace Beautiful. Her strenuous convictions, her simple worship, her stately psalmody, strengthened and blessed me in my boyhood and youth, and still command my warmest affection.

I had no Baptist influences operating on me. I read no book on the Baptist side of the controversy; had no appeal made to me on the matter. I never saw Baptism administered till I submitted to it myself; and the arguments usually adduced in the Presbyterian standards and preaching to prove

the propriety of infant baptism, seemed sufficient and satisfactory to me. In the process of development, however, a reconsideration of my whole creed was forced on me. My studies enlarged my thoughts. The alternatives of unbelief challenged my attention. My traditional holdings were unsettled. I was afraid of retaining anything merely because I had received it; and I was obliged to verify all my positions for myself.

At the close of my course of study for the ministry of the English Presbyterian Church, I felt I should be somewhat straitened by the signature of the Presbyterian Standards,—and resolved I ought not to sign them, although I was in substantial agreement with their findings. I determined to examine the claims of other denominations, and the result was, that I concluded the views held by the Baptists on the Sacraments, and on the constitution of the Church of Christ, were most accordant with the New Testament. I was baptized, became a minister of the Baptist Church, and have since been very grateful for what I regard as the Divine leading which guided me to that decision.

I have now to give my present reasons, after the thought and experiences of between thirty and forty years in the Baptist denomination, for the choice I then made—and which still remains clear, vital, and strong—of that body as 'The Fellowship in which the principles of the gospel find their best embodiment. I begin by saying, I am a Baptist because

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Baptist Doctrines are most in accordance with the great principle of Personal Responsibility, which marks the whole teaching of the Saviour and His Apostles

The way in which the Saviour individualizes men impressed and impresses me greatly. However feeble, obscure, unworthy, He treats each soul as a responsible unit. He requires the personal Repentance in which each man will own his sin to God and get forgiveness for it; and the personal Faith, in which each faces God, entrusts himself to His grace, and claims His mercy. He calls for the personal prayer by which each brings down blessings on himself and others. There is in Christ's teaching no suggestion of gregarious or corporate salvation. One by one, men receive Christ and gain power to become the sons of God. One by one at Pentecost they repented and were baptized. Even for healing, personal faith is demanded. Repentance by proxy, sponsorship for others, are things conspicuous by their absence in the New Testament.

The Church seems a free spontaneous fellowship of wakened souls, moved to a united confession, life, and worship by the constraints operating on each, of a common repentance, a common adoring faith, a common love, a common ideal, and a common hope. The unit of the Church is an awakened soul. The whole life, guidance, and work of the Church is to be done by such. The training of the child is a matter for the home, and its church relationships cannot

without peril begin till the soul wakes to the touch, to the call of Christ, and responds to it. When that happens—*however early*—the soul can take its place with other quickened spirits, share their work, and unite in their confession. But till the soul is awake, to give it a place in the Church, is to act on a line not justified by Scripture, quite superfluous in view of the preciousness of children to the heart of Christ, and is to give public position to one whose proper place is in “The Church in the House,” where it is the delightful charge of family faith and prayer.

Individual repentance and faith are required for all Church acts and fellowship; and therefore the principle, which reserves Church rites for those who can intelligently accept them, seems to me to be the only one in accord with the general principles of the New Testament. To give Church membership to the unconscious, or the unawakened, is to give something whose benefits cannot be appreciated, and whose responsibility cannot be discharged.

Moses legislated for a State, Christ for persons; and to me it seems discordant with the spirit of the New Testament to provide a place for any who have not the fitness to fill it.

The restriction of Baptism to those professing repentance of sin, and faith in the Saviour, is in harmony with every reference to the Rite which occurs in the New Testament

It is a keen test of any theory whether it fits the facts; and it is a keen test of any doctrine

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whether it fits the words of Scripture in which it is referred to.

Our principle breaks no precept, but, on the contrary, harmonizes with every precept on the matter.

Confessedly no precept of Infant Baptism is found in Scripture, and no reference to baptized children. Though Paul's later epistles were written more than thirty years, and John's probably nearly sixty years, after Pentecost, we meet with no exhortations to young men or maidens to remember their baptismal vows. There is no precept concerning the administering of Baptism to infants, and none concerning the Church's care of the Baptized. The Saviour never prescribes infant baptism, nor is there one syllable of the apostles which alludes to it.

We therefore run counter to no precept by denying baptism to infants. While, on the other hand, we are in the line of every precept when we require Repentance and Faith in those who would observe it. It is significant that there is no text in which Baptism is mentioned which suits a preacher of infant baptism, and there is no text which is unsuitable for a preacher of believers' baptism. All references to Baptism seem references made by those who thought as we do of the matter. We can, for instance, use John's phrase "*the Baptism of Repentance*," and, like him, can urge men to be baptized, "*confessing their sins*." The formula of institution, in which the Saviour makes John's rite the permanent ordinance of the Church, is one which makes it the badge of enrolment of Discipleship, and it remains

such with us. We can urge Peter's appeal at Pentecost, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus.*" As Ananias did in addressing Saul, we treat it as a symbol of the washing away of sin, the acknowledgment of the need of such cleansing, and a prayer for the removal of the guilt and power of sin.

Paul always treats it as the brave, great act of surrender, carrying the issues which always attend surrender to the Lord. Accepting in this rite a Saviour dying for sin, by moral necessity we die to the sin which thus we own and He expiates. Accepting in it a risen, enthroned Christ, we rise to a higher life under a sky of hope and faith. Baptism being the act of confessing Christ, in which a soul turns its back on the world and faces persecution, we are not embarrassed by the great influence and result attributed to it. Such influence and result would be incredible if attributed to an act void of the Purpose and Surrender which constitute Receptivity. They are intelligible and credible when attributed to an act full of moral purpose and consecration. Even when St. Paul calls baptism the washing of regeneration, he is only attributing a great moral result to a great act of surrender, and speaking in the spirit of Christ's word, "*To as many as received Him, He gave power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name.*"

When Peter describes baptism as "*the answer of a good conscience to God,*" he uses a word which exactly describes what it is with us. So, we traverse no teaching of sacred Scripture on this rite, and are not embarrassed by its language.

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Whereas, none of these words can be used of infant baptism without violence. We must, if we baptize infants, omit all demand of repentance and faith ; and we cannot attribute great moral and spiritual results to a rite received unconsciously, without clashing with the doctrine taught throughout the New Testament, that Grace enters the soul by Faith and Surrender only. We feel we are in this matter true to Scripture, because our practice harmonizes both with its spirit and its letter. The words of sacred Scripture fit our thoughts. So, both harmonize with its essential doctrine of Salvation by Faith.

Our Doctrine has this further commendation, that it would restore to the Church of Christ a Rite which the Saviour ordained, but which she has lost

The Saviour ordained two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The latter is a joint rite, in which, unitedly, Believers commemorate the death of Christ ; the former an individual rite, in which each simply confesses his submission to the Lord. The joint rite was for continuous use ; the individual rite, to be used once only at the outset of Christian life.

No one can read the story of Pentecost, or, for that matter, the story of Foreign Missions to-day, without feeling the value of the rite of Baptism as a conversion rite. It calls for decision—is admirably suited for a rite of confession. It owns the pollution of sin, it asks for cleansing, it expresses the entrustment of the soul into the hands of the

Triune God. The contrite are emboldened by it to draw nigh to Him who asks only the confession of our sins to bestow His pardon. The hesitant are helped to decision. The supreme gifts of Christ are made prominent before the soul, so that it is helped to come in the right mood, and with pure and high expectations. Though it be an outward act, the inward purpose finds strengthening, completion, and fixing in it. It is husk, and not kernel, but the husk protects the kernel. The service this rite rendered to converts at Pentecost, and renders to-day to converts on the mission field, is a valuable and much-needed service. But it is lost to the larger part of Christendom by the rite being administered to babes, who have no need of it, and who can derive no benefit from it, though, doubtless, the prayers parents offer for their children, with or without this rite, are heard on high.

No part of the Church's equipment can be spared, and no part of the equipment the Saviour prescribed can be with advantage replaced by any ordinance of man. Confirmation is a rite unknown to Scripture, not prescribed by the Saviour, and it very poorly and faintly serves the purpose of the prescribed rite of discipleship—Baptism.

It is a high function for any community to have allotted to it—to restore a Rite full of gracious uses to the Church which had lost it. That function falls to the Baptists to-day, and is a reason why I cleave thankfully to them.

I am further strengthened in my adhesion to Baptist principles by observing that—

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The Baptist theory of the Sacraments is the only theory around which Superstitions and Errors do not gather

The theory, that the efficacy of the sacraments depends on the faith that accepts them and animates their observance, is a theory which keeps us looking to spiritual forces and spiritual conditions, and prevents our mind dwelling on the external, the official, the imaginary elements in the rite. Ultimately the thoughts of men gravitate to one or other of the antithetic positions with regard to the efficacy of these rites. The one is, that the virtue of a sacrament depends on our having a priest administering it; the other, that it depends on a quickened soul observing it. We take the latter position. All who deny the latter, and administer the rite to those void of the faith and of the feeling it is meant to express, take a course tending to various errors and superstitions.

In my opinion, Infant Baptism grew out of, and always tends to grow into, superstition. Historically, it seems to me to have grown from that exaggerated estimate of the outward which came into the Church when the simplicity and fervour of her first piety passed away, and when the sacraments were accepted as Necessary for Salvation and Productive of it.

According to Neander, the same North African teachers who helped to introduce and fix the custom of Infant Baptism were influential in introducing the practice of Infant Communion. St. Augustine quoted the words of Christ, "*Except*

ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you," as a word requiring the administration of the Communion to infants.

That practice of Infant Communion became universal. In the Western Church it lasted eight centuries—lingering indeed longer—down to the Council of Trent, which discouraged but did not prohibit it. It is still universal in the Greek Church, and amongst the Nestorians and Armenians. And this practice, once universal and still widely observed, shows the spirit in which the rite of Infant Baptism was adopted, viz., as something mysteriously necessary to salvation, and perhaps securing it. And thus growing out of superstition it tends to produce superstition. Even amongst Presbyterians a superstitious fear of the fate of unbaptized infants prevails amongst the less spiritual—a fear which surely is very dishonouring to God. When regeneration is held to depend on a rite, the natural solicitude to have it accurately performed tends to produce Sacerdotalism. The errors which infant baptism tends to produce, are perhaps most clearly seen in the doctrine of the Council of Trent, which holds that it takes away original sin, imparts an indelible imprint to the soul, that it justifies and regenerates the soul, and so transforms it that it obliterates sin from the nature, though an inclination to sin still remains, even in the regenerate.

The Council simply attributed to an unconscious experience everything which the apostles attributed to an act of repentance, faith, and love. The doctrine which naturally grows into errors and

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superstitions is surely an erroneous view. And when we reflect that these errors are grave ones, and permit the impenitent and wayward to believe themselves children of God and heirs of His kingdom because baptized, we must recognize the un-wisdom of sanctioning the practice that leads to them.

I have dwelt thus far on the distinguishing tenet which marks us. I am not oblivious of the fact that what I have advanced contains only part of the answer to the questions addressed to me.

Assuming that Baptism is the divinely appointed rite of confession for the individual convert, the question remains—How about the community of converts thus confessing Christ? Do they realize effectively the ideal of Church life? Is the seeming fitness of the entrance rite confirmed by its subsequent results? Or does the extreme accent we put on Individualism prevent the development of Fellowship?

I have answered the question, Why I became a Baptist? The further questions, Why I continue a Baptist? and Why, having regard to Church methods and Church work, I advocate the sort of fellowship at which we aim as the ideal worthy of general aspiration? are separate and grave matters deserving a careful reply.

In answer to them I have to add the following considerations as weighing strongly with me, and as tending, by their united force, to confirm me in my satisfaction with my ecclesiastical environment. I remark—

**The view of Baptism we hold tends strongly to
maintain the purity of the Church of Christ**

The Purity of the Church of Christ is her Power. In the degree in which she is marked by the beauty of holiness, by the radiance of Christlike love, by the energy of moral purpose—in that degree she is strong to charm and to lead men. It is obvious that some impurities must always be found in the Church. Some persons, whose conversion was real, backslide ; some who were unconverted, but who joined the Church, honestly wishing to do right, never pass on to the higher motive, and to the vision and apprehension of the Divine. So tares are always in some proportion to be found among the wheat. It is obvious, also, that our chief hope for the purity of the Church of Christ must lie in something higher than any organisation—must rest on the forces of God, on the inspiration and the protection of the Holy Ghost.

But yet there are methods which facilitate, and there are others which discourage, the entrance of the unconverted into the Church of Christ. Infant baptism constitutes a person a member of the Church of Christ who is unconscious and incapable of emotion. The more evangelical of the Reformed Churches save themselves to some extent by subsequently treating the baptized person as an outsider, and requiring him to join the Church afresh at a later period. But whatever permits the membership or quasi-membership of the unconscious, tends to facilitate the membership of the unconverted. While if the doctrine is held that in

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Baptism God is pleased "to regenerate the infant by the Holy Spirit, to receive him by adoption, and to incorporate him into His holy Church," the impression must be produced that the essential conditions of salvation have been fulfilled, and there is no need of further repentance and conversion. It is a supreme advantage of our Baptist Churches that the Initial Rite proclaims the need of Conversion, demands Repentance, calls for Faith, requires thought and decision, and also involves some hardship and reproach for Christ. This rite tends to restrict the membership of the Church to the converted, and, by so doing, to keep the Church pure: to the great advantage of the world outside, and to the great advantage also of those who might have deluded themselves with the thought they were Christians when they were not.

Those who baptize infants always gravitate in the direction of the doctrine that the Church membership of the unconverted is not to be regretted, inasmuch as it puts persons in the way of being benefited. We demur to the propriety of such a contention. If any one has neither part nor lot in the spiritual life the Saviour seeks to produce in us, it is better that he should occupy a position altogether outside the Church, and be saved from delusions of complacency, and be moved to seek the mercies which the Saviour wishes to bestow.

There will always be tares amongst the wheat, but that is not a reason for multiplying them deliberately, in the hope that they will grow into wheat. It is desirable, on matters of such supreme importance, that men should "examine themselves

whether they be in the faith," and that the Church should not provide arrangements by which self-delusion—always, alas! too easy—should be made easier still.

The Churches organized on the basis of requiring the individual profession of repentance and faith toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are effective for the work of the Church of Christ

I am not unwise enough to claim all the advantages for any one system. In the nature of things there must be some good mixed with all evil, and some drawback attendant on all good. Despotic rule in the Church may sometimes permit swifter action, and will secure outward Uniformity. Rule by representatives chosen by the Church will often secure more vigorous co-operation of all portions of the community, than our more democratic method allows. But, as a matter of practical working, I think our Church system works effectively for the furtherance of the kingdom of God, and could not be replaced by any other with advantage.

1. *Our simple groups of brethren, converted by the grace of Christ, confessing Him, and aspiring to share His life, have a charm that attracts many.*—When fellowship is vital, there is a gracious solemnity in the Requirement of faith and repentance for discipleship, and in the solemn welcome into the Christian brotherhood, which is helpful to the soul. The fellowship of hearts that feel in union quickens life, and intensifies the reality of

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faith and prayer. The sacrifice of reserve has its reward in the growth of sympathies of the most precious character. Christian finds Faithful and Hopeful, and journeys more vigorously for their fellowship. There will sometimes inevitably be that in the fellowship and in the testimony of such a brotherhood which will be discordant with refined taste, as doubtless there would be in "the disorder," which Mr. Jowett notes as such a characteristic of the Church in the apostles' days.¹ But when the vision of God is lost, and the sense of His love dies out of such a fellowship, the fellowship itself dies out, and comes to a proper end. While it lasts, it lasts perforce of the goodness, the aspiration, and the reality in it, and these all have charm.

In such a brotherhood, I remark further—

2. *There is generally an exercise of Scriptural discipline which in Churches on a looser basis cannot be found.*—It is one of the duties of the brotherhood to be helpers of each other's faith; to exhort one another; to appeal to and restore the backsliding. The Church has no elaborate machinery of discipline. The most that it can ever do is to "*withdraw*" from the fellowship of such as walk disorderly. This she is bound to do whenever a member gives up the faith, or so acts as to disprove the existence or operativeness of Christian principle. It is an accepted position that the Church has only "ministerial," not "magisterial" power; that is, it has to execute the Saviour's laws, not formulate laws of its own. As the only doctrines in the Church's purview are

¹ Jowett on Thessalonians, Galatians, and Romans, vol. i. p. 79.

those expressed or assumed in the two sacraments, and as the conduct required of each member is that simply which is harmonious with his professions in these rites, discipline only takes note of vital departures from the supreme things of faith and character. When brotherly discipline, prompted by love accompanied by prayer, testifies against errors denying the Godhead or Atonement of Christ (the truths set forth in the formulæ of Baptism and the Lord's Supper respectively), and against conduct inconsistent with the discipleship professed in these rites, it is a procedure much blessed of God to reclaim those who, if despaired of or neglected, would be only too likely to harden in their error, and become presumptuous in their wrong. The brotherly basis of our Churches, and the mutual compact of discipleship involved in membership, leads thus to the wholesome exercise, where it is needed, of a holy discipline, and to maintain that force and lustre of sanctity, and that clear testimony, which are the Church's power.

3. *Nor is there anything in the constitution of our Churches incompatible with the maintenance of united life and action.*—I freely admit that I desire to see still closer and firmer bonds of fellowship than the Baptist denomination shows to-day. I think we might with advantage have more complete co-operation, so as to be able to marshal our forces more effectively.

But this is probably a desire felt by each writer in this book, regarding the denomination to which he belongs. While, therefore, desiderating more unity of action, I have to state that there is a

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great deal more of united action than might be anticipated. With 2924 churches in the United Kingdom we have 360,112 communicant members, giving 123 as the number of members for each church on the average—a number the smallness of which is, of course, due to our comparative fewness in this country. It is noteworthy, however, that probably the very largest churches in the country belong to our body, and are gathered on this individualistic basis, as, for instance, the Metropolitan Tabernacle, with 4708 members; the East London Tabernacle (Mr. Archibald Brown's), with 2399 members; Woolwich Tabernacle (Mr. Wilson's), with 1275 members. Whatever divisive tendencies might be supposed to be developed by the accent we put on individual conviction and individual responsibility for the conduct and well-doing of the Church, there is evidently a cohesive tendency developed by the closer knowledge and trust which marks our fellowship. And while again I have to express the desire for more effective co-operation between congregations, I would be doing wrong were I not to express the feeling that we probably have as much or more of it than is found elsewhere. Our Churches combine heartily for the support of Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Colleges; for evangelistic work in the various counties; for augmentation funds aiding weak Churches, and funds relieving aged or infirm ministers and their widows. But only a small part of such funds is under the control of the Baptist Union. I think the amount received from our membership for these objects, considering our numbers and our scanty wealth, will probably

compare favourably with the amounts contributed by more thoroughly organised bodies, such as the Methodist and Presbyterian communities.

There is nothing in our principles which would prevent more organic union between the Churches of our faith and order; for the same principle which permits us as individuals to forego the exercise of a portion of our liberty, in order to have the advantage of Church fellowship, would equally allow our individual Churches to forego the exercise of part of their liberty in order to have the advantage of the fuller co-operation of other Churches. Our extreme independency probably grew out of the reaction from the high and somewhat intolerant pretensions formulated by the Presbyterians of the Commonwealth. To-day the peril of such pretensions having vanished—the trend of our denomination is toward closer links of common action than have hitherto existed.

**Our Polity is not unfavourable to the development
of an effective Ministry**

Perhaps our weakest point as a denomination is our inadequate control of the entrance into our ministry. There are those who think our ministry over numerous and not sufficiently strong. Certainly we have many who “desire the office of a bishop.” The smallness of our Churches, and the corresponding smallness of emoluments, does not dull the aspiration to spend one’s life exclusively as a “worker in the kingdom of God.” Over 2000 ministers for 360,000 members would seem to show nearly two per cent. of our male members

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are ministers. This is probably largely due to the influence of Mr. Spurgeon's example. The work he did loomed so sublime, that the hearts of our youth aspired to share it. Almost all of these have received some training in one or other of our eleven colleges.

Perhaps the critic may question whether so many as two per cent. of the Lord's people were ever endowed with prophetic gifts. Perhaps some others would advocate the opening of our colleges to as many of our members as would be likely to profit by the training given in them ; leaving the results of the training to enrich the ministry or the general leadership of the Church, as Providence might determine.

Two things are certain—the ministry of the gospel in our denomination (as perhaps in others) is not as strong in spiritual and intellectual force as it ought to be. While, on the other hand, the consecration of our pastors to their work, their honourable contentment with scanty means, and their harmonious relations with their people, are such as should move our deepest gratitude. Our ministry affects no priestly eminence, function, or power. We feel that Scripture is ignorant of such a thing as a Christian official named a Priest, never mentioning him ; and we are content to be ignorant also.

We feel that the work of pastor and preacher is one of several in the Church for which God ordains men, and that Divine Equipment is Divine Ordination. That without this, it is profanity and presumption for any one to assume the ministerial office : that, having this, no ordination of man is

needed by him. We regard human ordination as simply a minor, secondary ordination, viz., the acceptance and acknowledgment of a man by the Church, as fitted by God for a certain work. And we think our "orders" are amongst the best, simply because our Churches take special care to verify the Divine equipment of their ministers for their work. From Bunyan to Robert Hall, from John Foster to Charles Spurgeon, from William Carey to the heroes of our Congo Mission, we have not lacked apostolic souls on which God's seal was clearly set. While, for the kingdom of God's sake, we long that our ministry should be marked by more eminent gifts and graces, we rejoice that the Master has called and used abundantly so many souls of high spiritual honour, whose witness and whose lives have "allured" multitudes of souls "to brighter worlds, and led the way."

Our basis of Church order being thus found a good working one for all purposes of Church life and equipment, I have next to urge—

Our Progress as a Denomination is a gratifying proof of the soundness of the lines on which we are proceeding

Three centuries ago Baptists first drew public attention to themselves in England. By their doctrines they were the most obnoxious of all Protestants to the Roman Catholics, and indeed to Episcopalians as well, whose priestly pretensions found no quarter from their simple New Testament views on Church government. By their faithful-

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ness unto death they were sustained beneath the martyr sufferings, which it was the habit of the age, and the necessity of priestly principles, to inflict on those who would not conform. Their numbers were few—probably not more than a few hundreds—found in the Eastern Counties and the Metropolis. No one would have expected a very large expansion for such a community. Christendom, Protestant as well as Catholic, was united against them. Their views seemed an attack on innocent childhood—a denial of Church privileges to those who most merited them. Their temper was probably intolerant, as that of discoverers is apt to be. Socialism, an impatient desire to make the Sermon on the Mount a Law for nations, started some on lines of opposition to authority; made them impatient of the slow growth of spiritual principle; made the weapons of their warfare earthly instead of heavenly; led to the use of force instead of meekness.

These communistic principles strongly marked the Continental Baptists, but to some slight extent were held by some English Baptists also. This was enough to bring on the body universally the discredit attached to them. When Truth was thus weighted—and when Authority, Protestant and Catholic alike, addressed itself to the extirpation of those who held it—not many would have expected for it a future of extended influence. To-day, however, we have the somewhat remarkable result that, with the single and noble exception of the Methodists, Baptists constitute the largest Protestant community of those using our English speech to be found in Christen-

dom, numbering as they do four and a half millions of communicants. We have grown always rapidly in times of enquiry and moral earnestness—like the period of the Commonwealth, and in times of religious revival. The Puritan spirit, which achieved the independence of the United States of America, moulding alike the form of its civil government and its creed and worship, naturally inclined to Baptist principles, as being Puritanism in its perfect form. One-fourth of the Protestants of the United States are Baptists. That a large section of them are negroes may abate the weight of such a fact; but on the other hand, the acceptance of our views by the enslaved and the oppressed is a credential not to be overlooked. Such progress shows the spiritual force which has marked our membership, and the power of Truth, however opposed or unpopular, to lodge itself in human hearts.

There are features in our fellowship which seem to fit us for a great work in the next generation

I should maintain the statement that the present time is a season of regal opportunity for the Church of Christ at large. But I should hold this to be especially true of Nonconformist Christians, and most of all of Baptists, if we only can prove equal to our opportunity.

So far as I can judge, the Church has never had the ear of the world so remarkably as she has to-day, and the mood of men has never been more reverent to our Lord and Saviour.

I do not think any branch of the Church of

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Christ is alive to the greatness of its opportunity, or equal to the demand made on it. I have to admit we are not. Yet we have some advantages which are of great moment.

1. *We have freedom of faith and action.*—No minister or deacon, with us, signs any confession of faith, or binds himself to uphold any specific doctrines. We are free to utter whatever God reveals to us. Church property may, by trust deeds, be secured for the setting forth of special views. But while property is bound, men are free. It is a great advantage, that we are free men—free to inquire and to utter whatever we may be led to hold, and whatever our congregations find quickening and hallowing. We are known to be free, and are not regarded as preachers of conventional or traditional doctrines. All our activities, our modes of worship and our lines of labour, are free. The liturgy of the Church of England breathes the severity and terror of the mediæval conceptions of God—conceptions that exaggerate the sovereign and judicial functions of God, but lack the sense of His fatherhood. Yet it must be used. Our worship is free and speaks the language and breathes the feelings of to-day. The dead hand of the past has no authority with us. Whatever changes in organisation, whatever new philanthropies may be required, we can adopt them.

This elasticity is an advantage, for signatures to creeds have never secured orthodoxy. They have excluded the honest and admitted the insincere. A supernatural life is the only preservative of truth, and it is remarkable that the

faithfulness of the free Churches to all the essential verities of the gospel has been much more vital and complete than that of the Churches apparently bound to their verities by the requirement of a formal assent and consent in a legal signature.

2. *Our sacred, Scriptural Democracy is in harmony with the trend of vital movements all over the world, and this gives us a great advantage.*—No one who has any sense of historical development, or of the differences which are found in social organization, would ever expect or desire the Church of Christ to adopt the same organisation everywhere. If I read the New Testament and Church history aright, the Church seems to me to have always adopted the forms of social organization prevailing around her. The Jewish believers organize themselves more or less on what we might call republican models—being accustomed in their village and synagogue life to orderly self-government. The extreme democracy of the Corinthian Church is obvious, and was natural in Greece, the land of democracy.

Dr. Hatch, with abundance of illustrations, shows how the habits of the Greek people, with regard to clubs and other associations, naturally reproduced themselves in the Christian Church. When Christianity became the religion of the Roman empire, she became Imperial in her constitution. She is feudal in feudal ages. In India her rule would almost necessarily reproduce that of the village panchayet. In China a native Christian community freely organizing itself would make

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much more provision for authority and rule than a Church in a British colony. But along with this adjustment of Church forms to common habits, there is one feature which marks her throughout. When she forms herself freely, *her forms and her spirit have always more of liberty in them than is found in the forms and spirit of civil society around her.* The regenerated man is never negligible, is felt to be possessed of inherent rights. The soul in which God dwells must have a voice in the management of the Church. Even when the government of the Church became monarchical, the people had the choosing of the bishop.

I make these remarks simply to lead up to another, viz., that it is a calamity for the Church of Christ whenever its government or organization jars on the spirit of the times, and secures less liberty and power for its individual member than the State secures for its citizens. When the Church arranges herself freely, there is always more liberty and more power secured for her vital unit than the State secures for its vital unit. It is, in my opinion, a grave disability under which the Church of England suffers that she retains a form of government derived from the ages of feudalism, or from imperial ages preceding them, and suited to such ages, but not suited to an age of liberty. The Baptist denomination is a sacred democracy—“*calls no man master*”—guards the rights of every member of the royal priesthood, invests every individual member with freedom, and with power, and with responsibility for the Church's wellbeing,—and so suits

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the age of freedom in which it is our privilege to live.

That is an advantage of no slight order. We have no archaic incongruities to get rid of, interesting perhaps from an antiquarian point of view, but unsuited for the work-day world. We keep to the simplicities of the everlasting gospel ; and in the complete "freedom with which Christ makes His people free," we address ourselves to the sacred work of bringing the changeless and living truth into contact with the changeful living present.

Our Denomination further seems, of all others, to stand for those things which most effectually meet the errors of our times

All Christian men must rejoice in the increased vitality which marks the Church of England ; compared with its state fifty or a hundred years ago. The clergyman of the worldly type has disappeared, and the man of disreputable habits is very rarely now found having the cure of souls. The high purpose, the Christian character, the unselfishness of the clergy are obvious. For this we give thanks.

But speaking for myself and for multitudes besides, I cannot but deplore that the movement forward into life has been blurred and weakened by a movement backward into Romish errors. No Fashion deludes us into forgetting that all Priestly pretensions are arrogant invasions of the sole sovereignty of Christ on the one hand, and of the freedom and self-respect of His disciples on

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the other. We cannot forget that the right of the priest to dictate our creed carries with it the right and duty of punishing us if we decline to admit Dictation in the sphere of Truth. We cannot forget that Sacramentarianism, affirming the regenerative powers of baptism applied to the child, and the power of the Body and Blood of Christ to refine the physical instincts, when assimilated by our flesh and blood, makes these rites the object of faith instead of Jesus Christ, and deludes multitudes by affirming that the saving change has taken place in them when they are "still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." The Ritualism which is to-day an affectation, a fashion, an æsthetic taste, a thing which people do not take seriously, will, in the next generation, be a darkness that can be felt—a bondage that enthrals the soul. We lament the Romeward movement in the Church of England, as destroying its true catholicism, and making it (Catholics excepted) the most sectarian body in England; we lament it as binding the living gospel to mediæval errors; overloading the simple truth with superstitious doctrines and injurious practices.

Now face to face with this departure from truth, and this falling off into exploded errors, the Baptist denomination holds aloft the simple gospel. We preach Salvation by Christ, not by Priests: Salvation through Faith, Faith that faces and trusts the redeeming God, not Salvation through sacramental rites working in some magical way unknown to Scripture, untraceable by reason, and contradicted by fact. We present not ceremonies, but the gospel of the Cross of Christ.

We have no infant baptism to embarrass our position, or enfeeble our attacks on the superstition we arraign. We have nothing answering to a priest in all our organisations. One is our Master, even Christ. I feel happy to belong to that body which has the uncorrupted, unclouded, unmixed gospel of Jesus Christ—to a body which, as these Romish errors spread, will inevitably gather to its fellowship, increasingly, all who oppose the backsliding towards Rome, and all who seek to lead men forward to the living Christ.

I adhere to the views of my Denomination the more intensely, because I think they lead most directly to the true Catholic unity of the Church of Christ

The question of Reunion is in the air. Though the word is objectionable by its latent admissions, the desire it registers is an out-growth of the Christian revival. The Church of Christ is one: nothing should divide what God hath joined. One God and Father and Saviour implies, as the apostle urged, one undivided fellowship of saints on earth. It may surprise some that I should urge that Baptists have been foremost in proclaiming the true Catholic doctrine of the unity of the Church. I know that "close communionism" is the usage of perhaps nearly a half of British Baptists, and of the great majority of American Baptists. Some, perhaps, forget that this "close communionism"—viz., the restricting of the privilege of partaking of the Lord's Supper to such as are baptized—is a principle almost as

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universal as Christendom. There is not so much significance in a large section of our people holding the ordinary view that the baptized only may communicate, as there is in the large proportion of our people who differ from Christendom on this point, and who hold that, even as all who can honestly adopt the spiritual professions made in baptism should be baptized, so all who can honestly adopt the spiritual professions made in the Lord's Supper should participate in that rite, and who therefore insist that the Lord's table is free to all believers in Christ, baptized or not.

Such "*Free communion*" views are the views which give most effective utterance and furtherance to the doctrine of the unity of the Church of Christ. Sectarianism and division will remain, if access to the Lord's table is made conditional on a man's previous action, on his holding certain doctrinal views, on his submission to certain ecclesiastical authority. But when in every Christian Church the Lord's table is free to every Christian man who wishes to bear witness that Christ crucified for him is the Bread of Life and the Wine of Life to his soul, then a basis of broad, simple brotherhood is laid which keeps, and manifests, and extends the unity of the Church of God.

Reunion on a doctrinal basis will never come. Still less will reunion on an outward submission to the same authority. But a Union which allows all diversity of usage found edifying: a Union consistent with perfect freedom is possible—viz., the Union found in the free, spontaneous gathering of souls at the common table of the Lord, all moved by a common contrition, a common

gratitude, a common trust, and a common hope. A union in this supreme act of worship of souls, diverse in views and in methods, is the sort of vital union which is possible, and the only sort compatible with the vigour of strong convictions and proper freedom. The body which insists most on the responsibility of the individual believer, is naturally the body which recognises the freedom that every believer needs in order to discharge his responsibility. So through Individualism we move to Unity. And claiming for every believer the franchise of every Christian Church, we leave room for differences of method, worship, and thought, such as would meet all tastes and all necessities, but none of them would be allowed to mar the unity of fellowship at the table of the Lord.

The limits imposed on this paper prevent my enlarging on other matters more congenial. The community to which I belong is dear to my heart for its services to the cause of truth, rendered by those who knew how to die rather than deny the truth, or practise a guilty silence.

The sufferings of our Baptist forefathers, and their sturdy faithfulness, have been amongst the most potent forces that have created English liberty. The historian of the free Churches of England—not a Baptist—remarks that “it is the singular and distinguished honour of all Baptists to have repudiated from their earliest history all coercive power over the conscience and the actions of men with reference to religion. No sentence is to be found in all their writings inconsistent with those principles of Christian liberty and willing-

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hood, which are now equally dear to all the free Congregational Churches of England.”¹

Our people are dear to us for their leadership in foreign missionary work, and for the glory of the success God has given to them. Our fathers' part in that emancipation of our West Indian slaves, which has led to the entire abolition of slavery in Christendom, was alike arduous, conspicuous, and honourable. So long as worth, courage, sacrifice, and usefulness in fathers are the glory of their children, so long will we be proud and grateful to own an ancestry so highly honoured as ours has been. We feel guilty of no schism, for *Schism is standing aloof from others in whom Christ dwells*, and we welcome all such to our fellowship, and claim the right to join with them at the table of the Lord.

We lament many weaknesses, unworthinesses, faults, but for our memories we are grateful, and our principles are in our judgment worthy of all acceptation. We catch in outward usage the fashions of the hour—in our Church music, in our phrasing of truth, in our Church architecture, in our forms of philanthropy. But, with our fathers, we hold clear and strong that the Church of Christ is the free gathering of souls awakened by God's Spirit to discern and to confess the beauty, the claims, and the Saviourship of our Divine Redeemer. We are God's freemen; we submit to Christ, but to no earthly master. Brothers of all who love Him we are content and thankful to be; but to own the pretensions of any to command or

¹ Skeats, p. 19.

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rule us, is something forbidden to us by our very faithfulness to Him. While the moon endureth, we shall claim freedom of thought and action for every Christian man, that thereby he may serve in worthier fashion and supreamer degree our Heavenly Master and our great High Priest.

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WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH

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REV. JOHN TELFORD, B.A.

IV

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH

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Rise and Progress of Methodism

THE position of Methodism in the world to-day is one of the marvels of ecclesiastical history. A hundred and sixty years have not passed since John Wesley stood in the open air at Bristol to carry on, with much heart-searching and sore reluctance, those open-air services, begun by his friend George Whitefield, which laid the foundation of the Methodist Societies. He had been strangely led to his field of work. Trained at Charterhouse School and Christ Church College, the polished classical scholar and keen logician had left his learned leisure as Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, to labour among the American Indians, but in the ends of the earth he had discovered his want of living faith, and had returned to England full of bitter accusations against himself as still a child of wrath and a stranger to the righteousness which is of faith. On his arrival in London the clouds gradually lifted. He found

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a wise spiritual guide in Peter Böhler, a young Moravian minister, and on May 24, 1738, was able to rejoice in "the forgiveness of sins." "I felt," he says, "my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation ; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."

This was Wesley's spiritual birthday. Up to this time he had been a zealous seeker after truth, and a devoted worker, yet he had no message for the multitude. Now his heart was fired, his lips were opened. He soon became the Evangelist of England, who travelled five thousand miles a year and preached more than forty thousand sermons. The story of his labours has been described as "the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned by man," and in that verdict there is no exaggeration. Wesley brought special gifts to his work as a religious leader. He was not only a scholar and a gentleman, whose very appearance and conversation acted as a social and intellectual stimulus wherever he moved, but he was also the prince of organisers. He was ready to learn from every one to the last day of his life. Methodism became, in his hands, a kind of providential mosaic, into which one piece after another was fitted with consummate tact and power of adaptation.

Charles Wesley gave Methodism that hymnology which deepened and conserved the spiritual influence of the field preaching, and made Methodist doctrine familiar to all its converts. Whitefield's enormous popularity also contributed

largely to the early success of the work, though his Calvinistic views soon led to a separation from his old friends.

The times were peculiarly fitted for the rise of Methodism. The Church of England was asleep ; Nonconformity had lost its fervour, and “seemed likely soon to be found nowhere but in books.” Wesley’s doctrines of free grace, personal salvation, and entire sanctification, gave Methodism a message for all the world. Before the veteran died, in 1791, his Societies numbered 71,668 members in Great Britain, 43,265 in the United States, 5300 on the mission field, with 294 ministers in Great Britain, 198 in the United States, and 19 missionaries. Such was the result of half a century of apostolic zeal and labour.

Several anxious years followed Wesley’s death. Methodism was divided into three parties. The Church party wished to draw still closer the links between the Societies and the Established Church ; the small but resolute dissenting party laboured to bring all such connexion to an end ; whilst the main body of Methodist members, who had been saved from ungodliness and neglect of religion through Wesley’s labours, had no quarrel with either Church or Dissent, but naturally desired and expected to find every means of grace where they had found the joy and blessedness of personal religion. The struggle centred round one question : Were the sacraments to be administered by the Preachers themselves to the Methodist people, or were the members to go to “church” to receive them. After four years of anxious debate, a Plan of Pacification was agreed upon in 1795. It was

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resolved that the Lord's Supper, Baptism, Burial of the Dead and service in Church hours should not be permitted unless the majority of trustees, stewards, and leaders of a chapel approved of this step, and assured the Conference that no separation was likely to ensue. In nearly a hundred places, where the Lord's Supper had already been peaceably administered, it was arranged that it should not be interfered with. This was really a great victory for the main body of the Methodist people, and though a sentimentalist may regret that the gulf between the Societies and the Church of England was widened, thoughtful men will see that this was really the only way in which Methodism could hope to train its people in the due observance of the sacraments. The Salvation Army, which fails to make provision for such observance within its own borders, points a very different moral.

Other measures, marked by the same statesmanship, sagacity, and prudence, laid the foundation for the peace and progress enjoyed during the first quarter of a century after Wesley's death. The gloomy forebodings with which many had waited for that event were not realised. By 1815 the number of members in Great Britain had become three times as great as in 1790, whilst in the United States Methodism had increased fivefold. The following table of general statistics will show that the progress has been steadily maintained during this century. Methodism is now the largest Protestant Church in the world, with 43,500 ministers, 99,392 lay preachers, 7,041,122 members, and more than 28,000,000

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adherents. In Great Britain it ranks next to the Church of England, whilst in the United States it heads the Protestant Churches with 32,369 ministers, 53,537 churches, 5,124,636 communicants. The Roman Catholics of the United States number 7,742,774 communicants, the Baptists 3,926,183.

General Statistics of Methodism

	Ministers and Probationers.	Members (including those on trial).
WESLEYAN METHODISTS—		
Great Britain	2,137	469,000
Ireland	231	27,576
Foreign Missions	400	52,058
French Conference	38	1,942
South African Conference . .	193	62,812
West Indian Conferences . .	108	50,365
Australasian Conferences . .	661	97,730
METHODIST NEW CONNEXION—		
England	185	33,932
Ireland	9	1,078
Missions	6	2,092
BIBLE CHRISTIANS—		
England	195	26,572
Australia, China, &c. . . .	100	7,732
PRIMITIVE METHODISTS—		
England, &c.	1,113	196,628
UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCHES—		
Home Districts	355	76,105
Foreign Districts	62	13,513
WESLEYAN REFORM UNION . .	16	7,400
INDEPENDENT METHODIST AND FREE GOSPEL CHURCHES		
	393	8,648
Carry forward	6,202	1,135,183

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Brought forward	6,202	1,135,183
UNITED STATES—		
Methodist Episcopal	17,026	2,766,656
Methodist Episcopal (South)	5,868	1,450,541
Union American Methodist Episc.	115	7,031
African Methodist Episcopal	4,365	599,141
African Union Meth. Prot. .	80	7,000
African Meth. Episc. Zion .	2,836	394,562
Methodist Protestant . . .	1,556	166,032
Wesleyan Methodist . . .	600	18,141
Congregational Methodist .	204	12,500
Congregational Meth. (Coloured)	5	319
New Congregational Methodist	20	1,200
Zion Union Apostolic . . .	30	2,346
Coloured Methodist Episcopal	1,297	170,718
Primitive Methodist . . .	70	6,340
Free Methodist	855	26,140
Independent Methodist . .	8	2,569
Evangelist Missionary . . .	87	4,600
CANADA—		
Methodist Church in Canada	2,054	272,392
<hr/>		
Totals	43,278	7,043,411

It is not only its numerical strength that bears witness to the providential place of Methodism among the Churches. Its ministers and people have never swerved from the doctrines which Wesley taught. There have been divisions and agitations on matters of organisation, but Methodism has never been rent by any dispute on doctrine. Every year in the annual Synods each minister must answer the question, "Does he believe and teach our doctrines?" Every year also the character of each minister is brought under review. No Church in Christendom has such safeguards for the purity of its pastorate or the soundness of the teaching given from its pulpits. Its ministers

have had little learned leisure, but they have always been moved by a strong desire to equip themselves as fully as possible for their work as public teachers. Wesley used often to gather a little company of his preachers together and read with them some book of philosophy or divinity. He thus inspired them with a thirst for reading which has never died out. The minister is the central pivot of the Methodist organisation. Wesley once said, with his usual sagacity, "Nothing will stand in the Methodist plan unless the preacher has his heart and his hand in it. Every preacher, therefore, should consider it is not his business to mind this or that thing only, but everything." That maxim is still steadily kept in view in all training for the ministry. Every candidate is first tested as a lay preacher. If he is found to possess "gifts, grace, and fruit," he is carefully trained in one of the colleges of his own Church. He must then pass through a four-years' probation before he is ordained for his lifework.

The Methodism of To-day

The Methodist Church of to-day is full of zeal and youthful vigour. The missionary income of English Methodism for 1896 was £127,858. The missions in New Zealand, Fiji, and the Friendly Islands have been transferred to the Australasian Conference. South Africa has now its own Conference, and two West Indian Conferences were formed in 1884. This policy of forming affiliated Conferences has robbed the parent Society of some of the results which were once shown in its re-

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port, but it has developed local resources, and is bearing good fruit. The Fijian people, who, at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign, were degraded cannibals, are now a nation of Methodists, who not only support their own ministers and schools, but raise more than £5000 a year for missionary work in New Guinea and other places. The range of operations conducted by the English Missionary Society is more limited than in former years; but, besides its Continental missions, work is carried on in India, Ceylon, Burmah, China, and Africa. The Hyderabad Mission is only seventeen years old, but it already has 4000 baptized Christians scattered over 134 villages, and strong missions have been planted in the chief cities of India. Ceylon is one of the oldest and most vigorous stations of the Society; and an encouraging beginning has been made in Burma since the fall of Theebaw. In China, besides the usual evangelistic work, there are hospitals in Fatshan, Hankow, and Teh Ngan, a blind school, high schools, and other departments of work. The number of members in the Sierra Leone, Lagos, and Gold Coast districts is 16,945, and the way is opening to the vast and populous heathen country which lies behind this fringe of Christian settlements. The Transvaal and Swaziland district is also making rapid advance. Here and in British Bechuanaland, Mashonaland, and Rhodesia, there is a great field of usefulness among the white settlers; whilst the Transvaal "affords a unique opportunity for evangelising the heathen, tens of thousands of whom, drawn from different tribes and distant parts of the country, are now employed in the mining industries." The

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Society was never doing better service in all parts of the world than it is doing to-day.

Some of the chief successes of present-day Methodism have been gained through its home missionary work. Not least encouraging has been the revival of Methodism in East Anglia. The reform agitation of 1849 had strewn the country with wreckage. A recent Home Missionary Report says:—"Many chapels and preaching-places had been lost, and what was left had gone from bad to worse in many places, after the wear and tear of forty years. About twenty village chapels had been closed, and many more were quite unworkable. They were monuments of decay. Debt, dirt, and dulness reigned. Indeed, so much hard and honest work had been expended without result that some of our wise men had come to think we had no proper sphere in the Eastern Counties." The late Home Missionary Secretary, the Rev. J. E. Clapham, set himself to grapple with this situation. He secured the appointment of ministers who were in sympathy with the Forward Movement. All the closed chapels, save one, have been reopened, and the work has been attended with unvarying success. Chapels have been built in places where there was no Nonconformity; Gospel cars have been sent through the county, and a flying brigade of cycling missionaries have visited many towns and villages, with the happiest results. Similar work has been done in many other parts of England. A spirit of enterprise and evangelistic zeal has been aroused, and village Methodism has, in many places, been completely transformed. The Rev. Thomas Champ-

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ness, with his Joyful News Mission, has had a large share in this revival.

More notable still has been the success gained in great centres of population. Twelve or thirteen years ago the state of some of the town chapels seemed almost hopeless. The tide of modern life had set towards the suburbs, and venerable sanctuaries, like Oldham Street, Manchester, and Oxford Place, Leeds, were well-nigh deserted. The appointment of the Rev. S. F. Collier to Manchester, and the Rev. Edward Smith to Clerkenwell, marked the beginning of a new era. No twelve years of Methodist history have been more notable than these years of the Forward Movement. Manchester heads the roll of honour. The Free Trade Hall is packed every Sunday evening, and the Grand Theatre has an overflowing congregation at its lantern services. About twelve thousand people attend the various services every Sunday night. There are 2500 Sunday-scholars, and 1200 men and women meeting in Bible-classes. The mission attracts the wrecks of humanity, and lays hold upon those who prey upon society, and are the despair of social reformers and statesmen. Their vast experience is enabling the workers to deal effectually with the appalling demoralisation of the people without destroying such traces of self-helpfulness as may survive. In this respect the mission has done marvels. One of its first principles is, that immediately any one is converted, some Christian work must be found for them. Each centre is thus transformed into a hive of workers. The list of a week's services, which may be seen in the report, brings this home

in a more impressive way than any formal description.

In London there are four chief central missions. The Rev. Peter Thompson, after twelve years' devoted toil in the East End, has ten mission halls, each of which is a radiating focus of Christian life and influence. The work has a dramatic interest. Some of the Sunday-scholars are the lowest and most needy waifs of the East End. They come to school without shoes or stockings, often with a minimum of clothing, yet it is wonderful how soon they learn to be reverent and orderly. Looking back over ten years Mr. Thompson finds a marked improvement in the condition of the East End. "There is far more hope and interest in life; far less coarse and blasphemous talk; far less fighting and low brutal life; far more general effort to secure personal cleanliness and decency in home life. The children are better cared for, and there is much more self-respect among the people." The missions in Clerkenwell and Southwark are retaining their hold on the artisans of London, and the smaller missions are full of life. The amount of suffering relieved by the sisters and the medical staff is beyond estimate. The West London Mission, under the superintendency of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, is grappling with vice and sin in its chief seat. In the vast area embraced by the mission the problem of house rent has to be faced in its most acute form. Drinking saloons abound. In one district, less than a quarter of a mile square, near the Cleveland Hall branch, there are seventy-seven public-houses, nineteen hotels, thirty-nine

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restaurants, thirty-five dining-rooms. Public-houses sometimes have as many as eleven entrances, and one landlord boasted that at busy hours each of his barmaids took about a pound a minute. Within five minutes' walk of St. James's Hall there are said to be five hundred houses of ill-fame known to the police. The services at St. James's Hall, conducted by the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse and Mr. Hughes, draw great congregations, and every form of social and Christian work is in full operation. Mothers' meetings, Sunday-schools, boys' and girls' clubs, are in vigorous operation; teas are given to the inmates of the workhouses. There is a Home for fallen women, and St. Luke's House provides a retreat for the dying poor.

Similar work is being done in nearly every great city of the kingdom. The Rev. Charles Garrett has just issued his twenty-first report of the Liverpool Mission. Its eight chapels and halls have become centres of religious and social work in some of the worst parts of that city. Birmingham, Nottingham, Hull, Cardiff, Leicester, Coventry, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Sunderland, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and many other towns have flourishing missions. The Bermondsey Settlement and the Leysian Mission are doing fruitful work. Sisters of the people and deaconesses are taking a foremost part in the modern revival of Methodism.

There are more than 22,000 declared Wesleyans in the army and navy, of whom 1480 are Church members. 195 ministers are wholly or in part devoted to the care of Methodist soldiers and

sailors in all parts of the world. Twenty-seven Homes have been provided, at a cost of £34,024. These supply 435 beds, and by social and Christian work exert a growing influence among the men. The Military Church and Home at Aldershot form a splendid group of buildings, and there is a parade service of about four hundred soldiers. At Portsmouth the chaplain has more than a thousand sailors under his care. The zealous labour of the Rev. R. W. Allen, and his regiment of chaplains, is bearing notable fruit.

Dr. Bowman Stephenson, the Methodist apostle of waifs and strays, has devoted more than a quarter of a century to orphan and destitute children. He now has about a thousand of them under his care, whilst another thousand are being helped and protected in various ways. £20,000 is subscribed for his work every year, and of this a considerable part comes from the Sunday-schools of Methodism. Besides the headquarters in London there are Homes in Edgworth, Gravesend, New Oscott, the Isle of Man, Canada, and other places. Dr. Stephenson hopes to be able to do something for workhouse children, so that no child of Methodist or Nonconformist parents may be allowed to sink into the pauper ranks or wear the pauper uniform. Methodism has taken a large part in the education of the people. It has 786 day schools with 173,000 scholars, and two of the most efficient colleges for training day schoolmasters and mistresses in the whole country. Good middle class schools have also been set up in various parts of the country. There are 7139 Sunday-schools, with 965,201 scholars

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and 131,145 teachers. The annual income of Methodist funds in this country probably exceeds £1,500,000.

The Methodism of England is but a fraction of Ecumenical Methodism. In the United States alone it has more than five millions of communicants, "the vast majority of whom," as Dr. Buckley has pointed out, "have been received by conversion. The influence which has led so great a multitude to affiliate with Methodism is the power of the fundamental principles of Christianity as taught and preached by it, the attractiveness of the services, and the hand-to-hand conflicts waged by pastors and people against the powers of darkness.

"By its stimulus and example it has powerfully affected other religious bodies, with resulting modifications in their spirit and methods in preaching, singing, exhortation, lay co-operation, and revivals. By the number of attendants at other churches who were converted among Methodists, and returned to their former associations carrying this spirit, and by the countless revivals kindled by their zeal which have spread through entire communities, much has been contributed to the vitality, and consequently to the permanent growth, of other religious denominations. Ministers who have changed their views and entered other Christian Churches, carrying with them the peculiar zeal and working plans of Methodism, have contributed a similar influence, which a large proportion of those who have been the subjects of it have gladly acknowledged."¹

¹ A History of Methodists in the United States, p. 683.

In whatever part of the world Methodism is found she is full of youthful vigour. She is the youngest among the great Churches of the world; and, judging from the signs of life, spiritual, social, intellectual among both preachers and people, she is only as yet in her cradle, with her mightiest toils and triumphs yet to come.

Influence of Methodism on other Churches

There is, however, a still larger sphere in which the influence of Methodism may be traced. The Methodist leaven in other Churches is working mightily. No Church in these days has any monopoly of zeal or evangelical fervour; but much of the fire has been caught from Methodist altars. Simeon, Venn, Wilberforce, and other noted leaders of the Church of England, owed much to Methodist teaching and example. Some of the greatest Nonconformist preachers of our century have rejoiced to acknowledge their debt to Wesley and his successors. Dr. Dale bore his witness to this in a noble tribute delivered at the Wesley Centenary in 1891. He showed that Nonconformity owes no small debt to Methodism. "William Jay, of Bath, discovered the glory and grace of the Christian redemption at a Methodist service. My colleague and predecessor, John Angell James, did not attribute his religious decision to Methodist preaching; but he says in his autobiography, that when a boy at Blandford, the only religious fire in the town was among the Methodists; he was taken by his mother to the Methodist meetings on Sunday nights, and there was a touch of Methodism in

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him to the very last. He always smelled of that fire. Thomas Raffles, of Liverpool, in his early life, was a member of the Wesleyan Society. John Leifchild, of Craven, was originally one of your local preachers. The great revival which originated Methodism, restored life, vigour, courage, fervour to the Congregational Churches of England." Dr. Stoughton's father and mother, grandfather and grandmother, were all Methodists. Dr. Parker gained experience as a Methodist local preacher. Mr. Spurgeon was led to Christ by a Primitive local preacher. Dan Taylor, the Yorkshire miner, who founded the New Connexion of General Baptists in 1770, was converted under Wesley's preaching.

Dean Farrar, then Canon of Westminster, said at the same gatherings: "I say that even now I do not think we have done sufficient honour to the work which Wesley did. Consider the fact that he gave an impulse to all missionary exertion—the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society, the London Missionary Society. Even the Church Missionary Society owes much to his initiative. The work of education and the work of ragged schools—the work of Robert Raikes, the Gloucester printer, and John Pounds, the Portsmouth cobbler—were partly anticipated when the sainted Silas Told taught at the Foundery. Wesley was the first to encourage the cheap press, with all its stupendous results; he was the first to make common in England the spread of religious education; he was a pioneer of funeral reform. Besides all these things, he was the inaugurator of prison reform, for he visited prisons

and sought to improve them long before John Howard made that his special work ; and the very last letter he ever wrote was a letter written to Wilberforce, to spur him on and encourage him in his brilliant advocacy of emancipation for the slaves. We may therefore feelingly endorse the estimate of one who said that almost everything in the religious history of modern days was foreshadowed by John Wesley. Wesley was the first man who revived the spirit of religion among the masses of the people, and who roused the slumbering Church. His was the voice that first offered the great masses of the people hope for the despairing, and welcome to the outcast ; and his work is continued under changed forms, not only in the founding of the great Wesleyan community, but also in the evangelical movement in the Church of England itself ; and even at this moment in the enthusiasm for humanity which is shown by the poor, humble, and despised Salvationists."

Even more suggestive is the tribute of two great historians. Mr. J. R. Green says : "The Methodists themselves were the least result of the Methodist revival. Its action upon the Church broke the lethargy of the clergy." Mr. Lecky bears this testimony to the movement : "The creation of a large, powerful, and active sect, extending over both hemispheres, and numbering many millions of souls, was but one of its consequences. It also exercised a profound and lasting influence upon the spirit of the Established Church, and upon the amount and distribution of the moral forces of the nation, and even upon the course of its political history." Such words are an inspira-

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tion to Methodist workers. They show that the influence of our teaching and example has spread far beyond our own borders. We have links to all Churches, friends in all Churches, children in all Churches, and we can trace, in the care for the destitute and the prisoner, in the quickening of zeal, in the softening of beliefs, in the stress placed on personal religious experience, and in the growing search for real holiness, some of the abiding effects of the Evangelical Revival.

Methodist Doctrine and Organisation

Methodism has always held fast to the central doctrine of the Reformation—justification by faith. Wesley maintained that his teaching was at all points in harmony with the Articles of the Church of England. His long spiritual struggle led him to lay peculiar emphasis on the truth, that every Christian might enjoy that assurance of acceptance with God which he himself had found whilst Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans was being read at a meeting in Aldersgate Street. He showed that every believer in Christ was entitled to expect the witness of the Spirit. This he defined as "an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God." This experience inspired Methodism with courage to face the mob, and made it bold to declare Christ to the most ignorant and degraded.

Wesley set a high standard of Christian life before his people. He knew that the only way by which they would be able to hold fast what they had already received was to grow in grace and knowledge. He taught that when a man was justified sanctification began, and that this work was carried on till the Christian was "sanctified throughout in spirit, soul, and body." With him Christian perfection was love—"the humble, gentle, patient love of God and our neighbour, ruling our tempers, words, and actions."

The first Methodists felt that they had a message for the whole world. The Wesleys were early constrained to separate themselves from their friend Whitefield, who had adopted strong Calvinistic views. They felt that their vocation would be gone if they had not a gospel of grace and mercy for every sinner. Charles Wesley thus expressed the feeling of himself and his brother—

"And shall I, Lord, confine Thy love
As not to others free?
And may not every sinner prove
The grace that found out *me*?

Doom them an endless death to die,
From which they could not flee;
O Lord, thine inmost bowels cry
Against the dire decree!"

Despite its evangelical teaching, Methodism would never have become such a power for good had it not given a new meaning to the foundation principle of Christian fellowship, and brought opportunities for enjoying that great means of grace within the reach of all its converts.

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For many years before he began his career as an Evangelist, Wesley had found the blessing of frequent converse with Christian friends. After the field preaching began, he was gradually led to form classes under the care of leaders, which met every week for spiritual conversation and prayer. He soon discovered that here was the missing link. He says, "It can scarce be conceived what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to 'bear one another's burdens,' and 'naturally to care for each other.' As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for, each other."

A Society was formed wherever the Wesleys or their preachers went, and by this means the good impressions made under the preaching were deepened, and the converts were held firmly together. Methodism has been built up by its class-meetings. Modifications in the method of conducting these meetings are being introduced, and a general feeling is springing up that this is not altogether the best way of numbering our adherents; yet the need of such gatherings, and the blessings to be derived from them, are as manifest as in any previous stage of Methodist history. Changes may come, but not changes that will in any way discredit the class-meeting or weaken its hold on the Methodist people.

After Wesley's death, the Conference succeeded to his powers as the ruling body of the Connexion. Down to the year 1878 it was entirely composed of

ministers. In that year a Representative Session, made up of 240 ministers and 240 laymen, was constituted, and to this all business not affecting ministerial character or pastoral work is committed. The Conference is the Supreme Court for the Connexion. It owes its power to Wesley's Deed of Declaration, and every question affecting the reception of candidates for the ministry, the character and appointment of ministers, or the administration of connexional funds devolves on it, either in its Pastoral or Representative Session. No ecclesiastical body has such powers as the Methodist Conference. It is the final Court of Appeal, the legislative and governing body for the whole Connexion, and is invested with plenary powers over every minister and every circuit. The advantage of a compact and well-knit organisation are manifest in every department of Methodist work. Town centres have clusters of villages around them. The strong Churches have been taught to help the weak, and all are welded together into one great body. Methodism knows nothing of the interregnum which saps the strength of many a Nonconformist Church on the death or removal of its pastor. When one minister is taken away another steps into the pulpit, and the machinery moves on without a jar.

No Church has developed lay influence, and enlisted lay helpers, as Methodism has done. Wesley's class-leaders became his lay pastorate; his stewards bore the burden of finance. It is the constant aim of Methodism to make all its people take their full share in Church work. Nowhere is this characteristic more marked than in regard to

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lay preaching. I have shown in "A History of Lay Preaching" (C. H. Kelly, 1897), that Wesley was the first to exalt lay preaching into a definite institution, with carefully fixed rules. It would have been quite impossible for the Wesleys to overtake the opportunities for usefulness which opened before them on every hand, had they not secured a splendid band of lay helpers as their allies. The Methodist preachers have long since taken ministerial rank, but they are supported by something like nineteen thousand lay preachers, who conduct religious services in town and country. These are picked men who serve their apprenticeship on the Plan, pass an examination in theology, and submit themselves to the discipline of Methodism. A finer body of workers no Church ever possessed. Village Methodism would have been impossible but for these lay preachers. In America and the Colonies they have done unspeakable service as pioneers and helpers. All Churches are following in the wake of Methodism in the development of lay preaching and influence. It is certainly high time that such steps were taken.

Speaking at his Diocesan Conference on November 5, 1895 (see *Guardian*, November 6), Bishop Ryle dwelt at some length on "The Rights of the Laity." He called attention to the unsatisfactory position of lay Churchmen in the present day, and said, "As for a Church in which the clergy acted alone, settled everything, decided everything, judged everything, and managed everything, and the laity had no voice at all, I cannot find the shadow of such a thing in the Acts or Epistles of

the New Testament." He said, "To my eyes, it seems that in the regular working of the Church of England, almost everything is left in the hands of the clergy. In all this there is no intentional slight. Not the smallest reflection is implied on the trustworthiness and ability of the laity. But from one cause or another they are left out in the cold, passive recipients, and not active members in a huge ecclesiastical corporation; sleeping partners, and not working agents, in an unwieldy and ill-managed concern. In short, in the normal action of the Church of England, lay Churchmen have been left on a siding, like soldiers not wanted. They have fallen out of the ranks, retired to the rear, and sunk out of sight." He added: "The position of the English laity is nothing more nor less than a rag and remnant of Popery. It is part of that *damnosa hæreditas* which Rome has bequeathed to our Church, and which has never been completely purged away."

The Church of England is awaking to the fact that her laymen have a great work to do in reaching the masses, and nothing but good can come from that extension of lay service, both to the Church of England herself and to our common Christianity. Meanwhile Methodism is doing more than she ever did for the training of her lay preachers. The Rev. Thomas Champness is devoting his strength to this work, valuable handbooks and magazines are being issued, conventions and examinations held, and books provided. Methodism is still leading the van in this great movement, but the lay preacher is gaining a

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recognised status in communions which had long closed their doors against him.

The Three Years' Term, and other Questions

The burning question in Methodism during the last few years has been the extension of the 'Three Years' term of ministerial service. The Methodist people are very conservative on some points. They know that a change of ministry secures a fresh current of thought and brings an element of novelty and of brightness into circuit life. The ministers form a brotherhood, all teach the same doctrine, all are familiar with the administration of circuit affairs. Change is made easy, for there is no interval of unrest and unsettlement. Each man has his own method of presenting truth and his own way of enlisting help, so that there is a variety about Methodist circuit life which is congenial to many minds. The change is also made as light as possible for the minister, who finds a furnished house prepared in his new charge and a circle of friends ready to welcome him. These are manifest advantages, and it will be no easy matter to persuade hundreds of Societies and of Boards of Trustees to meddle with an arrangement which has worked so well. The ministers themselves are quite as conservative as the people. They have adjusted themselves and their methods of work to the present system; they find that Churches which have no limit of ministerial service change their pastors almost as frequently as is done in Methodism, and they

naturally hesitate to step out into a kind of unknown world.

Yet, despite such considerations, some modification of the term seems necessary in the interests of the work. The conspicuous successes of the last few years have been gained where the itinerancy has been modified in favour of the great town missions. The means by which such extension has been secured are really evasions of the Deed of Declaration, and even those who welcome every evasion as a step towards future modification, feel that such a course is not altogether dignified. A wise extension of the term would put the circuits on a fair footing as compared with the town missions, and would enable a Methodist minister to build up for the benefit of his people something like a local influence. It would permit him to initiate and carry out schemes for the extension of Methodism, which a man does not see his way to formulate until he has gained some local experience, and does not wish to launch when his own time of service in a circuit is drawing to a close. It is also probable that the character of Methodist preaching, though it is confessedly of so high a standard as compared with the average preaching in other Churches, would be raised if a minister had to give more time and study to his pulpit work. It is said that the country circuits would lose all the best men by this extension of the term, but if a man were allowed to stay in a country place where he had got hold of his people, he would often prefer to do so, and the extension of the term might mean the permanent uplifting of such a circuit. Wesley himself deliberately excepted

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any clergyman of the Church of England from the operation of the three years' limit, and no one will say that a Methodist minister is not as well equipped for such a lengthened ministry as the clergyman of Wesley's day.

The practical difficulties are no doubt very great. An Act of Parliament would be necessary to modify the clause of Wesley's Deed of Declaration, and this could not be obtained unless there were practical unanimity of opinion. Such unanimity cannot be said to exist at present, and there are not many signs to encourage those who are eager for the extension. A decisive majority of the Synods held in May 1897, declared against further agitation of the question, and, in view of all the circumstances, the Conference of 1897 accepted the recommendation of the committee that had been considering the question during the year, that no steps should be taken "to promote an application to Parliament for an Act to repeal or modify the eleventh clause of the Deed Poll." The committee was discharged, and the outlook for those who desire the change is depressing. For the time the question is shelved, but Methodism has grown into a vast system, and the more scope it allows for the exercise of various gifts in various ways, the more likely is it to become a mighty national Free Church.

One of the chief obstacles to the growth of the ministerial strength of Methodism lies in the fact, that after a circuit has had a young minister for four years, it must take a married minister in his place and furnish him with a house. If means could be devised by which this difficulty might be

obviated, and a second order of ministers secured who could administer the sacraments and have ministerial status whilst content to receive £100 a year, Methodism would call out three hundred men of this stamp in a twelvemonth, and secure a pastoral oversight over country Societies, which is now almost impossible. We have material to our hand in the great corps of lay agents, but the problem is beset with difficulties. The man who could discover some wise method of meeting this need would be one of the greatest benefactors of Methodism.

The attitude of our Church is conservative, yet it is also progressive. There have always been two parties in the Connexion. Charles Wesley was deeply distressed by some developments of his day. When his brother ordained ministers for America and for England, he pleaded that he should be allowed to go to the grave before the bridge between the Societies and the Church of England was quite broken down. Greatly to John Wesley's regret, he refused to be buried at City Road, because the ground there was unconsecrated. We have seen the struggle that arose between the two parties after Wesley's death, and have noted the victory of a wise liberal policy. Happily for Methodism, the conservative element has always asserted itself. It has given stability to the system, and made rash advance impossible. Yet no one can doubt that the general trend of Methodism is progressive. The history of the last thirty years abundantly demonstrates this. Dr. Stephenson's noble work among children, the foundation of the Leys School under Dr. Moulton at Cambridge, the

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growth of middle-class schools in various parts of the country, the formation of the Wesleyan Sunday-school Union, the beginning of the successful town missions, the formation of the Representative Conference in 1878, the addition of representative lay members to the District Synods—these are only a few of the signs of progress which have marked the last quarter of a century. There is no doubt that the first quarter of the twentieth century will see further progress. Those who complain that we do not move more quickly must remember that there is a certain natural fear of change in Methodism, and that it has in recent years been moving so fast that there is a strong desire for quiet, and, above all, for an end to the agitation which disturbs so many minds. But though it is well to remember the motto, *Festina lente*, and to take care lest people of more conservative temper are estranged from Methodism, there can be no real rest in a growing system which is every day deepening and spreading abroad its influence as is the case of the Methodist Church of England.

As to Church worship, Methodism has never aimed at uniformity. The Morning Prayer of the Church of England, or Wesley's abridgment of that form, has been used in some of the chapels ever since her founder's day. A few years ago a Methodist Prayer-book, containing a revised form of Morning Prayer with the Psalms from the Authorised Version, and a book of Offices, was issued by the Book Room. This is used in many places, but the great body of the Methodist people prefer a simpler, non-liturgical service.

There is no stereotyped form of worship, so that each congregation may follow its own inclination as to the kind of service it prefers. The Methodist Hymn-Book is its real liturgy, linking it to the stirring days of the evangelical revival.

Reunion

The day for reunion with the Church of England has long since gone by. Wesley hoped that his people would never snap the links that bound them to the communion which he loved. High Church critics are constantly reminding us of his words: "When the Methodists leave the Church of England, God will leave them." But Methodism has simply followed the lines on which Wesley set it moving. He ordained some of his preachers, and gave them power to administer the sacraments. Lord Mansfield pronounced this to be separation, and there is no doubt that he was right. Methodism had grown too big for absorption at Wesley's death, and it has certainly been a blessing to the religious life of England that she has preserved her independence of the Anglican Church. There is absolutely no hope of reunion with the Church of England as a whole. There are multitudes of Methodists who feel that there is less to be said for extreme Ritualism than for Roman Catholicism; and greatly as they honour the zeal of many High Church clergymen, they would not dream for a moment of anything like reunion with a Church which allows such teaching. If the evangelical party of the Church of England could be set free from State control, and separated

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from the extreme High Church section, a union with Methodism might be possible, but it could only be on a basis of equality. No Methodist preacher would allow doubt to be thrown on his own orders. To state the case clearly is enough to show that reunion here is altogether out of the question. Nor is there any hope of union with other branches of Nonconformity, though there is a growing spirit of brotherhood. Reunion among the various Methodist bodies is a more open question. Some steps have been taken in this direction. In Ireland the little body of Primitive Wesleyans, who separated from the original stock in 1816, because it had been resolved that the sacraments should be administered in Wesleyan chapels, returned to the old fold in 1878. The disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1870 had so altered their position that the leading ministers and laymen expressed a strong desire to be united to the parent body. An Act of Parliament was without difficulty obtained, which provided for the transfer of the chapels, and the alteration of the trusts. But though there is one undivided Methodism in Ireland, a heavy price had to be paid for union. Out of the seven thousand members of the Primitive Wesleyans, less than four thousand came over, yet all their ministers had to be provided for. The financial burdens have proved very heavy. A large fund had to be raised to meet the necessities of the case, and even this has not prevented serious financial difficulties. In Canada the New Connexion Methodists joined the Wesleyan Methodists in 1873, and ten years later all the other bodies of Metho-

dists came in, so that there is now one United Methodist Church in Canada. Many causes contributed to the success of this great stroke of Methodist reunion, and it is now possible to avoid overlapping, and secure concentration in Church work.

The reunion of the various Methodist bodies in England would be a formidable task. The financial problems involved are more serious than any Methodism has ever had to face. There are also differences as to ministerial status in the various bodies, the standards of education and culture vary greatly, and innumerable problems would arise which would tax the resources of the united Church for a quarter of a century. It is quite conceivable that if the various Methodist Churches were unanimous, and heartily unanimous, in desiring this reunion, an enormous amount of overlapping might be avoided, and for every chapel closed in one village, another might be opened in some spot as yet untouched by Methodism. But reunion at best is a dream of the future. It is folly to attempt to hasten it. Such a movement must be the result of clear and deliberate conviction on the part of both ministers and laity, and the best way to bring it about is to cultivate a friendly spirit, and let each Church avoid anything that might make reunion more difficult in the future. The Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians seem approaching the verge of union, though it is evident that many difficulties are making themselves felt. It is worth while also to note that the German Missions of the British Conference have just been transferred to the

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Methodist Episcopal Church of America, which has a strong and flourishing work in Germany. Methodist union of this kind is going on all over the world, and ought to bear much fruit in the course of a generation. The Rev. H. J. Pope, D.D., who has just been appointed Home Missionary Secretary in succession to the Rev. J. E. Clapham, recently described himself as a strong advocate of Methodist union, and said that for a long time he had been doing all that he could to promote it. It is pleasant to add that the friendly feeling among the various branches of the Methodist family is deepening every day.

Dr. Rigg¹ shows that "The most vital question is whether the Societies, which by a decree of union between the two Churches would have to be fused with each other, and the circuits which would have to admit new Societies and additional preachers and chapels into union with themselves, are prepared to accept and to carry into effect the proposed union. . . . Whatever resolutions might be adopted by Conferential majorities, there are hundreds of Societies which, with their local history and local knowledge, would regard with dismay, and with a sense of grievous and oppressive injustice, any attempt to compel their union in the same close spiritual fellowship and the same ecclesiastical home with other Societies, with whose members, nevertheless, as neighbours of other Christian denominations, they live on terms of cordial friendliness." Each Connexion, as Dr. Rigg shows, would have to receive a large number of ministers who had not been accepted

¹ Church Organisation, p. 323.

or trained for its ministry, whose standard and style of preaching had been formed under conditions more or less foreign, and who had been accustomed to administer a discipline differing more or less in its principles. Dr. Rigg holds that there is grave reason for thinking that re-union would not mean strength. "Who can doubt that there not only are, but are always likely to be, many persons who are unable to distinguish between the sphere of religious and of political organisation, who must carry their political instincts, sympathies, tendencies, with them into their Church meetings and arrangements of every description? If there are such men, is it better that they should remain conflictingly mixed up in one Church with those who distinguish sharply between ecclesiastical and political organisations and agencies, or that they should be united in communities organised after their own heart? Is it not the fact, again, that there is another class of Methodists, and a very large class, who cannot endure to breathe a political atmosphere, and to be pursued by political ideas and aims, in connection with spiritual agencies and worship and enterprises, and of whom many, if they could not find a peaceable habitation in a non-political Methodist Church, would undoubtedly retreat from the sounds of political or quasi-political agitation, or exhortation, or insinuation, or discourse, or allusion, into the shelter of the Church of England? Is it wise, by insisting on a fusion of all Methodist bodies, to distress these peaceful and simple-hearted (perhaps at the same time able and cultivated) experimental Christians of the ancient Methodist type,

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and to drive many of them out of Methodism altogether?"

But if reunion seems more or less remote, the Free Church movement is uniting the Nonconformist bodies in a way of which our fathers never dreamed. Methodism has taken a considerable part in that movement, and it would have taken a still larger part had not some natural fear of political controversy stood in the way. It is acknowledged to be "particularly important that the Council should keep clear of politics," but in this day it is impossible to tell where politics end and religious and social questions begin. Methodist ministers have always made it a point of honour to keep themselves free from party strife, and many of them are not yet at home in a Free Church Council, though they welcome every approach to brotherhood among the Nonconformist Churches.

Why I am a Methodist

I am asked to add some personal reasons why I am a Wesleyan Methodist. It is natural to reply, Because it is the Church of my fathers. Two or three generations of Methodist blood in his veins must make any one feel a peculiar loyalty to the Church to which himself and his kindred owe so vast a debt. But to come to broader grounds. I am a Methodist because Methodist doctrine seems to me to come nearest to the teaching of the New Testament. It has three salient features: Salvation for all; a personal sense of Acceptance with God; a continual pursuit of Holiness of heart and life.

BY THE REV. JOHN TELFORD

It is not so easy for our generation to understand what Wesley's Arminianism meant in days when Calvinism seemed to have entrenched itself in the religious life of England. It gave him a message for the world, and sent him and his preachers out to win multitudes of converts among the most degraded classes of their day. Methodism was the Church of the common salvation, and it is her glory that she has not only offered a free Gospel to all men, but that she has inspired other Churches with her own spirit.

Wesley, however, not only declared a common salvation, but he taught that every man who believed in Christ might enjoy the witness of personal acceptance. He thus brought to an end the bondage of doubt and uncertainty in which multitudes of good men and women were living, and led his converts out into a new world. One prayer was put on the lips of the true penitent—

“ And let my sprinkled conscience know
Thy sweet forgiving love.”

The soul that tasted this peace soon began to glow with love to the unsaved. This was the missionary grace which lit all the fires of zeal in the soul and made every convert a labourer for others.

The topstone of Wesley's system was entire sanctification. That pursuit of holiness lifted life into a kind of guest of the Holy Grail. The path became brighter, the consecration more complete, till body, soul, and spirit, were given to Christ. Such teaching a hundred and sixty years ago shows what a gift of God Methodism was to England and to America. The doctrinal basis of our

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Church, as found in Wesley's Fifty-Three Sermons and Notes on the New Testament, is the most catholic and the most free from irksome restriction of any creed in Christendom. There is ample room for freedom of personal thought, and neither Wesley himself, nor the Conference which has succeeded to his place, has ever interpreted the standards with rigorous literalism. Wesley expected his preachers to be faithful to the great evangelical doctrines which he taught, but he gave them abundant liberty. He instructed Joseph Benson to reply to one of his critics: "I never undertook to defend every sentence of Mr. Wesley's. He does not expect or desire it. He wishes me and every man to think for himself." There is a fine air of tolerance in Methodism which blends well with its loyalty to evangelical truth. That is one strong reason for the personal attachment both people and preachers feel to the system.

The polity of Methodism commends itself to those who have grown familiar with its working as one of the finest systems the world has seen. The various circuits are bound together into a vast Connexion. No place stands alone. The strong help the weak, and are abundantly repaid for every sacrifice they make to nurse and sustain struggling causes. Wesley was the wise master-builder of this system. He had that great gift of God—an open mind. A paragraph from my "Life of John Wesley" may bring out this feature of his character.

"Lord Macaulay's judgment that Wesley possessed as great a genius for government as Richelieu is repeated on every hand. No great statesman

ever watched the course of public opinion more carefully than Wesley watched the course of events in Methodism. He did not think out a system and force it on his people. There is no special evidence of inventive power in Wesley's administration. He himself speaks of his want of any plan for financial matters. His rule over the united Societies owed its success to the fact that he was always availing himself of the fresh light which experience gave. Methodist organisation was a gradual growth. Local experiments which approved themselves in practice were introduced into all the Societies. Leaders, stewards, and lay-preachers, the main instruments in spreading and conserving the effects of the Evangelical Revival, were all the fruit of this growth. Wesley did not set his heart on such means, but when circumstances suggested them he saw their vast advantages, and soon incorporated them into his system. This method Wesley pursued from the beginning of the Revival to the last day of his life. It is the most marked feature of his work. One might almost say that he never looked a day before him. He sometimes laid himself open to the charge of slackness in dealing with such disturbers as George Bell, but he was never willing to move till the way was plain. His field-preaching, his chapel-building, his calling out preachers, and his Deed of Declaration all supply illustrations of this spirit. Methodist polity and Methodist finance were built up step by step. No man had a more candid mind than Wesley. He learned from every one, and was learning till the last day of his life. Such a spirit in the leader gave confidence to

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preachers and people. Charles Wesley would have forced Methodism into his own groove, and have shattered it to pieces in the attempt. His brother was willing to leave his cause in the hands of God, and to wait for the unfolding of events which should mark His will. No cause was ever more happy in its head; no people ever loved their chief as the early Methodists loved John Wesley."

Methodism has been true to the spirit of its founder. Its history in all parts of the world is a history of adaptation to the needs of the special time and place. In the United States it has its bishops and presiding elders, who have helped to secure for Methodism its commanding position in the New World. The whole history of Methodism is a study of development; and if people and preachers keep an open mind and avoid angry agitation, the future will witness adaptations to environment which will make Methodism a still mightier force in the life of the world. The British Conference has vast powers, and it may be trusted to use them wisely.

One other reason for loyalty to Methodism may be added. No Church has such a hold on its laity. They have opportunities of work which no other communion offers. They take their part in all the consultations and responsibilities of circuit life. The class-leaders form a lay pastorate, and render great service in shepherding the flock. A vigilant oversight of every member is thus made possible, and with the happiest results. No one can be proposed as a candidate for the ministry till the laymen of the circuit have expressed their approval

of his character and his abilities. The people invite their own ministers, fix their allowances, administer trust-estates and finance. They take an important part in the synods and in the connexional committees which manage the Home and Foreign Missions of the Church, and also in the great board which directs the affairs of the theological colleges. They have a large place in the deliberations of Conference. There is no room for rivalry between ministers and laymen. The laymen are jealous of everything that affects the independence of their ministry, and wish them to be free to maintain godly discipline. An educated and high-toned ministry lifts a whole Church. The laymen of Methodism see this clearly, and are prepared to make any reasonable sacrifice to obtain it. But there is no sacerdotal spirit in Methodism, and there is no room for any.

These are some of the reasons why Methodism has such a hold on the affectionate loyalty of its people and its ministers. They are proud of its past, they are thankful for its present position at home and abroad, its zeal, its learning, its hold on the people, and they are full of hope for the future. Methodism is even yet in its cradle, and its adherents are confident that no Church is more needed by the world, or more likely to do a full share in that great work for which all Churches exist—the preaching of Christ, and the gathering of souls into living fellowship with Him.

THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

BY
THOMAS HODGKIN, D.C.L., Ph.D.

V

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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Past History. First Period, 1648-1689

I AM invited to describe, as accurately as I can, the present position of the Society of Friends as a religious body ; but I feel that it is hardly possible to do this without some allusion, however brief, to its unique but varied history in the past.

It is generally known that the "Society of Friends," in scorn called Quakers, owed their origin to the preaching of a Leicestershire peasant, named George Fox. Attention, however, has hardly been sufficiently directed to the peculiar condition of the religious mind of England at the time when he began his mission, or to the nature of the doctrines against which his preaching was a protest. He was born in 1624, and his boyhood was therefore passed during the period of religious repression which marked the eleven years when Charles I., Laud, and Strafford ruled England without a Parliament. Already, however, when Fox was but fifteen years of age, the first war between Charles and the Scots had heralded the downfall

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of Episcopal power. During the seven years that followed, there was more or less continuous war in one part or another of the British islands, and during all that time the once oppressed and persecuted Puritan party was more and more gaining the upper hand in the State as well as in the Church. These clamorous years, during which power and wealth were flowing in upon the Ironsides of Cromwell, and as an inevitable result were causing the hypocrite and the time-server to enlist side by side with the saint and the martyr, were the years of Fox's young manhood. The Episcopalian was down; the Papist was proscribed; Calvinism, in one form or another, was dominant, and all who would climb into the high places of the world must speak in its vocabulary. There was something in this hard militant Calvinism, using as it often did Old Testament precedents to settle the line of duty for a Christian man in the seventeenth century, which jarred upon the sensitive soul of Fox, who was undergoing one of those prolonged spiritual struggles through which many a saint and philosopher has had to pass before attaining to peace. He emerged from this conflict at rest in his own soul, but persuaded that he had a divine commission to go forth and preach doctrines concerning the spiritual nature of the Christian dispensation and the universal light of Christ in the souls of all men, which inevitably brought him into collision with the ruling authorities in Church and State—as much with the Presbyterian pastor of the parish church as with the Independent colonel who expounded the Word to his regiment of dragoons.

Hence it came to pass that for the first thirteen years of the existence of the Society of Friends (years of rapid and wide extension under the preaching, not only of Fox himself, but of Burroughs, Naylor, Whitehead, and many others), their opposition was chiefly directed against the various churches and sects which went by the generic name of Puritan. With the representatives of these Churches in later days—the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists—their relations have now for many generations been friendly and even cordial; but the earliest history of Quakerism cannot be rightly understood except by him who recognises the fact that such was not the state of things in the infancy of the Society.

In 1660, Charles II. was restored to the throne of his ancestors, and soon gave evidence, by his utter disregard of the promises of religious toleration contained in the Declaration of Breda, how little faith any man could repose in the pledged word of a Stuart. For a generation the Quakers suffered, in common with all the other Protestant Nonconformists, under the disgraceful persecution inflicted by Tory squires and High Church parsons, a persecution in which it is only fair to say that the Parliament was far more zealous than the king. The short breathing time which Protestant Dissenters obtained from James II.'s Declaration of Indulgence was, however, a prelude to the blessed rest from persecution (by no means yet equality of civil rights) which was secured to them by the Toleration Act of 1689.

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1689
Second Period, ~~1489~~—1790

With this Act, passed a little more than a year before the death of George Fox, what may be termed the Middle Ages of Quakerism began. The once-despised sectaries had won the battle against all the power of the state. Their meetings could no longer be broken up by the military; their marriages, at which no priest officiated, were recognised as binding ceremonies; their simple affirmation was accepted instead of an oath in the courts of justice. When thousands of their members were lying in the fetid dungeons of seventeenth century England, their society had grown and flourished. Now began the far more dangerous temptations of wealth, prosperity, and the favour of the world—temptations from which, it must be confessed, they did not escape unharmed. The high standard of truthfulness and honesty in dealing, which Fox had always successfully held up before his followers, had brought them a large share of public confidence. Men found that the Quaker was generally a man of his word, and that, though he might be somewhat stiff at a bargain, he would not seek to pass off upon his customers an inferior article. Thus the whole social status of the body was constantly rising. The farm servant, trusted and tried, became himself an employer of labour; the shopkeeper rose into the merchant—the artisan into the manufacturer. Shut out by religious scruples from three of the “genteel” professions, the best educated men among them were almost forced into a business life. Any one who examines

a list of the private banks in England, as they existed a generation ago, will be surprised to find how many among them were founded by members of the Society of Friends, and were the result of the deposits of trusting neighbours with their fellow-citizen, the Quaker tradesman. Strangely enough, also, when one considers the almost fierce teetotalism of the majority of Friends at the present day, many of the great brewing firms were founded by members of their body.

Thus from various causes this little sect, which had once been a very Ishmaelite among the Churches, "their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them," had now become rich, respected, and in a certain sense popular; certainly often needing to ponder the words of Christ, "Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers unto the false prophets." But as it increased in wealth and respectability, it diminished in numbers and in missionary zeal. Naturally the families which had acquired riches and social position drifted off to the Established Church, for Quakerism, like the earliest forms of Christianity, was no religion for the fashionable and the aristocratic, and a proverb much quoted in those days was often found true—"They who have walked to the conventicle drive to church." But at the same time many less wealthy members were lost to the Society owing to the absurd strictness of its marriage laws, which excommunicated all who wedded the members of another communion. And above all, when, in the second and third generation, the missionary spirit of Fox and his contemporaries

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died out, the body received no accessions from the outside world to make up for the inevitable leakage among its wealthier members. Thus it came to pass that in the middle of the eighteenth century the great work of evangelising the masses, which had once been undertaken by the itinerant preachers of Quakerism, fell into other hands. While the Friends were sitting in lethargic silence in their dwindling congregations, Wesley and Whitfield were preaching to the miners of Cornwall and the mountaineers of Wales, receiving the blows and buffetings which had once fallen to the share of the Quaker preacher, but also reaping the harvest, nay, a far more abundant harvest than had ever rewarded his labours.

Yet though the eighteenth century was undoubtedly a time of general deadness and spiritual decay in the Society of Friends, and though probably some of its members were drifting away into the Deism which was then prevalent, the picture must not be painted too darkly. The great majority were leading lives which, if not saintly, were at least moral, benevolent, and in a certain sense, devout. The *Imitatio Christi*, the life and hymns of Madame Guyon, the "Spirit of Love," and other works of the great non-juror, William Law, were the favourite reading of the more thoughtful members of the Society. They were mystics of the best type, and consciously touched hands with the noblest Quietists of both the Roman and Protestant Churches.

Moreover, to this period belongs the holy life of John Woolman, the American Quaker, of whom Charles Lamb wrote—"Get the Life of John

Woolman by heart, and love the early Quakers ;” and under his influence and that of Anthony Benezet, the Quakers, who had from an early period forbidden their members to hold slaves, began that active crusade against the slave-trade, which became in the course of generations a contest against the whole system of slavery, and which at last passing into other hands, even the hands of the warrior, and being waged with “confused noise and garments rolled in blood,” was in our own day crowned with victory.

So, too, about this time, or a little later, the Friends began those efforts for the reform of prisons ; for the spread of education among the working-classes ; for the mitigation of the penal code ; for the more humane treatment of the insane, in which they bore so large a part, and with which their name is so honourably connected. And now at last, partly through the friendly intercourse into which they were thus brought with members of other Churches, they became thoroughly touched by that wave of evangelical revival which was started by the great Methodist preachers, but which rolled on into the Established Church, and whose utterance was set to music by Cowper.

Third Period, 1790, to the Present Day

Events move slowly in a quiet and conservative body, such as the Society of Friends had now become ; but one might perhaps say that the half century, from 1790 to 1840, marked the period of transition to “evangelical” Quakerism. No name

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is more associated with this movement than that of Joseph John Gurney, of Norwich, a man of learning and of devout character, and best known to the outside world as the brother of that great prison-reformer, Elizabeth Fry. Occupying a high social position and master of his time, he devoted all his talents and his leisure to the preaching of the Gospel both in Europe and America. Although he met with some opposition, and there was even an actual separation among the Friends across the Atlantic, which was the result of a reaction from his teaching, on the whole he and those who were like-minded with him prevailed, and for the last half century the dominant note of the ministry in the Society of Friends has certainly been that which is known as "Evangelical."

Thus the Quakers as a whole have certainly moved some distance, if not towards the systematised doctrines of John Calvin, at any rate towards the spirit of that Calvinistic teaching against which Fox himself and his fellow-preachers so earnestly protested. There has, however, always been a section of the body who have refused thus to deviate from the paths trodden by their forefathers, and of later years especially, that recoil from Calvinism which has made itself felt even in Scotland, has not been without its influence on the Society of Friends. On the whole (though few things are harder than to measure the depth and intensity of the current of religious thought), it may be certainly said that there are now in this religious body *two* schools of thought, the Evangelical, and that which, for want of a better name,

we may call the Mystical. The former exalts the authority of the Bible, and speaks often of the sacrificial death of Christ and salvation by His imputed righteousness. The latter, while highly valuing the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, shrinks from staking the truth of Christianity on every sentence which they contain, and is somewhat more disposed to ponder the mystery of Christ's Incarnation than to attempt, by the analogy of the Jewish sacrifices, to explain the atoning efficacy of His death. Both schools of thought hold what are called "orthodox" views of the nature of the Divine Saviour, and the opposition between them, which is rather a difference of tendency than of formulated belief, very seldom manifests itself in open controversy.

The Peculiar Speech and Costume

Contemporaneously with this change in the drift of Quaker thought, there has come a change in some of the usages of the Society. Fifty years ago "plainness in speech, behaviour, and apparel" was insisted on as essential to full membership, and plainness practically meant "peculiarity." The use of the second person singular in conversation; the avoidance of Sunday and of January and the other heathen names of the days of the week and months of the year; the broad brim and uncollared coat of the man, and the quaintly-fashioned bonnet of the woman, were all considered the necessary marks of a "consistent Friend." Now, though some of these external signs of membership still linger,

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they are mere survivals, and nowhere, except, perhaps, in Pennsylvania, is the person who does not comply with the old traditions in these matters denied the fullest right of membership. From a merely sentimental point of view the change may be regretted. There is a distressing uniformity in the dress of the European or American citizen, and almost anything which makes a variety in costume is welcomed by the eye. Charles Lamb said in his humorously enthusiastic way, "Every Quakeress is a lily; and when they come in bands to their Whitsun-Conferences, whitening the easterly streets of the metropolis from all parts of the United Kingdom, they show like troops of the Shining Ones." Now, though they still aim at sobriety in dress, there is no longer that old-fashioned picturesque peculiarity, and it must be confessed that the effect is less pleasing. Still it was high time that the change was made. That tendency to externalism which the Quaker had shaken off in respect to other matters had reasserted itself here, and matters of absolutely no importance to the life of the spirit, the cut of a coat and the shape of a bonnet, were being forced, especially on the reluctant consciences of the young, with a severity which became unconscious Pharisaism.

Home Mission Work

While wisely turning their minds away from these merely traditional and external observances, the Friends of the present, and now passing, generation, have thrown themselves with some zeal and success into the work of evangelising

the masses of their countrymen. It has been well known that they were not the kind of people who "compass sea and land to make one proselyte"; in fact they have been, if anything, too shy of inviting those outside to enter their fellowship. Partly, perhaps, from this cause, and partly from the fact that the Quaker teachers make no assumption of ecclesiastical superiority, they have been remarkably successful in the work of teaching adult scholars, of whom about 30,000 now come under their influence.

Foreign Mission Work

The present generation of Friends has also turned its attention in a remarkable manner to the field of Foreign Missions. In the first age of the Society its preachers went far and wide with their message of the Inward Light. Not only France, Holland, Germany, and the young American colonies heard the voice of the Quaker preacher. In 1661 two female ministers of the Society started on a mission to Alexandria, but landing at Malta (which was then subject to the Order of the Knights of St. John), were arrested, and forced to spend four years in the dungeons of the Inquisition. More fortunate, if equally void of practical result, was the mission of a Quakeress named Mary Fisher, who went to Turkey with a message from the Lord to the Sultan Mahomet IV.; found him in his camp before Adrianople, was encouraged to deliver her message through an interpreter, was courteously listened to, and dismissed with respect.

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But these were but isolated and spasmodic efforts. For the greater part of two centuries it must be admitted that the Quaker ministers, though constantly travelling up and down among their own people in Europe and America, did little or nothing for the evangelisation of the non-Christian world. About thirty years ago, however, under the impulse of a death-bed message from an old Quaker patriarch, George Richardson of Newcastle-on-Tyne, there was formed the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, which has effectually removed this stigma from the little Quaker Church. It has now missionaries in Syria, India, Ceylon, China, Japan, and Madagascar, and though their number (about seventy in 1896) is not large in itself, is even preposterously small in comparison with the work that has to be performed, it is perhaps as large in proportion to the number of the Society as that of the missionaries supported by most Protestant Churches. Many of these are medical missionaries, and many have large schools under their care. The work of the Friends in Madagascar has been especially successful, or rather was especially successful till the recent overturn of everything by the French invasion. Two noble Quaker missionaries, William and Lucy Johnson, with one of their children, fell victims to the first fury of the mob, madly rushing back into heathenism in their despair at the loss of their independence. Their brother-missionaries, however, who survive them, still continue at their posts, and though their position is made one of extreme difficulty, by reason of the favour shown by the French authorities to the Roman Catholic

at the expense of the Protestant missions, they do not intend to abandon their work; and already, it is believed, see some faint indications that in this, as so often in past times, "the blood of the martyrs" may be "the seed of the Church."

And now from this brief survey of the external history of the Society of Friends, let us go back to their first period, and consider what were the salient points in the religious teaching of their earliest apostles, Fox, Penn, and Barclay.

Fundamental Principles

The fundamental principle of Quakerism is that which is known by the name of the Inward Light. As Fox says: "Though I read the Scriptures that spoke of Christ and of God, yet I knew Him not but by revelation, as He who hath the key did open, and as the Father of Life drew me to His Son by His Spirit. Then the Lord led me gently along and let me see His love, which was endless and eternal, surpassing all the knowledge that men have in the natural state, or can obtain from history or books; and that love let me see myself as I was without Him."¹

And again: "I saw that Christ died for all men, and was a propitiation for all, and enlightened all men and women with His divine and saving light, and that none could be a true believer but those who believed in it. I saw that the grace of God which bringeth salvation had appeared to all men, and that the manifestation of

¹ "Journal" (ed. 1891), p. 12.

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the Spirit of God was given to every man to profit withal.”¹

William Penn writes, “That which the Quakers lay down as a main fundamental in religion is this: That God, through Christ, hath placed His Spirit in every man to inform him of his duty, and to enable him to do it, and that those who live up to this are the people of God, and those that live in disobedience to it are not God’s people, whatever name they may bear or profession they may make of religion. This is their ancient first-standing testimony. . . .

“By this Spirit they understand something that is Divine, and though in man, yet not of man, but of God. . . . There are divers ways of speaking by which they declare and express what this Spirit is, viz., they call it the Light of Christ within man, or Light within, which is their ancient and most general or familiar phrase: also the manifestation or appearance of Christ, the Witness of God, the Seed of God, the Seed of the Kingdom, Wisdom, the Word in the heart, the grace that appears to all men, the Spirit given to every man to profit withal, the truth in the inward part, the spiritual leaven that leavens the whole lump of man. . . .

“It is to this Spirit of light, life, and grace that this people refer all, for they say it is the great agent in religion, that without which there is no conviction, so no conversion or regeneration, and consequently no entering into the Kingdom of God.”²

¹ “Journal” (ed. 1891), p. 36.

² “Primitive Christianity Revived.”

Barclay, opposing the arguments of those who said, "God is indeed to be known by His Spirit, but not immediately or inwardly, but in and by the Scriptures," contends, "that Christians now are to be led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God even in the same manner, though it befall not many to be led in the same measure, as the saints were of old."¹

These passages would probably strike some readers as containing the very commonplaces of Christianity, and in fact Barclay quotes both Fathers and Reformers as witnesses that it was no new or strange doctrine which he was advocating. But certainly at the time when "the Inward Light" was first preached by the early Quakers, it brought its champions into frequent and fierce collision with the theologians of their day. It may perhaps be safely asserted that the England of the Commonwealth, when many hard and unspiritual men were, from worldly motives, making a loud profession of godliness, needed especially to be reminded that it is not by a mere intellectual process, performed upon the letter of Scripture, that man will ever attain to a real understanding of "the deep things of God." And, on the other hand, the Friends themselves gladly admit that the truth of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit with believers in Christ is far more vividly recognised now by the members of all the Christian Churches, at any rate in this country and America, than it was when George Fox felt himself called "to bring people off from all the

¹ Apology, Proposition II., "Of Immediate Revelation."

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world's fellowships and prayings and singings which stood in forms without power, that their fellowship might be in the Holy Ghost, in the Eternal Spirit of God."

Ministry and Worship

One result of this advocacy of the doctrine of the Inward Light was, that the Friends steadily refused to speak of the heathen, and those who had passed through this life without any knowledge of the Christian revelation, as necessarily debarred from eternal life. They contended that it is in truth an "universal and saving Light," and that "by the operation of this Light and Seed some have been, and may yet be, saved, to whom the gospel is not outwardly preached, nor the history of Christ outwardly known."¹

Another practical consequence was that they as much as possible avoided all pre-arrangement in public worship. "How," they said, "could one man undertake always to preach or pray at a stated time and place before a certain congregation?" He might not be led by the Holy Spirit into any vocal utterance—it might rather be his duty to sit silent while another handed forth the word of life. Thus, from a desire to preserve "the liberty of prophesying" in the congregation of believers, and to leave the direction of the service to the unseen Master of the Assembly, arose the practice of silent worship in the Society of Friends. Not, that is to say, that in those early

¹ Barclay (Apology, Prop. VI.).

times their meetings were frequently, if ever, held in absolute silence. The zeal of the multitude of preachers who attended them effectually prevented this result. But periods of silence, during which the congregation reverently waited upon God and listened for His inward voice, formed, so to speak, the background upon which the ecstatic utterances of the prophet, or the calm words of the religious teacher, had liberty to manifest themselves. Later on, as has been already said, in "the middle ages of Quakerism," a good many of the meetings were habitually held in perfect silence, a silence which doubtless often became as formal as any liturgy.

The Bible

There was much discussion between the early Quakers and their opponents, whether the Bible or the Holy Spirit was to be considered "the primary rule of faith and manners." The discussion would perhaps seem to a modern reader to be not much more than a strife about words; since the great champion of Quakerism, Barclay, while contending for the latter alternative, said: "We shall be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, that whatever any do, pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil." But the question which was practically at issue seems to have been this, "Has the Christian believer now a Guide to whose voice he may listen when it speaks to him in the secret of his heart, and who will show him the way in which he ought to walk; or will he by merely

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bringing his reason to bear upon certain texts of Scripture, find there a sufficient indication what course he ought to follow in all the emergencies of life?" Thus stated, the question would now be generally answered as the early Quakers answered it; and all the more, when we remember that in that generation the rules for moral conduct seem to have been chosen even more from the Old Testament than from the New. The fierce zealots who were all for destroying Amalek and hewing Agag in pieces needed to be reminded of the words of the historic Christ, echoed certainly in their hearts by the Christ within: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Tithes

For in various ways the teaching of Fox and his friends was a protest against the Judaical views of Christianity, derived from a too exclusive study of the Old Testament, and a vindication of the new law of love proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount. It was in this spirit that they felt themselves called to bear what was often spoken of as "their triple testimony against Tithes, Oaths, and War"—a testimony on behalf of which thousands of their number spent long years of their lives in the fetid dungeons of the Commonwealth of the Stuarts.

As for the exaction of tithes from all the inhabitants of the land for the support of a sacrificing priesthood, there can be no doubt that

the only arguments for this institution, unknown in the early ages of the Christian Church, were drawn from the law of Moses. On this subject George Fox, with rough eloquence, in a letter written about 1654, remonstrated against the Levitical precedent, and pointed to the contrast between the precept of Christ and the practice of the Puritan ministers under the Commonwealth. "There was in old times a storehouse for the fatherless, strangers, and widows to come to and be filled; and they did not prosper then who did not bring their tithes to the storehouse. But did not Christ put an end to that priesthood—tithes, temple, and priests? And doth not the apostle say that the priesthood is changed, the law is changed, and the commandment disannulled? Might not they have pleaded the law of God that gave them tithes? Have ever any of the priests prospered that take tithes since by the law of man? Was not the first author of them since Christ's time the Pope, or some of his Church? Did the apostles cast men into prison for tithes, as your ministers do now? As, for instance, Ralph Hollingworth, priest of Phillingham, for petty tithes not exceeding six shillings, has cast into Lincoln prison a poor thatcher named Thomas Bromby, where he has been about eight and thirty weeks, and still remains a prisoner; and the priest petitioned the judge that the poor man might not labour in the city to get a little money towards his maintenance in prison. Is this glad tidings to cast into prison a man that is not his hearer, because he could not put into his mouth? (*sic.*) Can such as are in the fear of God

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and in His wisdom own such things? . . . Christ, when He sent forth His ministers, bid them give freely, as they had received freely; and into what city or town soever they came, inquire who were worthy, and there abide; and ‘what they set before you,’ said He, ‘that eat.’ And when these came back again to Christ, and He asked them if they wanted anything, they said ‘No.’ They did not go to a town and call the people together to know how much they might have by the year, as those that are in the apostacy do now. The apostle said, ‘Have I not power to eat and to drink?’ But he did not say ‘to take tithes, Easter-reckonings, midsummer dues, augmentations, and great sums of money,’ but ‘Have I not power to eat and to drink?’ Yet he did not use that power among the Corinthians.”

This conscientious refusal to pay tithes was a continual cause of conflict with the authorities. Of the Friends, numbering about a thousand, who were in prison at the time of the death of Cromwell, the larger number apparently had been sent thither on account of their resistance to ecclesiastical demands.

Oaths

Equal offence to the authorities was given by the persistent refusal to take an oath in a court of justice. Unlike the majority of professing Christians, but agreeing herein with the German Mennonites and with some of the early Baptists, George Fox held that not profane swearing only, but all swearing, even the oath of the witness or the juryman, was forbidden by the Founder of Christianity. “Let

your yea be yea, and your nay nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil," seemed to him and to his friends, as it does to their descendants at the present day, to be a command which was not aimed merely at the blasphemous imprecation which might be heard in the tavern, but also at the solemn oath demanded in the court of justice. The Christian man, they held, was to have ever before him so high a standard of truthfulness, and to feel himself so continually in the presence of his Maker and subject to His law, that in the ordinary affairs of life, his word should be a sufficient guarantee of the fact to all his neighbours, and that when he stood in the witness-box, no further attestation or asseveration, no introduction of the Divine name, nor hint of the future doom of the transgressor, should be necessary in order to secure the absolute credibility of the witness.¹ This refusal to take the oath, though at the worst only the result of a too literal obedience to the words of Christ, was the cause of endless suffering to the Quakers at the hands of men who were always boasting of their orthodox Christianity. When the country justice, or the Old Bailey judge, affronted by the independent demeanour of the Quaker defendant, and especially by his refusal to take off his hat, after a long wrangle, found his points of law failing him, and feared that he might have to let the prisoner go, there was always one last remedy in his hand. He had only to order

¹ George Fox writes that when he was engaged in business he used in his dealings the word "Verily," and it was a common saying among people that knew him, "If George says 'Verily,' there is no altering him."

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him to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy (oaths which had been introduced in order to guard the State against Roman Catholic conspiracies), and on the Quaker's refusal to take these oaths he could be sent to some loathsome dungeon, whence, after years of imprisonment, it was a marvel if he emerged with life. As George Fox once said, "You tell me to kiss the Book, and the Book says, Swear not at all;" but all arguments of this kind were wasted on Justice Shallow, who was generally thinking more of his offended dignity, and of that obnoxious hat which the prisoner persisted in wearing, than of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, or the differences between Judaism and Christianity.

In this matter, however, as has been already said, the transparent honesty of the stubborn Quaker on the one hand, and the good sense of English legislators on the other, have long since found a *modus vivendi*. For two centuries the simple affirmation of the Quaker has been accepted instead of an oath in all our courts of justice, and this indulgence has in our own day been so extended as to include all those who on any ground, either of faith or of no-faith, feel a conscientious objection to the taking of an oath.

War

The last of the three great "testimonies" of Quakerism is that which has made the most impression on the world. Every one knows that the Quaker holds all war unlawful, and however combative his natural disposition may be, strives to

comport himself as a man of peace. The passages in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the Epistle of James, on which the Quaker protest against war is founded, are too well known to need more than a brief allusion here. Though some of the descendants of the early Friends have carried the scruple so far as to say that force must never be used to resist crime, I do not find that the more careful writers among them, especially their chief controversialist, Robert Barclay, ever laid down the doctrine so broadly as this ; nor have the Friends ever in fact protested against that which we now call the action of the police in a well-ordered State. Doubtless this raises a difficult question. If you consent to the action of the police between man and man, how can you condemn what may be called the police of nations? How can you forbid a nation which is pursuing no selfish ends, and is really intent on righteousness, from resisting, even by force of arms, lawless violence directed against itself? or yet more emphatically, if directed against some weaker neighbour that has a claim on its protection?

There is also the obvious difficulty that Christ's words may be binding on Christians, and there may be many of His followers who would rather suffer the loss of all things, even of life itself, than disobey them; but in every nation there is an immense number of citizens, who are not thoroughly penetrated by the spirit of Christ. Many are professed infidels, many are absolutely indifferent to all religious considerations; some, probably the majority, would like to keep on good terms with Christianity, but have no idea

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of so moulding their conduct by Christ's precepts as to suffer any loss of worldly goods, much less of life or limb, for the sake of their obedience to Him. Then how is the State, which is but a congeries of these widely different classes of men, to take the high Christian principle of the small minority (even supposing them all to be united as to the meaning of Christ's teaching) as a practical guide in the administration of the affairs of the great semi-Christian whole?

It will, I hope, be admitted that I do not shirk the difficulties involved in the Quaker position on the subject of war; and I would further remark that a nation which has for centuries acted on the principle that its rights can only be defended by the sword, may not be able, however desirous, at once to change all its principles of action, and to shape its conduct in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount. The conquest of India, for example, has involved the British nation in all sorts of responsibilities and honourable obligations, which would be violated if at six months' notice the whole British army were to evacuate that country. To begin on pagan lines, and suddenly to transform them to Christian lines, is not such an easy matter. Still after every allowance has been made, and every doubtful point surrendered, the question must recur to the mind of a thoughtful Christian, "What was the meaning of our Master when He uttered those memorable words, 'But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil. . . Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you,

and persecute you'?" If Jesus Christ was merely a holy Jewish rabbi, it might be possible to take these words as His well-meant "counsels of perfection," and so dismiss them from our minds. But if He be what the creeds of all the Churches proclaim Him, and what the great majority of Christians profess to believe Him, one must think that these words, uttered by the rightful King of the human race, were meant to be obeyed, and that War, which is the one most flagrant act of rebellion against both their letter and their spirit, was not meant to be a permanent element in human affairs. Yet now, after the lapse of near eighteen centuries, an enormously greater number of men are engaged in the trade of war than were so engaged when the Sermon on the Mount was preached, and the keenest intellects of the world are engaged in the investigation of the problem, "How to kill the greatest number of the men for whom Christ died in the shortest possible time." Could this have been the result if men, really believing the Divinity of Christ, had brought to the question how to obey Him in this matter, a tenth part of the subtlety and the energy which they have expended on the questions, "Who is He?" and "What form of government did He establish in His Church?"

To sum up the whole discussion in few words, we are told that "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil." If there be any devilish work anywhere in the universe, it is such scenes as are witnessed at Gravelotte and Sedan. The manifestation of the Son of God has not yet destroyed

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that kind of work—rather it has increased a hundred-fold since He came. Is this because the men, who call themselves by His name, sit down perfectly contented with their absolute disobedience to Him, and thus the arrogance of the military swash-buckler has become the ideal of the nations, instead of the sublime and courageous gentleness of Christ?

The Sacraments

In their “testimony” against oaths and war, the Quakers took up a position of implicit obedience to the letter of the commands of Jesus Christ. On the question of the rites which are commonly known as the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper they appear at first sight to be seeking excuses for disobeying Him. This peculiarity of the Quaker position has been forcibly, though not altogether truly, described in the words of Lord Macaulay: “Passages which had been in the apprehension of all the readers of the Gospels during sixteen centuries figurative, Fox construed literally. Passages which no human being before him had ever understood in any other than a literal sense, he construed figuratively. Thus, from those rhetorical expressions, in which the duty of patience under injuries is enjoined, he deduced the doctrine that self-defence against pirates and assassins is unlawful. On the other hand, the plain commands to baptize with water, and to partake of bread and wine in commemoration of the redemption of mankind, he pronounced to be allegorical.” This statement is

marked by that tendency to rhetorical exaggeration, which is so characteristic of its author, since many "human beings" at various periods of the history of the Christian Church had anticipated both the negative and the positive parts of George Fox's teaching on these subjects. But, though nothing pleased Lord Macaulay better than to show that a man, or a sect, or a school of philosophers or politicians, was irrational and almost idiotic, historical students, who go somewhat deeper, and who prize truth above rhetoric, will not be unwilling to spend a little time in examining this strange paradox, and inquiring how it came to pass that the same men who cheerfully faced the terrors of a Stuart dungeon rather than disobey Christ's command against swearing, felt themselves absolved from obedience to the command to baptize with water, and to partake of bread and wine in remembrance of Him.

Baptism

The Proposition of Robert Barclay on this subject is stated in these words: "As there is one Lord and one faith, so there is one baptism; which is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience before God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this baptism is a pure and spiritual thing, to wit the baptism of Spirit and fire, by which we are buried with Him, that being washed and purged from our sins we may walk in newness of life. Of which the baptism of John was a figure which was commanded for a time, and not to continue

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for ever. As to the baptism of infants, it is a mere human tradition, for which neither precept nor practice is to be found in all the Scriptures."

In his argument in support of this proposition, Barclay first states the undoubted fact that the word "sacrament," which plays so large a part in the discussion, is no Scripture word, but was borrowed by the Latin Fathers of the second or third century from the heathen Roman Empire, where it denoted the oath of obedience sworn by the soldier to his general.

It is true that language and thought may often be enriched by such borrowings, but it is a serious question how far it is right to build up a whole scheme of doctrine on a fanciful analogy such as this. At any rate, the honest inquirer will do well mentally to substitute "Soldier's oath" for its Latin equivalent, "Sacramentum," whenever he is listening to discussions on sacramental grace and sacramental efficacy.

Barclay then proceeds to his main thesis, emphasising the declaration that there is but one baptism, appealing to John the Baptist's distinction between his baptism by water and his great Successor's baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and quoting the remarkable passages in which Paul seems to glory in the fact that his commission had not been to baptize but to preach the Gospel. Throughout the discussion it is clear that Barclay's mind is strongly under the influence of the great postulate of Quakerism: "The Christian religion is pure and spiritual, and not carnal or ceremonial," but it is also clear that he is honestly convinced that the word "baptism" in

Christ's mouth refers to an inward and spiritual work, the "baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire," and not to any outward rite, whether performed on infants or on adults. And in this sense the word "baptize" has been in constant use among the Friends for two centuries, as, for instance, in this "Advice to Ministers": "Bearing in mind that the treasure is in earthen vessels, beware of laying stress on the authority of your ministry, the baptizing power of the Spirit of Truth accompanying the words being the true evidence."

The Lord's Supper

"The communion of the Body and Blood of Christ," says Barclay, "is inward and spiritual, which is the participation of His Flesh and Blood, by which the inward man is daily nourished in the hearts of those in whom Christ dwells. Of which things the breaking of bread by Christ with His disciples, was a figure which even they who had received the substance used in the Church for a time for the sake of the weak, even as abstaining from things strangled and from blood, the washing one another's feet, and the anointing of the sick with oil, all which are commanded with no less authority and solemnity than the former, yet seeing they are but shadows of better things, they cease in such as have obtained the substance."

The statement of the proposition will perhaps sufficiently indicate the course of the argument. The mysterious words of the Saviour in the sixth chapter of John, as to the necessity of eat-

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ing His flesh and drinking His blood, are much dwelt upon; the doctrines of Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, and the Real Presence are described, and it is earnestly contended, in opposition to all of them, that it is the Spiritual Body of the Saviour which is there spoken of, and that "this Spiritual Light and Seed is as bread to the hungry soul." The connection of the bread and the "cup of blessing" with the Passover is alluded to, and it is urged that the words "till He come" apply not to some future pre-millennial advent of Christ, but to His inward arising in the hearts of believers. (A view which has lately found considerable acceptance both with Friends and others, that the promised "Parousia," or "Coming of Christ," was in a certain sense fulfilled at the destruction of the Temple or end of the Jewish dispensation, does not seem to have suggested itself to the early Quakers.) Much stress is laid by Barclay, and it seems to me rightly laid, on the injunction about the washing of the feet. Though this argument partakes somewhat of the unsatisfactory nature of a *Tu quoque*, it certainly is difficult to see what reason can be alleged for discontinuing the practice of washing the disciples' feet, which cannot also be used for discontinuing the partaking of bread and wine as an act of worship. The one seems to be commanded with as much solemnity as the other in those pathetic chapters which record our Saviour's farewell words to His disciples.

I hope I may have succeeded in conveying to my readers at least some understanding of the mental process by which the early Friends arrived

at the conclusion that these "ordinances"—as they are called—were not intended as absolute commands, nor meant to be observed as external rites by the Christian Church in all succeeding ages. A much less important question, but one which may be naturally asked, is, how far these arguments commend themselves to the individual judgment of the present writer. Frankly, then, I must confess that Barclay's arguments on baptism, though perfectly sincere and well worthy of being studied by minds steeped in "high sacramental" teaching, are not altogether convincing, and that he sometimes seems to me to try to prove too much. When the apostle Paul speaks of "one baptism," he is thinking of the unity of the Christian body notwithstanding all apparent diversity of schools of thought within it, and the passages in the Gospels which relate to the baptism by water and the baptism with the Holy Spirit, are evidently not at the time present to his mind. Thus the conclusion, at first sight so necessary, "if there be but one baptism, it must be that of the Spirit, and baptism by water is excluded," does not, as I think, fairly follow from these words of the apostle.

Nor can I doubt that when our Lord speaks of "baptizing all nations," He means, as the earliest Church understood Him to mean, immersing them in water as a sign of their new profession of faith in Christ. Even thus, however, it is important that we should bear in mind the passages of Scripture quoted by Barclay, in which baptism by water seems to be relegated to an inferior place when compared with baptism by the Spirit, and the even

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more remarkable passages in which St. Paul seems almost to glory in the small number of baptisms in which he had himself officiated. True, he gives us one reason for this, "lest any should say that I baptized in my own name;" but if the mere outward application of water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had been the especial channel, still more if it had been the only channel for the communication of the new and divine life to men, would he have spoken with satisfaction of the small share which he had in so necessary a work.¹

It appears to me that the whole meaning of baptism by water, as commanded by Christ and practised by His apostles, was to mark by some definite and undeniable act the passage of a convert, either from Jewish formalism or from Gentile idolatry, to faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. There would be many in that early age of the Church who would gladly share in some of the new hopes and spiritual joys contained in the Evangel, yet who could not bring themselves to break altogether with their old worships, friend-

¹ In this connection I may allude but very briefly to the celebrated passage in our Lord's discourse to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This saying cannot have applied to baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which was not then instituted. I have long believed that the correct interpretation of the passage was that which I heard from the mouth of a careful student of Scripture (not a member of the Society of Friends), that Nicodemus, as a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, wished to avoid the humiliating necessity of resorting to John the Baptist, making confession of sins, and being baptized by him, and that Jesus tells him that this is a necessary preliminary to becoming His disciple. "Water," then, here means the water of John's baptism, and the "kingdom of heaven" here, as in so many other passages, means not the future state of the blessed, but the Christian dispensation.

ships, associations, whether these clustered round the Jewish synagogue or the pagan temple. Many, too, there would be who, from fear of persecution and the world's scorn, feared to ally themselves with a sect "which was everywhere spoken against." In order to end this state of half-hearted allegiance to the new teaching, and to give firmness and cohesion to the new society which had been born into the world, the rite of water-baptism was, not so much instituted by Jesus Christ, as taken over by Him from the ordinary religious usages of His day. "For it is well known," says Wheatley,¹ "that the Jews baptized as well as circumcised all proselytes of the nations or Gentiles that were converted to their religion." And of course the recent appearance of such a teacher as John, the last of the prophets, calling the people to repentance, and baptizing them in the rapid waters of the Jordan in token of their dying to their old sins and rising up to a new and fairer life, brought the rite of baptism prominently before the minds of all; even though, as we are told, "Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples."

Thus, then, in the earliest ages of the Church, while Christianity was fighting its difficult battle against Jewish prejudices and Gentile scorns, and all the power of "the rulers of the darkness of this world," baptism by water, as administered to a Cornelius or a Crispus, had a meaning and a purpose which none might misunderstand. It was a confession that the convert accepted Him who had suffered a felon's death on Calvary as his Lord

¹ Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer, p. 343 (ed. 1722).

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and Saviour, and cast in his lot thenceforward with the despised and persecuted sect which bore His name.

As the generations passed away, this state of things was changed. Persecutions became fitful, and at last ceased altogether. In three hundred years the Christian Church had become rich and powerful. Heathenism and Judaism were both crushed. All who wished to rise to high places in the state found that they must "profess and call themselves Christians." Thus was "the offence of the cross ceased." And moreover, even before the second generation of Christians had vanished from the scene, the composition of the Church was necessarily altered by the fact that now the great majority of its members were men and women cradled in Christianity. There was no one moment in their lives at which they might suitably be called upon to make public profession of their faith in Christ, for His had been among the first names which they had learned when still upon their mother's knee, and they could not remember the time when they had not, with more or less of conscious conviction, accepted Him as their Saviour.¹

I have not space here to trace the influence which these altered circumstances produced upon the usages connected with baptism; how at one time the thought, that sins committed after baptism were unforgivable, led to a long delay in the

¹ The fact seems to me to be not altogether without a bearing on this question, that the Jews baptized proselytes and their children on entering their Church, but did not baptize the second generation of such converts (Wheatley : *Ibid.* p. 343, note).

administration of the rite ;¹ and on the other hand, the misinterpretation of our Lord's words to Nicodemus led the Church to hasten the performance of the rite, even on infants, if they were in danger of dying unbaptized.

As every one knows, the practical result of all these various tendencies has been, that in the vast majority of cases baptism is administered while the receiver is still in unconscious infancy. I am not now going to enter into the controversy between the upholders of adult and the upholders of infant baptism, but I venture to say that it is only the comparatively small body of Christians who immerse in the baptismal water the neophyte who is able to make an intelligent profession of his or her faith in Christ ; it is only these who can with any show of reason remonstrate with the Quaker for his entire disuse of the outward ordinance. The others have, as it seems to me, so entirely transformed the rite from its original character and purpose that they might, with no greater exercise of Christian liberty, have discontinued it altogether.

Somewhat similar is the position of the members of the Society of Friends in our day, with reference

¹ As is well known, the Emperor Constantine postponed his baptism almost to his death-bed ; Theodosius was not baptized till his thirty-fifth year. Even Gregory of Nazianzus, though the son of a bishop and dedicated by his mother to the service of God from his birth, had reached full manhood before he was baptized. St. Augustine ("Confessions," i. 11) describes his own desire to be baptized when visited by some childish malady, and the long postponement of the rite (till his conversion in middle life) which followed his recovery—"Whence comes this saying about one and another which is now constantly sounding in our ears : Let him be ; let him do what he will [in the way of sin], he is not yet baptized."

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to that which is commonly spoken of as the Lord's Supper. In its original institution it seems to have grown out of the Paschal feast, and our Lord, Himself a son of Israel, and speaking to eleven Jews, seems to have given them a new and hallowed association with Himself in all their future observances of the great national rite. Something more general than this, something resembling the common meals of the *sodalitia* of the empire, or those which formed part of the Eleusinian mysteries, seems to have characterised the *Agapæ* or love-feasts described by St. Paul. Neither exactly corresponds with the sacrifice of the Mass, as introduced at an early period into the Christian Church. Everything in reference to this rite seems to depend on the way in which we interpret the words of Christ, "This is My body; this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you." Is He in these memorable words using one of His vivid illustrations drawn from external objects, as when He calls Himself a Vine, a Door, a Shepherd? Or did those words of consecration then work an unseen miracle, transforming the bread into flesh and the wine into blood, and has that miracle been repeated millions of times since in the great historic churches which claim to have been founded by His apostles? It is a question not to be solved by logic, still less by the rhetoric of scorn on either side—a question which has brought the havoc of fire and sword into fruitful kingdoms—a question which will perhaps not receive its final answer till this Dispensation closes and "the Lord of those servants" comes to reckon with the various sects

and churches as to their use of the talents of religious truth entrusted to their charge.

It need not be said that the Friends have always taken the absolutely spiritual view of the discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, and have refused to connect it with the scene in the upper chamber on the evening before the Crucifixion, which they have generally held to be essentially identified with the Jewish Passover. Yet while abstaining from thus commemorating the death of Christ themselves, they have, even in the early and bitter days of controversy, spoken tenderly of those who differed from them herein, and most of them, I think, would gladly acknowledge that, even in the fully developed sacrifice of the Mass, there is often a real approach, on the part of the devout worshipper, to Him whose body was broken and whose blood was poured out for us, and that many depart from that which is called "the Holy Table" having truly partaken of the Bread of Life.

But we, too, without the introduction into our worship of "the consecrated elements," do often in our religious meetings feel that we are in like manner fed by an Unseen Hand. If the text, "This do in remembrance of Me," is the watchword of our communicating fellow-Christians, there is another which is equally precious to us: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them;" and it would not be too much to say that many of us at such times have, though in no carnal, material sense, been permitted to feel the Real Presence of Christ.

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This, after all, more than any fine-drawn arguments for or against the observance of particular rites, seems to be the test to which we must at last resort, the test of spiritual experience. Some of Barclay's arguments for the disuse of the "sacraments" may appear scarcely equal to the weight which he lays upon them, but there is one argument stronger than any that he could then adduce, the fact that six generations of men and women have lived the Christian life without that initiatory rite of baptism, which is, according to some, its only origin, and without that literal eating and drinking, which they allege to be its chief sustenance.

This argument, of course, will have little weight with those who have never come in contact with any members of the Quaker body, and who think of them only as a sect of eccentric and weak-minded revolvers from the teaching of the Catholic Church; but those who have known them find it difficult to cast it aside as worthless. The writer of the present paper has been honoured with the friendship of many men of high Christian character, both members of the Society of Friends and strangers to its fellowship.²² After an experience of many years, and endeavouring to look at the question as fairly and impartially as he could, he cannot truthfully say that he has found the standard of personal holiness and love to Christ higher among baptized Christians than in the Quaker society. Yet, if there be any truth in the high sacramental teaching, this ought surely to have been flagrantly and obviously visible long before now.

To conclude: The position of the Society of Friends, in reference both to the Sacraments and to their mode of public worship, is no easy nor enviable one. It would be far easier, far pleasanter to the natural man, to abandon the lonely position in which we find ourselves placed, to baptize, to break bread, to organise a regular-paid ministry, to frame a liturgy. But we believe that we have, in the providence of God, had a fortress given us to hold which we dare not abandon, even though it be upon a somewhat lonely spot in the Christian fatherland.

Whatever others may do, and rightly do, with the associations which in their minds have grown up round certain rites and ceremonies, we must yet maintain, calmly but firmly, our "testimony" to the non-ceremonial, non-ritual character of Christianity. If the reunion of Christendom is to be accomplished, as seems not impossible, on the basis of a sacrificing priesthood and an elaborate liturgy, we shall have to be excluded, for as long as life is left us we shall protest that to us Christ is the only possible Priest, and that in His words, "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

But if, as the years pass on and man learns new lessons of his place in the world, and his relation to its Maker, some things which were in the Middle Ages accounted most holy, should be generally recognised as the presumptuous additions of man to the ancient truth of God: if these things which to the eyes of some of us seem even now to be "decaying and waxing old," should utterly

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“vanish away;” then in the new spiritual Church, drawing its life direct from Christ, not through any mechanical transmission of grace whether by Pope or by bishop; in the new Church, caring more for truth than for orthodoxy, and more for character than for creed, there might be room, both for the Quaker and for others whom the Catholic Church now brands as heretics. Recognising their own feebleness of vision and inability to solve by any efforts of their reason the mystery of the universe, the Christians of that future generation will perhaps set themselves to do the will of God instead of debating about His nature, and will recognise that, more acceptable in His sight than vestments and altar-lights and incense, is that which they are already doing in part, and will then with unencumbered minds do more abundantly, towards assuaging the sorrows and vanquishing the temptations of humanity. While still, perhaps, differing from one another on some theoretical questions of doctrine, or practical questions of Church government, they will, let us hope, be united in their joint warfare against the dense mass of Paganism around them. Yes, and against the secret unbelief, which is Paganism, in their own hearts.

In such a reconstituted Church, as I have said, the Society of Friends might find a place. Like every other body of Christians, it would have to make its own confession of failures and shortcomings in the past, not, indeed, of bloodshed and burnings in the name of Christ, but of spiritual deadness and lack of zeal, and of talents which have been with faithless cowardice laid up in a

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napkin. But it would have some gifts, not valueless, to bring with it into the common treasury of Christendom, of which not the least would be its testimony to the perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the Real Presence of Christ in the congregation of His waiting worshippers.

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND

BY

PROFESSOR JOHN HERKLESS

VI

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

BY PROFESSOR JOHN HERKLESS

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

THE Church of Scotland is Calvinistic in creed, Presbyterian in government, and, through an inheritance of tradition and State recognition, national in character. Its distinctive mark is its nationality. The Free and the United Presbyterian Churches are each Calvinistic and Presbyterian, but neither is national. Within the present generation certain writers and speakers have begun to cherish the idea of catholicity; and in a current phrase the Church of Scotland is designated "a National branch of the Catholic Church." This phrase demands attention, as its usage emphasises the solidarity of the Church of Christ, and minimises not the nationality but the alleged insularity of the branch in Scotland.

Catholicity

The words of the Apostles' Creed regarding the Holy Catholic Church have not the same significance for the members of different communions, and hence the need to define terms. The Roman

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Church claims catholicity, but the Scottish differs from it in creed; the Anglican Church claims catholicity, but it is Episcopal, and the Scottish is Presbyterian. It is obvious that definitions taken from the authorised documents of a community are alone valid for explaining its character. At the Reformation the Church of Christ was styled Catholic, and the sense in which the term was employed may be seen from the words of the Confession of 1560—"It contains the elect of all ages, all realms, nations, and tongues . . . who have communion and society with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, through the sanctification of His Holy Spirit. This Kirk is invisible." A national branch of such a Kirk is an absurdity in thought. In the Westminster Confession of Faith, while the same idea of catholicity is retained, there is also a definition of the visible Catholic Church, which, it is said, "consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children." Particular Churches, entitled to the name of Catholic because Christian, "are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them." The Church of Scotland is Catholic according to this definition; and as it is recognised by the State, it may be styled with propriety a "National branch of the Catholic Church." In its claim of catholicity it is not uncharitable to other communions. It is true that the Westminster Confession of Faith names the Pope antichrist; but a spirit of charity dic-

tates the definition now quoted, since no individual communion is declared to be outside the pale of Christianity, and no pharisaism exalts the Presbyterian as *the* Church. In spite of its history—its triumph over Romanism, and its suffering many things from the hands of Episcopacy—the Scottish Church of the present day recognises with ordinary charity the spiritual aim and work of Anglicanism, and no longer rails at the Bishop of Rome as antichrist. Admitting the catholicity of other communions, it claims to be a member of the universal Church of Christ. In this admission it is obedient to the law of charity, and in this claim it manifests no unholy pride.

Nationality

The nationality of the Scottish Church dates from the Reformation, though it may be said that Protestantism inherited the character of antiquity and nationalism for its Church, or had it transferred to it. The Reformation was in one sense a religious revolution, as is borne out by these words taken from one of the documents of an early General Assembly: "Christ's religion *de novo* established, ratified, and approved throughout the whole realm." In spite, however, of the drastic policy of Knox and his friends, the union of Church and State did not cease with the destruction of the old form of national religion. Whatever may have been the relation, succession or sequence, of the Protestant to the Catholic Church, there was no period during which the people were in doubt regarding the dominant

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form of religion, or were left without a State recognition of religion. The Lords of the Congregation, laymen possessing political power and prepared to effect ecclesiastical changes, succeeded, when the time came, in altering the constitution of the National Church; and in Parliament the ecclesiastical revolution was made so speedily, that the people, while conscious of radical modifications in their ritual and also in their theology, were not witnesses of the spectacle of the State alienated from a religious incorporation. Thus, while the Reformation marks the origin of Protestantism, and so, strictly speaking, marks the beginning of the nationality of the existing Church, the Protestants of the sixteenth century were not disturbed by novelty in their experience of a national religion, and Scotland in the nineteenth century has a vivid sense of the antiquity of the Church.

Philistine thinkers reckon this sense of antiquity of no value, and, while rightly contending that it must not be a barrier to needed change, they count reverence of no worth. It has been shown, however, amidst the turmoils of the recent Disestablishment crusade, that there is a wide-spread and firm belief in the idea of a national religion, and a deep and passionate reverence for the Church, hallowed by ancient traditions of well-doing, which remains the oldest and most significant of the institutions which mark the nationality of Scotland. The nationality of the Church witnesses to the nationality of Scotland.

Until these last years there has been no contention regarding the principle of the establishment

of religion. The secessions which have taken place have not been the consequences of disputes regarding an abstract principle of State recognition of religion; and the representatives of the Disruption fathers of 1843 and of the seceders of the eighteenth century, have departed from the ways of their spiritual ancestors. The causes which led to the secessions have been removed, or have almost passed into oblivion; and the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches emphasise their existence as separatists by preaching the dogma of Voluntaryism, or by the more aggressive method of proclaiming the glad tidings of a severance of the bonds uniting the Church and the State. There is no substantial grievance to vex the Scottish dissenter; and his life has been singularly comfortable contrasted with that of his English brother. He has suffered no political disabilities; he has not been debarred from the degrees of the universities; and if he has paid a species of land-tax destined for the use of religion, he has been but paying teinds which belonged to the National Church before there were Protestants, and which were secured to the Reformed Church before there were Presbyterian dissenters. It is true that dissenters cannot occupy the theological chairs in the universities, but they have made no effort to remove this disability. The charge, then, against the National Church is not that it represents practical abuses, or that it is associated with political or social tyranny, but that it is founded on a wrong principle. The charge is met by the declaration that this union is right in idea and just in experience; and by the argument

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that religion should guide the conduct of the individual, should permeate the life of the family, and should dominate the policies of the State ; and, further, that the function of the State is not merely to guard the person and protect the property of the citizen, but is to promote his welfare by means of which religion is the most effective.

It is a new experience for the Church to defend its very existence by justifying its distinctive principle, to prove its right to the name of the Church of Scotland, and to exhibit the titles to its property. In former times, amidst Catholic, Presbyterian, and Episcopal strifes, there was no question regarding the justice, or even the expediency, of the State recognising a form of religion, and till these last days there has been no need for an apology for this recognition. Now there is defence because there is attack. The Church, however, is alive, as it generally has been, to the worth of the principle which it represents, and is conscious of the duties which in their fulfilment warrant its continuance as a national institution. Aware of its grave responsibilities it inaugurated, before the Disestablishment crusade began, a scheme of extension, which has resulted in the planting and endowment of over four hundred new churches in places where increase of population had over-taxed the resources of the old parochial system. The number of these churches, to which there are annual additions, is a patent sign that the Scottish Church is endeavouring, not simply to extend itself as a "denomination," but, in truth, to fulfil its high function as a national institution. Supplementary to this plan

of extension is the Home Mission scheme, under which stations are erected where regular churches are for the present impossible, or perhaps are undesirable. The Life and Work Committee is still another agency which sets itself, amidst its duties, to the training of deaconesses and nurses, and to the organising of guilds of young men and women. The Temperance Committee represents yet another side of spiritual labour. Similar work is being undertaken by other religious communities, and the harvest is plentiful enough to engage more labourers; but the number of the agencies promoted by various Christian societies does not alter the fact that the Church of Scotland is zealously striving to perform its duty as an institution designed to promote the spiritual welfare of the nation. It is worthy of note that an influential committee, appointed by the General Assembly, has been dealing, during the last few years, with the social and spiritual condition of the people. Members of this committee have visited the different presbyteries to obtain evidence in view of possible ecclesiastical legislation, have acted as advisers to parochial workers, have stimulated local energy and directed it, and have drawn public attention to many of the needs and wants of religion. The aims of this committee are vast; and though many of them may not now be realised, they bear fresh testimony, by the interest shown in them, to the fact that the Church is alive to its national functions. The money requisite for carrying on the work of the Committees is obtained by voluntary contributions, and from the interest derived from legacies and donations, such as the

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bequest of £500,000 made by the late Mr. Baird of Auchmedden. The income from these sources, large though it is, is ever inadequate, since success tends to widen the aims of Christian workers. It is no argument against a National Church that an ever-increasing mission area is beyond the energies of the labourers, or that there are no visible signs that the people are altogether Christian. It would be a strong argument in favour of Disestablishment if duties were left undone, or if methods were antiquated; but no one dares to attack the character or method of work, or to bring the charge of spiritual sloth. And yet enemies or theorists are now seeking to destroy the Church's nationality, which in a measure bears witness to the Christianity of the State, which gives some evidence that the people are religious, and which secures the exercise of religious ceremonies on official occasions. This nationality is to be destroyed, not because the Scottish Church is an institution useless to the welfare of the people, or is a community exercising some baneful influence, but because certain men, who have stepped beyond its pale, have formulated the charge that the union of Church and State is wrong in idea and unjust in experience.

Government

Since the Revolution Settlement Presbyterianism has been the fixed form of government in the Scottish Church. It is sometimes asserted that the scheme of ecclesiastical government introduced by John Knox was not based on any prin-

ciple which implied opposition to Episcopacy. It may be shown, that though he refused an English bishopric, he was for a time one of the royal chaplains in England, and also that his two sons entered the Anglican Church. It can be shown, on the other hand, that he did not reckon the office of bishop, distinguishing it from that of presbyter, as of divine appointment; and hence that if he approved Episcopacy he did so on the ground of expediency. According to the arrangement set forth in the First Book of Discipline, there was for several years after the Reformation no recognition of bishops, and this circumstance helped to educate the people in the belief that the threefold ministry was not of divine origin. In his preface to the Book of Common Order, first published in 1556, Knox declared the pastor, the doctor, the elder, and the deacon, to be the only officers of divine and therefore of permanent appointment in the Church; and it may be shown from other sources, such as the Helvetic Confession, approved in Scotland at his instigation, that he held that the words bishop and presbyter were used in Scripture to denote the same office. In the Second Book of Discipline, the work of Andrew Melville, as the First was that of Knox, the scheme of Presbyterianism was more fully developed and became the rival of Episcopacy. It may, accordingly, be said, that the Scottish people after the Reformation were not taught to view Episcopacy as having a Scriptural basis; and that this, the earliest lesson, has left a permanent impression on the country.

Episcopalians have often asserted that

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the office of superintendent mentioned in the First Book of Discipline was practically the same as that of the bishop. At the present day there are advocates for the revival of this office, and some of these assert that in Knox's plan the office was intended to be permanent. It has been pointed out that the office was not mentioned in the Book of Common Order, and evidence may be obtained from the First Book of Discipline to show that the superintendents were meant to serve the temporary purpose of planting the Protestant Church. If the office of superintendent was of temporary use in the Reformed Church, it cannot be said that it was almost identical with that of bishop, which, according to Episcopal theory, is of divine appointment. The functions of a superintendent may be compared with those of a bishop, and it will be seen that they were distinct. The superintendent was not consecrated by superintendents. His duties could be delegated to any ordinary minister not specially set apart, and in all things he was subject to the General Assembly. It may be safely affirmed that in the first years after the Reformation there was nothing suggestive of Episcopacy in the government of the Church, and that the people, as has already been said, were not taught to look on Episcopacy as a necessary because a divine order.

The history of Episcopacy in Scotland has not been such as to render the system acceptable to the people. Our only cardinal, eminent as a politician, skilful and subtle as a Churchman, was noted as a libertine; and when he was murdered there were many who thought, as Sir David Lindsay said,

“the loon be well away.” The last Catholic Archbishop, John Hamilton, was condemned on political and criminal charges and executed. The Tulchan bishops appointed, but not consecrated, that they might be agents for receiving the revenues of the ancient sees, were objects of popular ridicule. The Episcopacy introduced by James VI., after he had ratified Presbyterianism, was at no time revered for the worth of its representatives, who were for the most part the creatures of their royal patron; though, it must be admitted, they excited no widespread opposition to Episcopacy till, in the days of Charles I., the National Covenant was framed. While there was no popular enthusiasm for Episcopacy as established by King James, there was no special hardship felt by the nation, as the old form of worship inherited from Presbyterian times remained untouched. When, however, new canons and a new liturgy, “Laud’s Liturgy,” were forced upon the Church, there was resentment everywhere in the land, and a solemn and formal protest, the National Covenant, was prepared. In the Glasgow Assembly of 1638 Episcopacy was abolished and Presbyterianism was restored. Episcopacy suffered, not because of opposition to it as a theory or scheme, but because the prelates had become the tools of the English archbishop. The new liturgy was to change the fashion of public worship, and the people were roused to indignation. The men who perpetrated this indignity were ruled by Laud, and the patriotism of the Scots was stirred.

From the time of the Glasgow Assembly till the date of the Restoration, Presbyterianism continued

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as the established form of ecclesiastical government. At the Restoration, without the Church's voice being heard in her own peculiar business, Episcopacy was restored under Archbishop Sharp, who, to speak the truth in charity, was a most unfortunate representative of prelacy. Before the return of Charles, the country was divided into political parties engaged in bitter strife, and the Church was rent into factions. Though Scotland had nothing to do with the Restoration, there was a widespread delight in the land, as moderate men expected that a settled government would quell the political parties and crush the ecclesiastical factions. When Charles returned, he showed at once what Scotland was to receive at his hands. In ruthless haste he changed the government of the Church. Some three hundred ministers were driven from their homes, because they would not yield their consciences to their king, and thus the struggles of the later Covenanters began. Lauderdale as politician, Sharp as ecclesiastic, Claverhouse as soldier, were representative of the Royalist party; and it is to be remembered that amidst the strife, Leighton, of happy memory, retired from his bishopric, and in quest of peace departed to England. The nobles almost to a man were Royalists, and, doubtless, restrained many of their dependents; yet, in spite of the nobles, thousands of the people became Covenanters, and faced the abominable cruelties of the Royalist tyrants.

At the Revolution Settlement, Presbyterianism was once more established. We have been told that William would have befriended Episcopacy

had the bishops been his partisans ; but whatever hypothetical deeds he might have accomplished, he at least put an end to the ecclesiastical system which the bishops supported. It is absurd to reconstruct history out of possibilities, and it is useless now to estimate without data the number of the Scottish advocates of Episcopacy at the Revolution. The late Bishop Wordsworth, of St. Andrews, in spite of Macaulay, contended that there was nothing like a national demand that Presbyterianism should be restored. The important fact remains, though he did not heed it, that throughout Scotland there is, and has been, a widespread and very genuine reverence for the Covenanters, who contended for civil and religious liberty, and fought for the cause of Presbyterianism, while there is no pious record or noble tradition of a blissful influence of Episcopacy, and no fond regret for a golden age of patriotic prelates and holy priests. Episcopacy, whatever be the cause, has left no lasting impression of goodness or peace ; the struggles of the Covenanters, stern advocates of Presbyterianism, are among the most cherished traditions of the land.

Theories regarding the origin of the forms of ecclesiastical government do not appeal to a nation, and certainly these theories have not greatly affected the people of Scotland. When, however, the traditions attached to a particular form of government are able to rouse enthusiasm, that form is preserved with reverence ; and it is a plain historical fact that around Scottish Presbyterianism there have clustered traditions which Scotsmen treasure. At the present time, the great mass of the people, educated by records of fights for freedom,

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and touched by stories of heroism, value the Presbyterian form of government, which now for over two hundred years has been established in their Church.

In Scotland there is a sentiment for the nationalism and also a sentiment for the Presbyterianism of the Church. It would serve no good end to seek to determine which is the stronger feeling, as there is no conflict between them. There are those who count nationalism the one thing needful, arguing that we have a duty to God to make a national profession of religion. There are those, on the other hand, who think that the Presbyterianism is more than the nationalism of the Church, persuaded that it best secures the peaceful fulfilment of righteousness in the land. Fortunately, the Church may be, and is, both national and Presbyterian; and its adherents are convinced, and are prepared to do much for their conviction, that the Church, as now existing, is an instrument fitted for the establishment of national righteousness, and also for carrying to individuals the divine message of salvation.

In the teaching of Andrew Melville, it was set forth that Presbyterianism is of Scriptural origin, and therefore of permanent appointment. Melville's teaching does not, however, represent the precise position of modern Presbyterians. It may be said with accuracy that they do not declare that all government should be Presbyterian, but rather that they deem that form the best for their Church, and that they attribute to it a certain weight of authority, on account of its harmony with what they believe was the government of the primitive Church.

Clerical Orders

The question of apostolic succession, or of a continuity of clerical orders, extending from the times of the apostles, has never been of burning interest in Scotland, though in conflicts of argument defenders of Presbyterianism have asserted clerical continuity. Presbyterians, it is obvious, cannot have episcopal succession; but some, at least, lay claim to a succession through presbyters. Within the last generation the subject of ministerial orders has received a measure of attention owing to the rise of a "High Church" party, and on account of the proposals for union advocated by the late Bishop Wordsworth. In regard to these orders, as in regard to ecclesiastical government, the teaching and practice of the first Reformers have left a lasting impress on the mind of the nation. In the Confession of Faith of 1560, it was specifically stated that neither antiquity nor "lineal descent" is to be reckoned among the signs of the true Church, and lawful ministers are said to be "only they that are appointed to the preaching of the Word . . . they being men lawfully chosen thereto by the Kirk." In the First Book of Discipline it was declared that the ceremony of the laying on of hands should cease. "Other ceremony than the public approbation of the people, and declaration of the chief minister, that the person there presented is appointed to serve the Kirk, we cannot approve; for albeit the apostles used the imposition of hands, yet seeing the miracle is ceased, the using of the ceremony we judge is not necessary." This book, prepared

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by the Church, did not receive civil sanction. It indicates, however, the opinions of the first Reformers, and points to their practice. The use of the ceremony was restored by the Second Book of Discipline, and was continued by "the form of Presbyterian Church government" prepared at the time of the Westminster Confession of Faith. In the first of these documents, the imposition of hands is simply named among the ceremonies of ordination, and no symbolical significance is attached to it. The continuance of the ceremony is now justified on the plea that it is according to apostolic usage; but by New Testament teaching, the ceremony was the sign or accompanied the conveyance of some *χάρισμα*; and "seeing the miracle is ceased," Knox was more logical than the advocates of a usage which once had, but has not now, a symbolical importance. Logical consistency has no ethical value, and men are not constrained by it. Presbyterians use a ceremony which has no meaning for them save that it was part of the apostolic ritual, but they do not venture to assert that it was a Divine appointment of perpetual validity. The ceremony, as has been noticed, was disused for a time after the Reformation; but this flaw, if flaw it be, does not invalidate, in the thinking of Presbyterians, the calling or work of their ministers, even though it should involve a broken clerical succession. The words of George Gillespie, one of the Scottish representatives at the Westminster Assembly, express the general opinion of Presbyterians, "The act of ordination standeth in the mission or the deputation of a man to an ecclesiastical function. . . . As to which

mission or ordination neither prayer nor imposition of hands, nor any other of the Church's rites, is essential and necessary." These words, however, are not likely to commend themselves to the members of the High Church party, as they are commonly styled,—to those who in recent years have united themselves in the "Scottish Church Society." The High Church party of the present day is not suggestive of the "High Churchism" of the sixteenth century, of which Andrew Melville was the type, or of the "High Churchism" of the seventeenth century, of which the Scots Worthies, men like Peden and Cameron, were representatives. The High Churchman of the former times struggled to maintain the Divine right of the Church, opposing all civil interference in things ecclesiastical. Nineteenth century High Churchmen are charged with being not only sacramentarians, but also sacerdotalists, to use barbarous terms, and they are understood to lay stress on the historical continuity of the Church witnessed to by a continuance of orders through lineal Presbyterial descent. In the official transactions of the "Scottish Church Society," we are informed, though the statement is of no importance, that "Evangelicalism never believed the reality of ordinances;" and also, in the interests of another subject, that "ordination is the bond which makes us participators of the Apostolic ministry, and that 'which mainly holds the Church together,' through successive generations." The value assigned to the continuity of orders is seen in the statement that if the imposition of hands was ever omitted, "it was restored while most of the clergy had pre-

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Reformation orders." Part of the motto of this Society is "Ask for the old paths." The First Book of Discipline is one of the oldest documents of the Reformed Church, and the value attributed by Knox and his friends to pre-Reformation orders is attested by these words, "The Papistical priests have neither power nor authority to minister the sacraments of Christ Jesus." One of the most instructive passages in the Transactions of this Society deals with the decision of the General Assembly of 1882, in reference to the admission of Congregational ministers. It was reserved for this Assembly, we are told, "to break through this Apostolic rule, and to admit men to the status of ministers without a valid ordination." To this narrative there is this addition, "No wonder that such words as the following were then heard in the General Assembly: 'This is a bad day for the Kirk,' 'We shall have to become Episcopalians to save Presbytery.' 'Certainly there is no Presbytery here.' 'We are no longer a Church.'" Obedient to the Society's motto, we "ask for the old paths," in order to discover if we are no longer a Church, and we find that Knox and the framers of the First Book of Discipline, said, "Other ceremony than the public approbation of the people, and declaration of the chief minister, that the person here presented is appointed to serve the Kirk, we cannot approve;" that Calderwood, the historian of the Church, in his *Altare Damascenum*, stated, "Et sic nunquam peritura est Ecclesia, quia in casu necessitatis pii et fideles congregati in nomine Christi possunt eligere et electum inducere in ministerium;" that Gillespie was convinced that

in ordination none of the "Church's rites is essential and necessary;" and, to take an example, that Robert Bruce, minister in Edinburgh, Moderator of the General Assembly in 1588, was ordained, but not with the laying on of hands.

The fanaticism which rests the Church on a basis of ritual is not characteristic of Presbyterianism, and does not exist outside of a circle of members of the Scottish Church Society, which, as a whole, has excellent and pious aims, though using means that are questioned. Fixed ceremony may be necessary for a valid ordination, but this is not the current belief of the Presbyterians of Scotland, who look to another foundation, and do not prate that they no longer constitute a Church because some ritual has been omitted or disused. Professor Story, in the Baird Lecture, 1897, "Apostolic Ministry in the Church of Scotland," speaks like a Scot and writes like a Presbyterian, when he uses the words, "The succession, which binds the life of the Church age after age into one unbroken unity, is not that of the members of an ecclesiastical order, but of those who, in virtue of their spiritual oneness with the Father, have been in their day and generation the 'friends of God.'"

It is the function of lawfully ordained ministers, and of such only, to dispense the sacraments; and it is set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith that the efficacy of a sacrament does not depend on the piety or intention of him that doth administer it. The minister does not belong to a priesthood different from that of all believers in Christ, and hence his ordination is nothing more

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than his dedication to certain uses, such as the dispensing of the sacraments. In connection with this ordination there is now a customary ritual, not of Divine appointment but in harmony with Apostolic usage ; and it may be asserted that the existence of the Church does not depend on an essential matter of ordination, since ordination is not to the Protestant a sacrament. For the sake of decency and order, the customary ritual is preserved in the Church of Scotland, but there are not many within its pale who are likely to assert that the sacraments cease to be " holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace," when dispensed by ministers of churches in which this ritual is not observed.

Creed

Calvinism, as set forth in the Westminster Confession, is the recognised creed of the Church of Scotland ; but it does not adequately express the faith of many, perhaps even of the majority, of its members. In any religious community showing vitality of thought, and manifesting an earnest endeavour to know God in Jesus Christ, there must be, through the experience of centuries, a departure from the statements and definitions of a formula of faith. Professor Story, in the Baird Lecture already noted, says of the Westminster Confession, that it " exaggerates the doctrine of the divine sovereignty, disparages that of human responsibility, and conceals the truth of God's universal fatherhood and goodwill to men behind its dogma of an arbitrary election." Professor Story, in the present state of the Church, may with

impunity criticise the creed which he has accepted as the formula of his own faith. In such criticism he represents many minds, and it may be said, in the words of an eminent clergyman of the United Presbyterian Church, that there is "a tendency to abandon the use of the Confession of Faith as a working test of the doctrines of the preachers of the Church, and to treat it as an historical document indicative of the original basis of Protestantism." The Confession remains in its original form with what Professor Story terms its "dogma of an arbitrary election." That dogma rarely forms the burden of the sermons of our living divines, and yet no effort is made to remove it or any other dogma from the Confession. The formula for elders signing the Confession has been the subject of debate in the General Assembly, but no one has explicitly demanded for the clergy a relief from a weight which many of them feel. Believing what they count the essentials of Christianity, many, like Professor Story, remain in the Church while they condemn a particular dogma; and there are many who prize the Confession, but who, because they reject certain parts of it, would welcome a change in the formula of subscription, a change which the Church has the power to effect while it cannot touch the Confession itself.

Some will reckon as progress, and some as retrogression, the change which has taken, or is taking, place in the Church's faith. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ, which satisfies the need for a Saviour, and the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, which witnesses to His divinity and sanc-

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tions the hope of immortality, must be, and are preached; but let divines assert that a belief in the miracles of Christ is not necessary to a Christian, let them say they "trust the larger hope," or boldly deny eternal punishment as a doctrine incompatible with the highest and purest idea of God, let them vindicate the rights of scientific criticism, as they deal with the books of the Bible, and the Church takes no action. Campbell of Row, with his theory of Atonement, would not be evicted in these days, nor would Norman Macleod be arraigned for his "views on the Sabbath." In the present state of the Church's faith, where the tendency is to emphasise such cardinal doctrines as the fatherhood of God, and to permit freedom of opinion on secondary subjects like the nature of the inspiration of the Bible, it would be impossible to formulate a new confession, and no one proposes the task. It is, no doubt, a logical absurdity to fix a creed and then to allow divergences from it. Human needs, however, are of greater importance than the claims of mere uniformity; and there is in the Church of Scotland, as in other Churches, a recognised creed, from which there may be such separation as is determined and allowed by the charity and sense of the religious community. Naturally there are some who would limit and some who would extend the freedom of speculation which is more or less settled at any period; and thus we have a conservative and a liberal party within the domain of theology. There must be conservative and liberal forces in a Church as in a State, and conflicts and extreme opinions are inevitable; but

just as it is true that in present-day politics old Toryism is dead, and both parties recognise a law of progress to obey it, so, in the Scottish Church, the unyielding adherents of Calvinism are gone, and the conservative and liberal theologians represent, though with an obvious difference, progressive thought. Broad Churchism as a mere negative, destructive, revolutionary force has passed away, though it had a certain justification in dispelling superstitions, in stimulating rational religious thought, and in asserting the rights of scientific criticism. Theological liberalism, reverent towards existing beliefs, constructive in purpose, progressing where truth leads it, is alive. The recently constituted "National Church Union" has been founded to foster that liberalism, and it may yet possess the right to represent it. The "Scottish Church Society," as has been already stated, is commonly described as High Church in its aims. Its professed purpose, however, is to quicken religious life and to strengthen beliefs; in the words of its constitution, it exists "to defend and advance Catholic doctrine as set forth in the ancient creeds and embodied in the standards of the Church of Scotland." This society may be taken as representative, in some measure, of the theological conservatism of the Church.

Worship

The conduct of public worship has been greatly changed in recent years, and much has been done to remove the reproach of uncomeliness. The preaching of the Word, on which Knox laid stress,

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still retains an important place in public services, only it has been curtailed to sensible limits. Knox was no enemy to liturgical services, and the prayer-book, or liturgy, to which his name was popularly attached, was long in use. In the seventeenth century certain English influences helped to work memorable and baneful changes in the forms of worship in Scotland; and the attempt to enforce "Laud's Liturgy" probably accounts for the beginning of a dislike among classes of the people to set forms of prayer. The bishops themselves secured an ordinance of the Privy Council forbidding the use of the old and the new liturgies. In the eighteenth century the custom of extempore prayer gave ample opportunity to ministers to indulge in reasoned discourses, supposed to be prayers, expressed in a style outwith the province of recognised canons of taste. The choice specimens preserved in "Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Display'd" were probably treated by the writer of that book to suit the proprieties of amusing anecdote. It is the fact, however, that extempore prayer in a rude age gave scope for the play of eccentricity, and permitted indulgence to individual taste with remarkable results. In the first half of the nineteenth century, though nothing was done by the Church or by any society to improve the forms of worship, a growing refinement of taste affected the literary, and modified the illiterate, style of the clergy. Eccentricity took less ridiculous shapes, and individual taste was chastened into some kind of sobriety. In the latter half of the century Dr. Robert Lee, of Old Greyfriars', Edinburgh, came forward as the

advocate of new forms of worship. An organ was introduced into the Greyfriars' Church, and the nickname of "Organ Lee" clung to him. As an innovator, he had to wage a long and tedious fight; but he won his battle, and the Church Service Society continued his work. A hymnal was compiled, which was sanctioned by the General Assembly for the use of congregations; organs were introduced into many churches; chants and anthems were added to the forms of praise. Manners of reverence were adopted by many worshippers, and in due time many of the clergy passed from extempore prayer to the reading or repetition of carefully written or selected prayers. The Church Service Society, to aid the public devotions of the people, issued the *Εὐχολογιον*—a Book of Common Order—which has already passed through several revised editions. This society, which had neither legal standing nor recognition of any kind in the Church, stimulated the General Assembly to a sense of duty, so that in 1889 a committee was appointed—the Committee on Public Worship and Sacraments—which was instructed to deliberate, and to make suggestions, regarding the conduct of public worship and the celebration of the Sacraments. Unfortunately, this committee, by their reports, violated the taste and shocked the sense of the people, and their efforts were without practical result. When the final report, by a resolution of the General Assembly, was sent to the presbyteries for their consideration, Dr. Boyd, of St. Andrews, the most notable of the Church service reformers, proposed in the local presbytery a motion which expressed the opinion of the country. He moved

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that that report be disapproved, saying, "Some of the recommendations are sure to be regarded as a perilous approach to what is called 'Ritualism'; that is, to be so regarded by many excellent people. On the other hand, such as desire an advance in the conduct of public worship would not thank the Assembly for recommendations so very savourless. . . . Changes in worship must never go beyond the sympathy of the congregation, and, if they be good, they are best allowed to come in gradually, as the change in taste and feeling may call for them. . . . The singular recommendation that ministers and congregations should cultivate due reverence of demeanour at prayer implies a reproach for which . . . there is no foundation whatever."

There is as yet no liturgy sanctioned for general use. Writers have lost the dignified epic style of the best compositions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and nothing in these last years has appeared which could be placed in a fixed ritual. Yet prayer in many churches is now offered in words not chosen at random, but selected according to the best taste to express devout feeling; and music, through variety and excellence, is lending its charm to worship. A natural result, however, of the want of a fixed ritual is the absence of uniformity in divine service. In many parishes, especially in those of the Highlands, there is still severe plainness; in others there are "innovations," as they are not uncommonly styled. In one church there is the repetition of the Apostles' Creed; in another, members bow at the name of Jesus; in still another, the elements of the sacrament of the

Lord's Supper are blessed as they are touched by the hand of the celebrant, and the cup is raised as if the host were being elevated. These practices, some of them not new in the worship of the Scottish Church, are generally adopted in the name of æstheticism ; and though there must be differences of opinion on matters of taste, yet amidst this variety of service there is no heat of party strife, and no bitter war of factions. Almost everywhere there are signs of an endeavour to lend a fitting dignity to prayer, and to add beauty to praise, that the best worship may be offered to God.

Statistics

The vitality of a Church may be seen in the thoroughness of its work at home and in the vigour of its labours abroad. It has already been pointed out that the Church of Scotland is true to its idea of nationality in planting new churches and erecting mission stations. Statistics are generally suspected by those whom they do not satisfy. The figures are contested which indicate that the membership of the Church of Scotland is greater than the combined membership of the other Presbyterian Churches, and it is alleged that it counts among its adherents all those who do not belong to other religious communities. It may be admitted that there are everywhere honorary members of the household of faith, and at the same time it may be declared that there is the strictest endeavour to make the roll of the Church's members and adherents accurate. According to official returns for the year 1896 the number of commu-

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nicants was 663,408; and the income, apart from teinds, which form the "ancient patrimony," amounted to £446,138; these figures indicating an increase of communicants and also of income for the year. When an Established Church represents but a small minority, or is inadequate to meet the religious demands of the people, it ceases, without Act of Parliament, to be national. Enemies may say that the Scottish Church, because it does not include the whole community, has therefore no just claim to represent the nation. No one, however, will say that it does not seek to be obedient to the will of the great Head of the Church or to realise the intentions of its own makers and builders, Knox, Melville, Henderson, since its endeavour is to carry the message of the gospel to all the people and to erect churches over all the land. Its opponents, who would destroy its legal title to nationality, do not accuse it of inactivity or of corruption. They profess to be zealous in promoting its welfare when they advocate their distinctive theory and agitate for the severance of the Church from the State.

Missions

Outside of the country, continental stations, army and navy chaplaincies, colonial and Indian churches, testify that the Church of Scotland is proving its membership in the Church of Christ. The Jewish mission, revered by many for the sacred traditions of Judea and Galilee, is directed to the conversion of the Jews. In India, which is one of the most important of the mission fields, a

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special characteristic of the work is the organising of colleges and schools for secular and religious education. In the college established in Calcutta there are six professors and eight teachers; while in the college in Madras there is a principal and a large staff of teachers. Blantyre and Domasi are the important centres of the African mission; and I'chang, where there are three missionaries, is the station in China. Industries are carried on at the stations in Africa, which provide training and employment to numbers of the native lads and young women. The report from Blantyre shows that the staff includes ordained missionaries, a medical officer, a general agent, a teacher, industrial missionaries, and lady missionaries; while the native staff consists of printers, teachers, carpenters, and laundry workers. In the report of the Foreign Mission Committee, presented to the General Assembly of 1897, it is stated that "the Church of Scotland has a mission band of 112 Europeans, with several hundreds of Christian natives in the service of the mission, of whom seven are ministers, one is a licentiate, and the rest are evangelists, teachers, doctors, and assistants in humbler capacities." The Foreign Mission income of the Church during 1896 was £45,879, 16s. 4d.

Union with other Churches

The defender of an institution emphasises its excellence, and yet when it is a Church, the instincts of religion teaches him that he is exalting

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that which should be abased in the sight of the Most High. Nevertheless, there remains the fact that a just appreciation of the Scottish Church may be made without glorification and without petty comparison. Rash and irresponsible individuals may speak foolish words regarding dissenters, and certain of them do ; but the policy of the National Church has been dictated by charity towards those who have separated from it. The Act for the Abolition of Patronage, which was sought for by the Church itself, is a conspicuous example of its efforts to remove just causes of offence. Once more it may be set forth that secessions did not occur through opposition to the principle of union between Church and State. The Patronage Act in its working was the chief cause of the ecclesiastical troubles of a hundred and fifty years ; and the wise statesmen and intelligent Churchmen who succeeded, in 1874, in abolishing patronage were not without hope that Presbyterian union would be accomplished. More recently a bill was introduced into Parliament by Sir Robert Finlay, to remove some of the minor grievances which led to the Disruption of 1843. That bill did not become an Act, and a similar bill, it is said, is being prepared at the present time, which, should it pass into law, may result in individual congregations or individual men returning to the National Church. But Presbyterian reunion, the return of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches to the National Church, is not, nor is likely soon to be, accomplished. The United Presbyterian Church, from the date of its incorporation in 1847, has professed Voluntaryism as a

principle, and its arguments have captured the Free Church, which in 1843, the year of the Disruption, included in its protest the words: "And finally, while firmly asserting the right and duty of the civil magistrate to maintain and support an Establishment of religion in accordance with God's Word, and reserving to ourselves and our successors to strive by all lawful means, as opportunity shall in God's good providence be offered, to secure the performance of this duty agreeably to the Scriptures, and in implement of the statutes of the kingdom of Scotland, and the obligations of the Treaty of Union as understood by us and our ancestors . . . we protest." In spite of these words, resolutions in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment have been again and again passed by the General Assembly of the Free Church, which is at this present time negotiating for union with the United Presbyterian. One of the departed heroes of the Free Church maintained that the communion to which he belonged had a vested interest in the defects of the National Church, and he probably meant that these defects justified the position of himself and his ecclesiastical friends. Had they been removed his occupation as a dissenter would have been gone. With the advancing years has come the fact that Presbyterian dissenters, with individual exceptions, not only repudiate the principle of the union of Church and State, but also seek to dissolve the existing union. The removal, therefore, of alleged defects, will not reunite to the National Church those who assert that nationality is the fundamental defect and constitutes a griev-

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ance to them. This assertion is the reduction of ecclesiasticism to commercial rivalry. The Church of Scotland has privileges which it seeks to use for the spiritual welfare of the people; and these very privileges are alleged to give it advantages in the sectarian competition. The National Church knows no sectarian competition. It has striven, and is striving, to remove the defects against which the dissenters protested when they became separatists. It is ready to receive or to meet those who will return; and if union is impossible it will not and cannot persecute its opponents; and it asks only for peace to live that it may fulfil the duty for which it has so long existed. Assertions are sometimes made by men, with the disposition for fanaticism and without the faculty for criticism, that the idea of an Established Church is unscriptural, since Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." The mind of the Master is not past finding out, and among His words are none which teach that a state is in idea and fact at once so secular and temporal, that a religious institution bound to it, or supported by it, loses spiritual caste. With those who brand it as unscriptural, and with those who urge that its nationality is an injustice, there can be no union on the part of the Church of Scotland, since it will not destroy its historic character, which is no anachronism, to satisfy theorists, or to please the sentimentalists who denounce privilege in a sphere where there is only the rivalry of duty.

Among recent schemes there is one of union on the basis of endowment. It is urged that the

retention of the tithes for religious purposes would not impair the spiritual independence which would be secured by Disestablishment. Those who value the idea of nationality reject this scheme; and it is also rejected by those who count the ancient patrimony a State aid to religion, and deem the money too debased in currency for a Church's use.

The prospect of Presbyterian union is not bright, especially as the ecclesiastical question has passed into the sphere of practical politics. Churchmen have allied themselves with the Conservatives, and dissenters with the Liberals. At the beginning of the Church Defence movement, before plans were matured, and before representations were made to the leading Liberal politicians, prominent Churchmen, who were professed Liberals, severed themselves from their party because of the utterances of Mr. Gladstone. Losing the opportunity of influencing their party, these men helped to reduce the question of the Church to the level of party politics. On the other hand, their union with the Conservatives gave strength to the political upholders of the Church, and a genuine popular enthusiasm was roused for the most ancient of the Scottish institutions. It has now been found that Disestablishment is not the simple process imagined by its advocates; yet to ecclesiastical has been added political bitterness, and were the Church disestablished, there would be among its members the sense of political defeat, in addition to the deep emotion stirred by the fact that an old religious order had passed away. This sense and this emotion would hinder the

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fellowship of the defeated Churchmen with their conquerors.

A union of Presbyterians purchased at the cost of a sacrifice of principle is not to be advocated, though right reason suggests that principles should be examined lest they be after all but prejudices. While institutions are temporal, ideas are not; and though it would be no argument to affirm that an institution which has served generations must be useful now and after, it is not against reason to say that the idea of a formal and spiritual association of Church and State, which has commended itself to the wise of many centuries and different lands, is one so weighted with authority and so tested by experience, that it should not be lightly thrown away. And apart from the origin of the title of the National Church to the teinds, which is in any case a legal one, it may be assumed that what Knox, Melville, Henderson, and Carstares could employ for the maintenance of religion, may be rightly used by their successors; and it may be argued that it is folly to separate from the purposes of religion money legally apportioned to it, when there is the constant cry for means to proclaim the Gospel. Disestablishment and Disendowment are neither ethical principles nor prudential maxims in the sight of the National Church; and it refuses to seek union at the price of the sacrifice of its own principles, however desirable union may be. The Presbyterian Churches have the same creed and worship and government, and yet instead of harmony there is enmity, instead of peace there is attack, instead of co-operation there is a wilful

waste of means. Union is impossible where principles separate; co-operation with Christian kindliness is not. It seems futile for the Church of Scotland to ask that enmity towards it should cease, and that its existence should be respected; and yet there is no contradiction of religion in separate communities, each charitable and tolerant, while self-preserving and self-respecting, working for one and the same spiritual end.

Among the Scottish dissenters are the Episcopalians, whose Church, since the Revolution Settlement, has been too small to exercise any marked influence on the history of the nation. Claverhouse, with a sneer, styled it "the Church Invisible." Scottish Episcopalians, of whom the majority are now associated with the Anglican Church, true to their traditions, do not repudiate the idea of Establishment. Being Episcopalian they object to Presbyterianism, and they so emphasise by habit the value of their own ecclesiastical form, that it is remarkable that any proposal for union with Presbyterians should have emanated from them. The late Bishop Wordsworth, of St. Andrews, as has already been noted, was the zealous advocate of such a union, but in his advocacy he clung strenuously to the theory of the Scriptural origin of the threefold ministry. It is strange, it may be repeated, that he, an Episcopalian, should have ventured to propose a scheme of union to the National Church. He was a member of a small religious society in Scotland, an upholder of an ecclesiastical order not accredited to Presbyterians by favourable traditions, and a supporter of the idea of a clergy spiritually created for definite

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functions. It is to his credit that he was eager to realise the prayer of Christ for unity, only he thought that an ecclesiastical unity, implying the absorption of the Church of Scotland into an Episcopal system, was according to the divine intention. Presbyterianism had its answer to Bishop Wordsworth in the words of Dr. (afterwards Principal) Cunningham, who, in one of the St. Giles' Lectures, said: "And yet, now in the nineteenth century, we feel it might be possible to conform the worship of the Church of Scotland to that of England, but its polity—never. Not that we think Presbytery divinely right and Episcopacy essentially wrong, but because we think no form of Church government has a prescriptive right, and that that form, be it Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Congregational, is the divinest and the best which works the best. We can never now belie our history by surrendering our Presbyterianism, or renounce our reason by believing that religion depends upon a trinity of orders." Bishop Wordsworth expressed astonishment over "the renunciation of reason;" and, referring to Dr. Cunningham, he wrote: "What he has been asked—asked again and again—to do, is to accept the threefold ministry as the means which the Word and providence of God would seem to have conspired to point out and recommend, to enable us to give effect to the prayer of Christ, and to fulfil the repeated and urgent injunctions of Scripture for the unity of the Church; to accept this means, or else to suggest some other and more probable method by which that end may be attained." Presbyterians are satisfied that the Word of God has not recom-

mended the threefold ministry, and many of them are not captivated by the scheme of an ecclesiastical unity of Christendom. Bishop Wordsworth, while willing to recognise Presbyterian orders as valid for a reconstructed Church, practically demanded that Presbyterians, who laid no stress on any form of orders, and valued their own on the ground of expediency, should be converted, and should say that the threefold ministry was recommended by the Word and providence of God.

Bishop Wordsworth's mantle has not fallen on a successor, though there remains some slight evidence that his scheme is not altogether ignored or forgotten. The proposals recently made in Scotland, that the Presbyterian Church should cease, and through Episcopacy receive new and valid orders for its clergy, were not his. These proposals interest but the old men who dream Catholic dreams, and the young men who see episcopal visions. Bishop Wordsworth's ideal was unity, and he required ecclesiastical uniformity, not being satisfied that oneness of spiritual aim, evidenced by the signs of charity, is the answer to the prophecy of one *flock* and one shepherd. He asked too much, when he demanded intellectual assent to propositions which had been denied through generations by the National Church. Presbyterians have been and are persuaded that they have orders valid according to the law of Christ, and that the sacraments dispensed by their clergy help towards salvation; and they ask not for a new fashion of ordination or a threefold ministry, but for faithful men, that the work of the Lord may increase. The government of the National Church may not

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suit the circumstances of other lands ; it has suited Scotland through centuries, and there is no sign that it is inadequate for a Church which is seeking to show its nationality by ministering to the whole community. Were there need for any supervision to which the Presbyteries are not adapted, the office of the superintendent could be revived, and this office would be no incongruity in Presbyterianism. The Church, however, sees no need for the revival of the superintendent, as everywhere in the land there are signs of vitality, and proofs that the present ecclesiastical organisation, sanctioned by long usage and valued on that account, is fitted for the work that is to be done. Satisfied with their orders and their organisation, Presbyterians have no mind to be traitors to the honourable traditions of their country, by seeking a new clergy and merging themselves into an Episcopal system, since they are not persuaded that this is the will of God. They have perfect freedom to co-operate with any Protestant evangelical Church. Their clergy are at liberty to preach from the pulpits of any such Church ; and though they are debarred on every occasion from conducting divine service in any Anglican Church, the interdict does not proceed from the General Assembly. Presbyterianism makes for liberty.

Disestablishment may come, and, in that event, some may turn away from Presbyterianism, to which, because it is the government of the National Church, they are attached. The great mass of the people will not turn away, but the time of Disestablishment is not yet. The National Church, numbering on its rolls the names of many of the

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greatest Scotsmen, hallowed by some of the noblest traditions of Scottish liberty, established in the land through innumerable efforts for the cause of Christ, and cherishing the remembrance of the favour and blessing of the Eternal, is still a power unto salvation.



THE
FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

BY THE
REV. WALTER ROSS TAYLOR, D.D.



VII

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Origin

THE Free Church of Scotland owes its formation as a separate Church to two causes—on the one hand, to a revival of spiritual life in the country, and, on the other hand, to certain decisions of the Civil Courts, and to the action of the Legislature, in the years preceding May 1843. During the eighteenth century, and in the early part of the nineteenth, the withering influence of an all-dominant Moderatism had gone far to destroy religious feeling within the National Church. Evangelical teaching was almost unknown in its pulpits, and was openly disallowed in its courts; the right of the Christian people to choose their pastors was contemptuously ignored; hirelings were forced upon congregations by the help of bayonets; and the Church's leaders were as servile towards the State, and as secular in their lives, as they were indifferent to the people's interests. Had this state of feeling continued, the great movement in 1843 would have been impossible. Ear-

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nest men and women, hungering for the Bread of Life, would have continued to drop away into the secession Churches, but no "Disruption" would have taken place. In the first quarter of the present century, however, the Church began to awake from its long slumber. The dreary winter gave place to a glad spring-time, full of hope and promise. All over the land there was the stirring and swelling of fresh religious life; and under the inspiring influence of the renowned Thomas Chalmers, and of others whose names will long be venerated in Scotland, the National Church rose anew to a sense of its responsibilities, and addressed itself with impulse and power to the real work of the gospel.

With this change of feeling, there at once arose the demand for changed methods of action. For one thing, it could no longer be a matter of small moment to congregations that they were compelled to accept whatever kind of minister might be given them by a patron. Even in the dead times preceding, the absolute discretion allowed to patrons had been often resented as a galling yoke; now it had become intolerable, for religion had become a reality. Accordingly, in 1834, the General Assembly adopted, by a considerable majority, the famous "Veto Act," giving "an instruction to Presbyteries that if, at the moderating in a call to a vacant pastoral charge, the major part of the male heads of families, members of the vacant congregation, and in full communion with the Church, shall disapprove of the person in whose favour the call is proposed to be moderated in, such disapproval shall be deemed sufficient ground for the Presby-

tery rejecting such person." It was a wise Act, and was hailed with great satisfaction throughout the country, but it carried with it issues which at the time were not dreamed of.

Another result of the Church's revived life was an effort to overtake the spiritual destitution of the country by the erection of new charges. Dr. Chalmers brought his matchless eloquence and energy to bear upon this effort, and with such success, that two hundred new churches were built, and duly equipped with ministers and kirk-sessions, exercising full Presbyterian rights. It had not as yet occurred to the Church to ask whether it was free to determine who should have a seat in its own Courts, or be entrusted with the exercise of its spiritual authority. As in the case of the Veto Act, so in this matter also—its right to arrange its own affairs was assumed; but a rude surprise was in store for it—it was speedily to be placed on its defence.

It soon appeared that the Civil Courts considered they had something to say in connection with those departures, and something of a peremptory and far-reaching description. The struggle began in this way. The parish of Auchterarder, in Perthshire, had become vacant, and the patron, the Earl of Kinnoull, bestowed the presentation on one who was totally unacceptable to the people. Out of a population of 3000, only two individuals could be found to sign a "call" to him—that is, an invitation to become their pastor,—while the great body of the people, not content to remain neutral, solemnly protested against his settlement. In these circumstances, the Presbytery felt that

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to proceed to ordination would be both a disregard of the Church's legislation, and a grievous wrong to the people and the cause of Christ in the parish; and, accordingly, they rejected the presentee. He in turn, backed by his patron, appealed to the Court of Session; and, by a majority of eight to five, that tribunal decided that the action of the Presbytery was illegal, and that, whatever might be the wishes of the people, or the conscientious scruples of the Church, the Presbytery were bound to give effect to the patron's choice. In the minority were judges whose names have shed an abiding lustre on the Scottish bench—such men as Lords Cockburn, Jeffrey, and Moncreiff; but in spite of the weight due to their opinions, it was laid down as law that the “call” of the people to a minister was no more than a form, and that the Church had no freedom or authority in the matter beyond what it received from civil statute.

A broad issue was thus raised, and one of a momentous character. It was nothing less than this: What authority was henceforth to hold supremacy within the Church of Scotland—the law of Christ, or the dictate of the civil power? This was no new question, for one characteristic feature of the Scottish Church in earlier days—a feature which has stamped its imprint broad and deep on Scotland's history—was the steadfast assertion that the Church is subject to Christ alone in all spiritual matters. The supremacy of the State in regard to civil matters was fully owned; but alongside of that, there was the staunch and resolute refusal to surrender the Crown-rights of Christ as sole King within His

Church, or to permit the civil arm to hold sway within the realm of conscience. Now, however, the old question was again raised, and with an explicitness and determination which, when the answer came, left no doubt as to the conditions on which the benefits of an Establishment were to be enjoyed.

On the one hand, the Church maintained that in accepting Establishment, it had neither forfeited nor surrendered its right to act on its own deliberate convictions in matters obviously spiritual, but had all along guarded its independent jurisdiction within that province. The Civil Courts, on the other hand, asserted with naked plainness, that an Established Church was a creation of the State; that its ministers, in addition to their spiritual office, were State functionaries, bound to carry out the duties imposed on them, whatever might be their opinion in regard to those duties; and that the claim to spiritual independence had no validity, as the Church's spiritual authority was subordinate to Parliament. In answer, it was argued that, as regards all questions of stipend, emolument, or other civil rights, the Church was prepared to accept and abide by the decisions of the Courts; but that when the matter was one which bore directly on the interests of Christ's kingdom, the Church, as being responsible to its Divine Head, was bound to have supreme regard to what it believed was His Will. The Courts, however, were resolute, and, as time went on, they made it evident that they were prepared to give fullest effect to their claim. Not only did they insist that Presbyteries were bound to ordain pre-

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sentees, however opposed the people might be, but they themselves did not hesitate to intrude into the spiritual sphere. By a decision in the Stewarton case, they at one stroke deprived the two hundred Church Extension ministers and their kirk-sessions of the Presbyterian rights the Church had readily acknowledged. In the creation of those charges the utmost care had been taken that no civil interests connected with the old parochial arrangements should be infringed upon ; the Church's one concern was to make more adequate provision for carrying on its spiritual work ; nevertheless the two hundred sessions were summarily extinguished, and the ministers interdicted from sitting in Church Courts. Nor was this all. When the General Assembly appointed ministers to preach in the parishes of certain ministers who had been suspended, the Court of Session stepped in with an interdict, prohibiting those appointed from preaching in these parishes.

It thus became only too apparent that, in regard to matters so purely spiritual as the forming of the pastoral tie, the recognition of Presbyterian rights, and even the preaching of the gospel throughout the land, the Court of Session claimed that the State must be the supreme arbiter and ruler of the Church's action, and had every disposition to enforce its claim.

At length, the Church resolved to approach the Legislature with a statement of the assaults made on its liberties and rights, "by the very Court to which the Church was authorised to look for assistance and protection," and with a claim to possess and enjoy these rights according to law,

“ especially for the defence of the spiritual liberties of its people.” This resolution took shape in the celebrated document known as the “ Claim of Right.” In this document—one in all respects worthy of a momentous occasion—the Church set forth the extent to which it claimed jurisdiction and independence, and the sacred ground on which its claim rested ; quoted the various statutes and Acts of Parliament by which, as it believed, its rights and liberties had been fully guaranteed ; protested that its government as a Church of Christ could not be carried on unless the encroachments on its freedom of action were prevented ; and solemnly declared that it must hold to those liberties, even “ at the risk and hazard of suffering the loss of the secular benefits conferred by the State, and the public advantages of an Establishment.” Such was the tenor of the statement adopted by the Assembly of 1842 by a majority of 241 to 110, and these numbers, taken in connection with the tone of clear and resolute conviction which breathes through the “ Claim,” ought to have warned the Legislature that a serious crisis was impending. If the decision in the case had been left to the Scotch Members of Parliament, who knew and understood the situation, the crisis would have been averted ; for by 25 to 12 they voted in support of the Church’s “ Claim.” But the political leaders of the day, with the great body of their followers, failed to realise either the true character of the issues involved, or the extent to which the conscience of Scotland was aroused in regard to them. Indeed, it was the general belief, based on assurances emanating from some of the

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Moderate party, that the suggestion of surrendering the benefits of an Establishment was a mere empty threat, and that only a handful of the more extreme "high-flyers" might be expected to act upon it! But whatever may have been the influences or considerations at work, the pregnant fact remains, that on the 9th of March 1843, after a debate lasting over two nights, a resolution in favour of the Church's Claim of Right was rejected by the House of Commons by a majority of 212 to 75, and the Legislature thereby gave its sanction to those decrees and interdicts of the Court of Session, which the Church believed to be unconstitutional and illegal, and such as it could not accept without sacrificing allegiance to its Divine Head and King. In other words, it was now decisively and finally ruled that State-establishment and endowment carried with it the right to control the Church in the discharge of its responsibilities towards Christ and the Christian people.

And now came the critical question, Will the Church, as the worldly and superficial predicted, continue to accept State Establishment on this footing? Will it be content to subordinate its Christ-given authority to the domination of the civil power? In answer, on the 18th of May 1843, the most venerated and trusted of the ministers of the Church of Scotland, to the number of 474, gave an emphatic No. Much as they valued the benefits of an Establishment, they valued more the liberties of Christ's kingdom; and great as was the sacrifice of surrendering churches, manses, glebes, and livings, they willingly laid down their earthly all to purchase for themselves and their posterity

the freedom of the Scottish Church. Leaving behind them a Protest that, as the Legislature had now fixed conditions of Establishment which were subversive of the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church, they were forced to separate from State connection, ministers and elders rose and filed out from St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, and, amid the tears and shoutings of thousands of enthusiastic onlookers, marched to Canonmills Hall, to form themselves into the first General Assembly of the Free Protestant Church of Scotland. It was a great deed, a noble testimony, one on which no true-hearted Scotchman can look back without a thrill of patriotic pride; and in the blessing which has since rested on the Church's efforts may be seen written, as with a sunbeam, the approval of its King and Head.

Spirit of Brotherhood

It has been a distinctive privilege of the Free Church that, from the first day of its separate existence, the duty of brotherly helpfulness has been wrought into its heart's core. The divine principle of the strong helping the weak, of those who have ministering to those who have not, has been as its very life-blood.

One of the first and most urgent questions that had to be answered, in view of the surrender of State-endowments, was that of the future support of the ministers of the Free Church. It would have been an easy thing for many of the congregations to maintain their own ministers, but the problem which had to be faced was of a much

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larger character ; for, as the true heir of the historic Scottish Church, and national also in extent, the Church recognised that its responsibilities were national. Moreover, it found itself imperatively called on by every district throughout the country to supply a gospel ministry—not by the cities merely, where people were massed together, and means were ample, but by rural parishes, scattered villages, and remote Highlands and Islands. But how was this to be done? Stripped of endowments, where were the means to be found for maintaining a fully-equipped Church in poor and sparsely-populated districts? This problem exercised the far-seeing mind of Chalmers long before it was necessary to bring his plan into operation ; and accordingly, at a convocation of ministers held in November 1842, he was able to present in a matured form to his astonished and reassured auditors his great conception of a common Sustentation Fund.

His central idea was the institution of a fund into which all connected with the Church should contribute as they were able—the rich according to their abundance and liberality, and the poor with equal willingness, according to their poverty ; and out of which every congregation, rich and poor alike, should receive for its minister an equal share. It was a broad, catholic, generous conception, which worthily expressed the fervid large-heartedness of its author, and directly appealed to all that was unselfish and brotherly in ministers and people. The appeal was not made in vain. At that memorable time of sacrifice and suffering for Christ's sake, the sense of brotherhood was intense,

as in the first days of the Apostolic Church, when a community of goods was attempted; and none welcomed the proposed arrangement with greater enthusiasm than the ministers of the wealthier congregations. Few more beautiful sights have been presented to Scotland than the spectacle of these men urging their congregations to pour their hundreds and thousands into this common treasury, although they themselves were to receive no more out of it than went to the most obscure of their country brethren. It was a spectacle that made the heart of the country throb with a quicker pulse, and awakened generous impulses in thousands who previously had thought little about the wants of others.

And while relying first and mainly on the power of Christian feeling, Dr. Chalmers had in view also that powerful law of human nature, according to which repeated actions pass in time into habits. Accordingly, he proposed that the order of deacons should be revived in the Church, with a special view to the ingathering of this Fund, and insisted that the collecting should be monthly, or even, if possible, weekly. He foresaw that in this way two essential qualities—perpetuity and progress—would be secured. What would be commenced under the power of impulse would be continued under the abiding power of habit; while habit again would prepare the way for still further advance.

These anticipations have been, to a gratifying extent, realised. The Fund, which amounted in its first year to £68,700, admitting of a dividend to each minister of £105, has steadily risen, till now it yields from £170,000 to £175,000 a year,

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and admits of a dividend of £160. It may, therefore, be truly claimed for the scheme that it has solved the problem as to how a National Church, which has no State support, may supply gospel ordinances to the poor as well as to the rich. And it is gratifying to observe that other Churches, even though endowed, are looking to it as a model for imitation. The Church of England has this year initiated a "Queen Victoria Sustentation Fund;" and the Established Church of Scotland has also found it advisable to propose action on similar lines.

At the same time, while the Sustentation Fund supplies a modest income to every minister of the Church, it is not to be supposed that all ministerial incomes are limited to the amount of the equal dividend. It was understood from the first, and was part of Dr. Chalmers' scheme, that congregations, while doing their duty to the central fund, should be free to supplement their ministers' dividend out of their ordinary congregational revenues; and this, accordingly, is in many cases done. A door is thus unavoidably left open for congregational selfishness to get in, and the temptation has not always been resisted as it ought to have been; yet, speaking generally, the Church has continued splendidly loyal to its central fund, and to the spirit of brotherhood which it enshrines.

Influence on Liberality

The task to which the fathers of the Free Church addressed themselves was one that might have daunted the boldest spirits. Deprived of all

former resources, without a solitary church, or manse, or school-house, or mission hall, and without a penny of endowment, they set themselves to re-establish a National Church over Scotland, on the new basis of the affection and generosity of its people. Yet, with an assured faith in God, and in the loving self-denial of the people for whose interests they had fought and suffered, they began the herculean task, nothing doubting. Accordingly, it is no exaggeration to say that a new chapter then opened in the religious history of Scotland. A new educative force was called into existence, which has ever since been training the country in the highest of the Christian graces. When Dr. Chalmers, some years before, had proposed to raise £100,000 for new churches, people were startled at the largeness of his demand, and gravely doubted its success; but in 1843, although the Free Church had not one-half of the wealth which had belonged to the undivided Church, its members set themselves to supply funds on the scale of hundreds of thousands per annum. Self-denial for Christ's sake became a familiar lesson. Within the first ten years, three millions sterling were poured into the Church's exchequer, and all the machinery of a fully organised Church was rapidly brought into operation.

Of course, those who failed to gauge the depth of feeling in the new movement, were loud with their prophecies that the sudden enthusiasm would as quickly die down again. But so far from the streams of liberality drying up and disappearing, they have grown in volume with every succeeding

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year. The sum of three millions in the Church's first decade, gradually rose until, in the fourth decade, it was nearly six millions, and in the fifth it approached seven millions. The total contributions during the fifty-four years of the Church's separate existence amount to not less than twenty-six millions sterling. At this time of day, therefore, no regrets need be expressed over the endowments surrendered in 1843. The income the Established Church of Scotland derives from its State connection falls considerably short of even one-half of the amount the Free Church annually receives from the free-will offerings of its people.

The organisation formed for the in-gathering of the Sustentation Fund has had much to do with the fostering of this spirit of liberality. The deacons and collectors who, month after month, year after year, have been steadily discharging their voluntary duties, have been among God's chief instruments in developing this side of practical Christianity. And the influence of their work has not been confined to the Free Church. During the past half-century the standard of duty in regard to the wants and necessities of those in spiritual and temporal need has been gradually, but surely, rising throughout the community. We can now point to a quick observing of necessities as they arise, a ready sympathy, a fertile inventiveness as to remedies, a liberal response to appeals, and a steady persevering in helpful work, which were comparatively unknown fifty years ago; and if we ask for the causes contributing to this in Scotland, we must certainly rank among them, first, the impulses awakened by the sacrifices

made in 1843 ; and second, the habit of bearing the burdens of others, which has been steadily formed by the continuous work done on behalf of the Sustentation Fund. The people's gifts have thus come back into their own bosoms an hundred-fold increased — coming back to them in the priceless gifts of enlarged sympathies and more spontaneous self-denial, and not in their own case only, but also in those around them.

Steady Expansion

1. *Home-Work.*—The number of ministers who severed their State connection was 474 ; at the end of the first year their ranks were increased to 583 ; now they number 1165, and minister to 1050 congregations all over Scotland. The history of the Free Church has thus been practically the history of a great Home Mission movement. And all the more because, itself sprung from an evangelical revival, the leading aim of the Free Church has been to bring the gospel to the careless and sunken. It has been sometimes said that a Church dependent on voluntary contributions cannot be the Church of the poor ; the work of the Free Church gives that idea the most direct contradiction. If it has grown, it is because it has gone on planting and equipping churches in the poorest parts of our great cities, in mining villages, and in the distant glens among the Highland hills. For typical illustrations of its spirit, reference may be made to the Church's great leader, Dr. Chalmers, who spent much of the energy of his closing years in fostering a mission in the West Port of Edin-

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burgh; or to one who was for many years its distinguished leader in Glasgow — Dr. Robert Buchanan — who planted in the most degraded wynd of that city a church which, in its turn, became the fruitful mother of many mission churches. These are examples of the kind of effort that is being systematically carried on. The Free Church believes that to provide mission-halls for the poor is not sufficient, and tends, moreover, to stereotype unchristian and unwholesome distinctions betwixt people who all need the same gospel of salvation. The Church's ideal is to bring its strongest resources to bear upon its aggressive work; to build attractive churches, with halls and class-rooms, even in the poorest localities; to send its ablest young ministers to work in them; to surround him with as much effective voluntary help as can be got, and to cherish, as far as possible, among the people who are gathered in, the feeling of corporate family life. Ideals, it is true, are not always translated into actualities, and vigorous congregations are too often satisfied with keeping in life little missions which give no promise of growth; but the impulses of the Church are flowing with steadily increasing strength in the direction of adequate measures.

The funds for Home Mission work come partly from the Sustentation Fund, but are chiefly raised by the committees, Lowland and Highland, charged with the oversight of the work. The sums which pass through their hands average about £15,000 yearly. Special sums are also raised from time to time as required. Thus, a year ago, Dr. J. H. Wilson, of Edinburgh, a

veteran in Home Mission work, raised £10,000 for the promotion of the work in mining districts ; and the present indefatigable convener of the committee, Rev. Robert Howie, has just raised £30,000 towards the erection of Extension Churches in the rapidly growing city of Glasgow. At the same time, those who are doing most for this work are the men most keenly alive to the need of greater effort, and to the obligation which lies on the various sections of Christ's Church to sink their differences and divisions in an all-engrossing desire to bend their whole strength upon the saving work of the gospel.

2. *Foreign Missions*.—In 1843 the Church of Scotland had thirteen missionaries in the foreign field ; and when the Disruption took place, every one of them cast in his lot with the Free Church. At the distance of India they fully recognised the character of the struggle, and without hesitation ranged themselves on the side of those who were surrendering everything, in their loyalty to Christ's Headship. From the first, accordingly, the Free Church started with a noble band of missionaries, men like Dr. Alexander Duff at Calcutta, Dr. John Wilson at Bombay, Mr. James Mitchell at Poona, and Mr. John Anderson at Madras ; and although stripped in India, as at home, of the buildings in which the work had been carried on, it rejoicingly undertook to continue the missions. And here too, as at home, faith and courage were crowned with success. Money poured in from unexpected quarters ; and within a year after Dr. Duff and his colleagues had been expelled from the mission premises at Calcutta, he

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was able to write,—“All things have prospered with us ; we have a more capacious edifice for our operations than before ; the pecuniary resources have been adequate ; the attendance of pupils—1257—has been great beyond any former precedent, and the organic workings of the system have been carried on throughout all departments with new life and renovated vigour. Our institution, as a Free Church one, instead of falling behind, has already started considerably in advance of its former self.”

But the new life in the Church could not rest content with simply maintaining operations on the old scale. Soon the motto came to be—Advance. It might have been thought that with so much Home work on its hands—the building of churches, and manses, and colleges, and schools, over all Scotland—and having to provide also for an ever-increasing ministry, the Church had already more than sufficient outlets for its givings and efforts ; but the word went forth that the Church could not dream of resting satisfied with upholding the missions as already established. Nor was India to be henceforth the only field. For some years there had existed a Missionary Society in Glasgow, which had chosen South Africa for its sphere. So soon as the Disruption took place, this society proposed to hand over to the Free Church its entire staff of six missionaries, along with the female teachers and native assistants, engaged at the various stations. The young Church was in no mood to hesitate. If its Divine Head had work for it to do in South Africa, it was ready to enter on it in His strength.

Cautious spirits might suggest that it would over-tax its resources if it added this fresh burden ; but with an open door set before it, the Church declined to turn aside.

Nor was this the full extent of the responsibilities it then assumed. Prior to 1843, the Church of Scotland had maintained missions to the Jews. There were four stations,—Pesth, Jassy, Constantinople, and Syria,—manned by six missionaries. When the Disruption came, all the six, including the well-known “Rabbi” Duncan, with their assistants, at once and unanimously, as in India, resolved to attach themselves to the Free Church. To take over the work meant financial obligations,—for not a penny of the sums in hand for the missions was henceforth to go to the missionaries,—but the Free Church knew the spirit of its people, appointed a collection, and on one Sabbath obtained sufficient to support the missions for a year. The time was not one for taking counsel with fears ; the men at the helm were men of faith, and their faith was not put to shame.

So began the Foreign Mission work of the Free Church. What of those missions to-day ? The revenue raised at home for Foreign Missions to the heathen and Mohammedans in 1843–44 was £7046 ; last year it was £71,957. In the former year their total revenue from all sources was £13,343 ; last year it was £117,256. For the Jewish Mission, the collection in 1843 was £3400 ; the income last year was £9423. If to those sums be added the revenues of the Continental and Colonial Committees, the total missionary revenue of the Free Church last year amounted to £137,014. Instead

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of 13 missionaries in the foreign field, there are now, of Scottish Christian agents, male and female, 191, and of native Christian agents, 1356. There are 6 colleges at work and 529 schools, with 30,481 students and scholars. The centres of operation have increased to 42 principal stations and 276 branch stations; four Presbyteries have been constituted in India and two in South Africa. A mission of surpassing interest, and attended with signal success, known as the Livingstonia Mission, in memory of the great traveller, is being carried on in British Central Africa; another has its sphere in the New Hebrides Islands; another in the Lebanon, and yet another in South Arabia, near Aden.

If we turn to the field of Jewish Missions, we find that the Free Church has now 70 Christian agents at work, maintains 10 schools for Jewish children, and has a noble hospital, fully equipped for medical mission work, standing on the shore of the Lake of Galilee.

Another important sphere of labour is cared for by the Church's Continental Committee. It was felt that, in these days of travelling and of foreign residence, something required to be done to supply the ordinances of the gospel in the chief centres of popular resort. Accordingly a Continental Mission was begun, and year by year the work has gone on extending and consolidating, until now the Church has two Presbyteries on the Continent of Europe—the Presbytery of Italy with twelve charges, and the Presbytery of Spain and Portugal with five charges—each charge having its own ordained pastor. Besides these, there are other

three charges which have not been attached to Presbyteries, and six stations where ordinances are supplied during the summer or winter seasons by ministers sent from the home Church. There are thus in all twenty-six centres occupied by the Free Church on the Continent of Europe; and many a testimony is borne by British and American travellers to the refreshing and strength they receive through those ministrations while sojourning among strangers.

And if the interests of the Continent have been attended to, those of our wide vast Colonies have not been overlooked. In addition to giving financial assistance to Colonial Churches, the Free Church has extended its own direct efforts to such places as Penang in the far East and Trinidad in the far West; to Queensland and Western Australia in the southern Continent, and to the suddenly increased populations in South Africa. In the principal towns of South Africa, there are at present twenty Free Church ordained ministers, and other labourers are about to follow.

It thus appears that, whatever else may be charged against the Free Church of Scotland, it is not open to the charge of construing its duty in any selfish or narrow spirit. The complaint sometimes brought against it rather is, that, considering its numbers and resources, it is stretching out helping hands too widely and too far; but may the day be distant when it will do aught to forfeit its reputation for large-hearted liberality and many-handed service! Nor does any danger of this meanwhile appear. Long and intimate knowledge enables the writer of this paper to testify, that the

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deepest desire in the heart of the Free Church is the desire to make known Christ's salvation—to make it known anywhere and everywhere—in Highlands and Lowlands, in terraces and closes, to Jews and Gentiles, to the cultured peoples of India, and to the ignorant savages of the South Seas, in the educated cities of Europe, and in the heart of Africa's dark continent ; anywhere and everywhere, according as opportunities allow.

In the earlier years of the Church's Indian missions, attention and effort were largely concentrated on educational work, and after many an anxious discussion this method continues to hold its place of prominence. The three Christian Colleges at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, continue, accordingly, to be maintained in the highest degree of efficiency, and are year by year embuing the keen intellect of Indian youth, not merely with Western but with Christian thought. It cannot be doubted that, in the long run, this influence will powerfully tell. It has already revolutionised the feelings of multitudes towards Christianity. A striking illustration of this may be found in an incident which thrilled all hearts at the General Assembly of last year. The Assembly had elected the eminent and devoted Principal of the Madras Christian College, Rev. Dr. William Miller, C.I.E.—to occupy the Moderator's chair, and this choice, so far from being received with indifference in Southern India, was welcomed, by a large body of educated and influential Indian gentlemen of all creeds and castes, as an opportunity for presenting the Church with an address of thanks for the good work done by the College. The address speaks of the College as “a

centre of intellectual activity, of moral growth and religious inquiry, within which the highest ideals of duty and self-sacrifice are placed before the students by professors distinguished for their scholarship, earnestness, and piety;" rejoices that the high office of Moderator of the Assembly was "filled by one who will live in the memory and affection of many a generation to come;" and breathes the wish that the Madras College, and other like institutions, may continue to be "centres from which beneficent influences may flow forth to all parts of our native land." This spontaneous address was signed by over 1500 persons, most of them occupying positions of weight and prominence, and some of them in positions of the highest dignity in the land. It was thus a most significant document, and all the more, that the larger number of those signing it did not profess to be Christians. For it told that in very many hearts, where the name "convert" cannot be applied, there nevertheless are present deep reverence for what is Christian, and vivid gratitude for the new apprehensions of truth and righteousness, obtained through Christian teaching. As was well said by Principal Rainy at the time, "Surely the existence of such men is a leaven in India, and as men multiply whose mind and outlook are of this type, surely a day will come, in the Providence of God, when that leaven will begin to ferment, and set in motion great processes of change."

But while education holds a front place, the Church's missions are not confined to any single groove. In later years, especially, under the energetic convenership of Professor T. M. Lindsay, D. D.,

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effort has broadened out in various directions, according as the finger of experience pointed. Female agency for zenana and school work has been largely developed ; and as far as possible medical missions are being multiplied. All methods are welcome that promise to hasten on the harvest-time for which prayerful hearts are waiting.

Progressive Character

A living Church must be a progressive Church, and especially one that has sprung from the emphatic assertion that Christ alone is Lord of the Conscience. Beliefs and usages that bear the marks of long currency are to be regarded with reverence, but it is the part of a living Church to look beyond its human authorities and creeds to its Divine Head, and to act according to the guidance of His promised Spirit. At the same time, it is no good sign of a Church if it is prepared to part in a spirit of inconsiderate haste with opinions and practices that were held sacred in former days. The presence of a strong conservative element is essential to wise advance. It is no reproach, therefore, nor a source of weakness, to a Church, if it has from time to time to bear the strain of theological conflict within its borders ; on the contrary, it is to the honour of a Church, an evidence to the world of its truth-loving spirit, if every step in the path of progress has had to be won through struggle.

Twenty years ago, the Free Church was startled by the article on "The Bible," which appeared in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," from the pen of

Professor Robertson Smith, at that time the Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Literature in the Free Church College at Aberdeen. In that article Professor Smith not merely stated the conclusions at which critical scholarship in Germany had arrived, with reference to the construction of the Old Testament Scriptures, but with unreserved frankness acknowledged and defended his concurrence in those views. This was an attitude for which the Church at large was not then prepared, and at once there was a sharp division of opinion and feeling. On the one side, there were those who recognised that the questions raised were questions which the Free Church had not hitherto been called upon to face and investigate, and upon which, therefore, it had never pronounced any judgment; and they urged that when a man of exceptional ability, insight, and scholarship, whose own evangelical faith was not open to doubt, addressed himself, as his position required him, to the investigation of those intricate matters, a large latitude should be allowed in the statement of his conclusions. They did not themselves, at that stage, undertake either to defend or to deny the views of Professor Smith; they were content to suspend judgment until learned experts had fought out the questions at issue; but they argued that to resort to disciplinary action against Professor Smith would be to foreclose discussion on subjects which could not possibly be suppressed, and to commit the Church to positions which further investigation might prove to be erroneous. They asked, in short, for freedom of inquiry so long as opinion was in a state of solution among those

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most competent to judge. But, on the other hand, the majority in the Church were so alarmed by the sudden sweeping aside of old beliefs, that they declined to pause. To many of them it seemed that Professor Smith's views undermined all faith in the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, and ought, therefore, to be at once condemned. Accordingly, the Assembly of 1877 resolved to suspend him from teaching until further inquiry should be made into his views. Thereupon, in the exercise of his constitutional rights, Professor Smith demanded to be tried under the regular process of libel, and the request was promptly acceded to.

It soon appeared, however, that in undertaking to convict him of heresy, the majority had taken a piece of work in hand of far greater difficulty than they had in their haste supposed. When the Confession of Faith, the Church's standard of orthodoxy, was compiled, the critical questions now raised were undreamt of, and where there had been no utterance, there could be no contradiction. Hence the first elaborate libel constructed had only to be touched to tumble to the ground like a house of cards. Two years passed before a workable instrument was produced, and by that time the tide had begun to turn in favour of allowing the Church's brilliant son the freedom which was claimed on behalf of a pioneer into new regions. By the next year the tide had decisively turned, the libel was withdrawn by the Assembly amid tumultuous applause, and the case took end with words of counsel and caution to the young Professor, which he sincerely accepted.

Unfortunately, however, another turn of affairs was at hand. During the months preceding the Assembly, Professor Smith, not anticipating the judgment that was arrived at, had written another article in a defiant rather than conciliatory mood, and had passed it through the press for publication; and scarcely had the Assembly risen before a new volume of the "Encyclopædia" appeared, containing this article. The result was an outburst of indignation on which explanations were thrown away; and before the next Assembly met, the way had been prepared for summary measures. It was known that there was no hope of assailing his position by libel, so the expedient was adopted of declaring that it was no longer "safe or advantageous for the Church" that he should continue to act as one of its Professors. On this footing it was moved that, while the Church offered to continue to him his full salary, an offer made to avoid any question of civil right, but which, of course, he would not deign to accept, it should henceforth dispense with his services. This motion was carried by 394 votes to 231, and thereby the Free Church deprived itself of its most gifted scholar. It was an issue which caused intense chagrin to a large section of the Church, and one that brought keen pain to Professor Smith himself, for he loved his Church; but in God's Providence it proved to be in reality a stepping-stone to a position of more commanding influence and of ampler opportunities for research. The University of Cambridge thankfully welcomed to its halls a man of his exceptional genius and great reputation, and from that more prominent

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centre he continued, so long as his frail body held out, to give Biblical students everywhere the rich fruits of his learning and industry.

These details are here given because the time of "the Robertson-Smith case" was to the Free Church a transition period of great importance. There were, it is true, mistakes on both sides. It was a grave mistake on the part of the young Professor to present views, which were then so startling, with a bluntness which showed no consideration for the susceptibilities of many of his fathers and brethren. To throw men into a sudden panic is not the way to lead them forward. Accordingly, the vigour and comprehensiveness of his onslaught on traditional opinions and prejudices placed those who had the responsibility of guiding the Church's action in a position of extreme difficulty. They saw that they could not convict him of heresy, and some, at least, must have seen that the case was really one for patience rather than for discipline, but then, what were they to do in face of a clamour that seemed overwhelming? The conclusion came to was—and this was the grave mistake on the other side—that the Assembly must bow to the storm. There is no reason to doubt that, if time had been allowed to exercise its calming influence, the Church would have come to extend toleration to the second article as it had done to the first; but the Church's leaders went even out of the regular and normal course of procedure to hurry on a denouement. As men impatient of the whole business, they determined to strike when the iron was hot, and did strike. They got rid of an

immediate source of trouble, but the blow has left an indelible stain on the Church's records.

Still, although the champion was driven off, the cause of freedom secured the victory. The memorable education through which the Church then passed has had a lasting effect in releasing it from the trammels of traditionalism, and broadening out its conceptions of truth. It breathes a larger atmosphere, looks round a wider horizon, distinguishes with clearer vision betwixt what is accidental and what is essential, betwixt the form that grows old and obsolete, and the substance that abides for ever.

Evidence of this may be found in several recent acts and decisions. The Robertson-Smith controversy had brought into prominence questions regarding the inspiration of Holy Scripture; and a sermon on this subject, published by Dr. Marcus Dods, aroused deep misgivings in the minds of those who clung to the traditional view of infallible accuracy in respect of every detail. It seemed to them that Dr. Dods' views were fatal to the maintenance of the Divine authority of Scripture, would leave the world, in fact, without a Divine revelation at all. Yet, in the Assembly of 1889, when proposing Dr. Dods as a fit man for the Chair of New Testament Exegesis, in the New College, Edinburgh, his proposer ventured to adduce, among other reasons for his appointment, that the position he had taken up in regard to Inspiration was "the only sound, safe, and Scriptural position on the subject," and in full view of that statement, his election was carried by a sweeping majority. In the following year a resolute attempt was made

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to unseat him, and also to remove from his chair a distinguished Glasgow Professor, Dr. A. B. Bruce, but both attempts came to nothing. Not that the Free Church holds with a slacker hand to the great truth that in Scripture God has given a revelation of Himself, and of His saving love to man; on the contrary, the various conflicts through which it has passed, have only made more apparent how entirely all within it are at one in the unity of a common faith. The waves of controversy have been on the surface; beneath them lie fathomless depths, calm and untroubled, of pervading reverence, trust, and love. He who has been pleased to lay it upon the Free Church to bear, in a special degree, the strain of the theological questionings of our time, has not failed to grant that rooted sense of certainty regarding the truth as it is in Jesus, which enables a Church to stand firm. Let criticism use its microscope; let science pursue its inquiries; let history disinter the long-buried past;—the Church is conscious that faith need fear no evil. For faith rests on its own broad ground—ground which no research can affect, ground equally sure for the simple child and the cultured scholar; and if the results of criticism or of science should require the revision and correction of some pre-conceived opinions about the truth, that, so far from obscuring, will tend only to make the truth itself more manifest.

Another evidence of the genial atmosphere the Church now breathes is to be seen in the “Declaratory Act,” which the Church adopted in 1892. For years back it had been felt by increasing

numbers that they could not accept office in the Church because of the seeming hardness with which certain doctrines were stated in the Confession, which they would be required to subscribe. Nor could that be wondered at, for two-and-a-half centuries have not come and gone without changing somewhat the Church's point of view. Religious thought no longer starts, as it did then, from the high truth of omnipotent sovereignty, but rather from that of gracious Fatherhood. It does not begin with God's eternal decrees, and work downwards to man's salvation, but begins with the revelation God has given of Himself in Christ, and works upward to a fuller knowledge of His character and design. It proceeds, not from the Divine decrees to the Divine doings, but rather from the Divine doings to the Divine decrees; not from the altitudes of the Divine council-chamber, but from the experiences of the manger and of the cross. Moreover, theology no longer follows the method of building up a system by the process of deduction, but by the humbler and wiser method of gathering and accepting every part and fragment of revealed truth, though it may be unable to join these parts into a consistent whole. Hence, in the whole cast and colour of its thought, the Church of to-day has moved considerably from the particular phase made prominent in the Confession; and those who failed to find in the Confession aspects of truth they counted precious, or who found them only in the background, hesitated to accept it as embodying the confession of their faith. Others, too, were repelled from accepting the office of the eldership, by the elaborate and

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detailed character of the Confession. They shrank from committing themselves to a multitude of propositions, which might be true for aught they knew, but which they had not had leisure to examine. As regards the general substance of the Church's teaching they had no scruples—they were in cordial sympathy with it; but as to the mass of material in which that teaching had been embedded by the Westminster Divines, they were not prepared to say that they could adopt it in all its length and breadth as truth they had ascertained to be divine.

Scruples like these the Church wisely decided not to ignore, more especially since a few explanatory paragraphs might, in part at least, suffice to remove them. These explanatory paragraphs constitute what is called the "Declaratory Act;" and whatever else it may be, it is the fruit of a considerate and kindly desire to remove some of the misapprehensions which hindered earnest and conscientious men from accepting office in the Church. It aims at two things—first, it declares that certain aspects of truth which are at present prominent and prized are, in its judgment, consistent with the Confession's teaching, and may be held and taught without scruple; and, second, it declares what the Church understands to be the meaning or scope of the act of subscribing the Confession. In both these declarations there is nothing that can be strictly called new; for the Act simply puts into words, for the satisfaction of those concerned, what had previously been the general understanding in regard to both matters. The only change is that that understanding is now

authoritatively expressed, and by not a few this is felt to be an important advance. It seems to them that they can now feel the pulse of the Church throbbing in its documents as they could not before.

Attitude towards Union

The Free Church would not be true to its claim to represent the ancient undivided Church of Scotland, if it did not seek to have the broken sections of Scottish Presbyterianism gathered again into one. Immediately after the Disruption, accordingly, the subject of Union began to be stirred. In the first instance, Union was proposed with the Church known as "The Original Seceders,"—of which the well-known historian, Dr. M'Crie, was the leading representative,—and after various delays this Union was consummated on June 1st, 1852. A second Union was effected on May 25th, 1876,—this time with the Reformed Presbyterian Church,—an ancient Church whose history goes back to the Revolution Settlement in 1688. Moreover, in 1863, an earnest effort to enter into Union with the United Presbyterian Church was begun under seemingly most hopeful auspices. The proposal to open negotiations was adopted by the Assembly, not only unanimously but amid great enthusiasm. Influential committees were appointed by both Churches, and they set to work with a will. But months passed into years, and still the Joint Committee had not completed the elaborate programme they had sketched for themselves. And as the years passed, the first ardour cooled down, mistakes and mis-

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apprehensions got into circulation, prejudices were aroused, feelings were embittered, opposite camps were formed, and all Scotland blazed and thundered with the fire and fury of ecclesiastical artillery. The spectacle presented by the Free Church became melancholy and humiliating in the last degree, afforded ample material to the scoffer, and did grievous injury to the cause of religion. At length, it became hopelessly apparent that the proposed Union could only be carried through at the cost of serious division within the Church itself; and in the Assembly of 1873, the Church felt on this account compelled, although with profoundest sorrow and disappointment, to abandon the effort which had been so happily started ten years previously. In his speech moving the resolution to that effect, Dr. Candlish uttered these memorable words,—“I hope our prayer will be for the speedy revival of the Union movement. I do not expect to see it. I do not expect my beloved brother, Dr. Buchanan, to see it. I am no prophet, but I do venture to predict that you will not all be in your graves before that day comes, and that there will be a goodly remnant of you when that day comes. We cannot stem the tide of Christian opinion and Christian feeling.”

That predicted time, it is to be hoped, has at last come round. A year ago the Supreme Court of the United Presbyterian Church generously declared its continued desire to unite, and the General Assembly of this year, cordially welcoming this declaration, instructed a committee to consider and confer with the committee of the United Presbyterian Church regarding the practical ques-

tions which bear on "incorporating Union." It cannot be said that last Assembly displayed the same enthusiasm on the subject as burst forth from the Assembly of 1863; but there is reason to believe that a stronger and deeper conviction exists that the present state of separation cannot be justified, and ought, as a matter of obvious Christian duty, to be brought to an end. If this is indeed the case, if it is conscience rather than feeling that prompts the movement, there may be all the greater hope of a successful issue. With Scottish Christians it is conscience that tells.

But while Union with the United Presbyterian Church is the aim immediately in view, the desire of the Free Church points to something further—the reconstruction of the Scottish Church. Nor is it utopian to hope for this. Within the last few years several representative members of the three large Presbyterian Churches formed themselves into a Conference, and anxiously discussed, at several prolonged meetings, whether a worthy way could not be found for the Union of the three. The net result of these conferences was to bring into fresh and vivid light those two facts—first, that the agreement betwixt the three Churches on such matters as National Religion and the Spiritual Independence of the Church, is sufficient to supply an adequate basis for Union; and second, that the one and only reason why the three cannot unite is the existence, in the case of the Established Church, of a State connection. That is the one barrier—a barrier external to the common Presbyterian Church-life of the country. It is the desire to see this dividing element removed that

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gives an interest, in the minds of many in the Free Church, to the agitation for Disestablishment. But how much nobler it would be, if, instead of waiting until the inevitable change comes round, the Established Church had the brotherliness and courage to say,—“We would rather be in union with our brethren and fellow-workers in Christ, and make common cause with them in the warfare with sin and vice, than hold aloof for the sake of State favour and prestige!” That one act of self-sacrifice would do more for the real interests a Church has to consult than a century of royal patronage, and would send a wave of applauding joy to the remotest shores of Christendom. If, however, that is not to be, the only course open to patriots and Christians who seek the unity of the Scottish Church, is to use every energy and effort to have the obstructing hindrance removed. For of this all may be assured, that there will not be peace in Scotland until this middle wall of partition between the Churches has been broken down, and the Christian feeling of the country is free to assert itself in favour of a United Church of Scotland.

THE
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BY THE
REV. ALEX. R. MACEWEN, D.D.

VIII

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Historical Position

THE United Presbyterian Church occupies a distinct position in the Church History of Scotland. It represents, by direct and legitimate succession, those who left the Established Church in the course of last century. The cause of their secession was not incidental nor transient, but lasted about a hundred years, as is reflected in the fact that between thirty and forty new congregations of seceders were formed every decade from 1733 onwards. It is distinctive of the movement, and of the Church to which it gave rise, that the cause was not the interference of the State with the Church, but the general policy and the particular decisions of the Church, which were held to indicate voluntary and persistent unfaithfulness. Lay patronage was enforced and Moderatism was fostered by the General Assembly. The liberty of the Church and evangelical doctrine were thereby sacrificed, and there was no redress. The United

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Presbyterian Church thus owes its origin and its first growth to the policy, doctrine, and discipline of the State Church, as displayed to four generations of Scotsmen. In many districts the pressure of patronage was either not felt at all, or was lightened by the excellent character of the presentees. Many parish ministers, too, were evangelical and earnest. In such districts, few if any communicants left the Established Church. Hence the inequality with which United Presbyterianism is to this day distributed over the country.

Yet the movement was not local, sporadic, or casual. From the beginning it had finality, being organised round two centres—the Secession Church, formed in 1733, and the Relief Church, formed in 1761. Sacramentally, ecclesiastically, doctrinally, it was not only independent but orderly and orthodox, showing none of those irregularities into which dissent often falls. Its error was insistance, intolerance, leading to internal strife and subdivision. But this divisive tendency ended with last century. Since 1807, a process of union has been steadily at work—a growth of the spirit of union and accomplishment of union. With union have come consolidation, enterprise, and a gradual widening of horizon. From year to year there has been increasing recognition of mutual responsibility and of national responsibility, showing itself in schemes for Church extension and evangelisation, for training ministers, and supporting ordinances, in large Home and Foreign Mission undertakings, and in clear pronouncements upon those moral and religious questions on which a living Church is bound to

speak. The Church assumed its present name in 1847, at the time of the last Union; but that date marked no new departure nor any break in continuity.

The United Presbyterian Church thus represents two movements which have covered 164 years—secession from the Established Church, and progress in the formation of one free Scottish Church. This is my general reply to the Editor's question. I am a United Presbyterian, not merely through inheritance, but because I believe that the Secession of last century was imperative and for the good of Scottish Christianity, and that the Churches which seceded have moved, and are moving, in the right direction—the direction in which the best hopes of Scottish Christianity lie.

Resemblances to other Churches

Although the United Presbyterian Church is the only one of the three Scottish Churches which styles itself "Presbyterian," this does not, *pace* Mr. Hill Burton, imply an exclusive claim to Presbyterianism. In 1847 it was proposed, and all but agreed, to take the title of the "United Church of Scotland." The present designation was preferred, because the Church had at that time more than a hundred congregations in England, which were anxious to have a title indicating their ecclesiastical character. Neither in doctrine nor in worship is there any essential difference from the Established and Free Churches. Although adherence to the Confession of Faith is qualified by a Declaratory Act, to which I shall presently

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refer, the liberty which that Act declares is generally conceded by Scottish Presbyterians. Soon after the Disruption, Principal Cunningham, then the acknowledged leader of the Free Church, stated publicly that he "could cordially accept the United Presbyterian formula," and similar statements have been made by eminent living representatives of the Established Church. There is no vital difference as to public worship, the Westminster Directory being generally recognised. The Sacraments are regarded and administered similarly. The training of candidates for the ministry is the same. Procedure in Church Courts differs only in details. The religious training of children on Sundays and on week-days is the same. United Presbyterians would promptly and justifiably resent the charge that they view as vital to the education of the young, those points on which they differ from the Established and Free Churches.

Distinctive Features

Yet the United Presbyterian Church has its distinctive features and principles, which justify its present existence and will determine its future. Some are general, others specific. I shall mention, first, some of the more general.

Popular Character

1. Upon the whole, it is the most democratic and popular of the Scottish Presbyterian Churches. This is indicated by its correspondence with the movement of the population. Last century, when

the chief native vigour of Scotland was in rural districts, these furnished the Church with its backbone. This century the activity of Scottish life has been in towns, and there accordingly United Presbyterianism is strongest. It is noteworthy that it has its hardest struggles in districts where small farmers and independent shepherds are decreasing in number, and that it flourishes in every growing centre of population.

This feature is, so far, mirrored in the rules and forms of the Church, which show a sedulous regard for the rights of the people, and develop the idea of equality with singular precision. Every office-bearer—even the organist of a congregation—is elected by the free vote of communicants. The finance of congregations is entrusted, not as in the Free Church to deacons ordained for life, but to managers, who are appointed for a term of years, and who are little more than an elective committee holding office at the will of their constituents. In the Supreme Court of the Church every congregation is directly represented by its minister and one of its elders. In presbyteries, an approximation has recently been made to a representation of congregations in proportion to their membership. The co-optation of elders by sessions, which is common in the Established Church, would not be tolerated by United Presbyterians. In many other details, the idea that Church Courts should faithfully reflect the will of the people has been worked out with great consistency. The Church is thus more in line with the First Booke of Discipline, which bore the impress of Knox's views, than with the Second Booke of Discipline,

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which represents the maturer ecclesiasticism of Melville.

Latterly, however, many of those divergences have been removed. Since the abolition of patronage, the general administration of the Established Church has become more democratic. The Free and United Presbyterian Churches have come into line in many matters of detail, leaving only two differences of any consequence: (*a*) The difference between the limited tenure of managers and the life tenure of deacons; (*b*) the existence in the Free Church of provincial Synods, which hold an intermediate position between Presbyteries and the Supreme Court. Those two differences are not regarded by United Presbyterians as involving principles. With the growth of the Church, the Supreme Court, which has between 1100 and 1200 members, has become too large for judicial purposes, and some alteration by way of devolution or of representation is not improbable.

Generally, it may be said that a democratic constitution is in keeping with the temperament and the convictions of the Scottish people. Three centuries have proved that it is the only type of Church polity which the nation will permanently accept. Apart from this national preference, history is gradually confirming Plato's verdict, that the safest and best polity is an enlightened democracy; and in the Church of the living God, the people may hope for enlightenment. The dangers of democracies are everywhere less than those of despotisms and oligarchies, while in Scotland they are greatly reduced by the national disposition to adhere to law and tradition in matters of religion.

Congregational Responsibility

2. The United Presbyterian Church has insisted, with special emphasis, upon the responsibility of individual congregations. The notion that each congregation should be self-supporting arose from the history of the Secession, willingness to "support ordinances" being a tangible proof that secession rested upon conviction. Until the middle of this century, there were few central funds and little financial organisation. In this respect there was affinity to English Congregationalism, and a development of some of the best elements of that vigorous system, which had healthful results. The propagandism of distinctive tenets by promise of financial support was unknown, and a powerful stimulus was given to local liberality. This idea, that financially the congregation, not the denomination, ought to be the unit, has still some prevalence, especially in rural districts. But during recent years it has gradually given way, as the need for fuller organisation has become apparent. By an Augmentation Fund the Church supplements the stipends of ministers, in cases where congregations discharge their own duty adequately, and by an Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund an addition is made to the provision of congregations for superannuated ministers. The outcome is, upon the whole, satisfactory, the minimum stipend of ministers being larger than in any other Scottish Church. Yet the Augmentation Fund is only forty years old, and by general consent its form is not final, and might be greatly improved. The

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combination of aid and direction from a Church centre with local energy and liberality, is a practical problem in all Churches, and we have not solved it; but we are nearer a solution than at any period of our history.¹

Unity

3. One other general feature of the Church must be mentioned, although it is not constitutional, and cannot be statistically defined. It is a thoroughly united Church. Its constituent elements have been completely blended. They differed very widely. The religious views of Relief and Anti-Burgher were at the opposite extremes—tolerance and intolerance, breadth tending to laxity and narrowness hardening into bigotry. But the differences have disappeared. Many active and earnest members of the Church do not know to which denomination their congregation originally belonged, nor can the differences be traced in the discussions in the Courts of the Church, either in the shape of convictions or as sentiments.

Nor have any new lines of cleavage arisen. The Church has passed through many controversies, in which there have been keen and strong divisions of opinion. But these have not left permanent

¹ In the Free Church all congregations, even those which are self-supporting, are organically linked to the Sustentation Fund, while with us the only link between self-supporting congregations and the Augmentation Fund consists in the contributions which they make to it. But the difference is less than it appears, since almost all congregations do, as a matter of fact, contribute. Otherwise the two funds correspond with one another.

marks. There are no factions with opposing leaders. The only approach to a difference lies in the fact, that some show more precision and pugnacity than others in asserting the distinctive position of the Church ; but that is mainly a difference of temperament and individual proclivities, which from year to year exhausts itself in passing discussions. This unity, or homogeneity, if so ugly a word may be applied to a living Church, is partly due to the fact that the Church, as the smallest of the three Presbyterian Churches, has been constantly exposed to criticism and opposition, and so cemented and compacted ; it has been fostered by the training of all ministers at one theological college ; and it has more potent causes still to be mentioned. But, however it may be explained, the feature is distinctive—attractive to many at present, and suggestive as to the future. The Church is a solid one, which exhibits no tendencies to disruption, and it is pervaded by a great deal of friendly and forbearing feeling. If I were at all disposed to assume a prophet's mantle, I should forecast the continuance of unity.

Separation from the State

4. Coming to more specific and clearly defined features, I name the one which probably bulks most largely in the eyes of those outside. The Church is completely, and by deliberate choice, separated from the State. The first Seceders were earnestly requested to retrace their steps by the Assemblies succeeding that which had deposed them ; but they steadily, some say stubbornly, refused. They had

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always distrusted the Revolution Settlement, and they had come to think that the influences of the State upon the Church were malignant, and likely to continue so. Looking further back, they saw few reasons for gratitude to the State as patron or ally of the Church. Since the Reformation the religious policy of the State had only twice for a few years (1591-5 and 1643-50) been, to their thinking, for the advantage of the Church. Their most treasured associations and traditions were with a Church which the State, as represented by the Stewarts, had persistently and savagely sought to exterminate, and which even Cromwell had deprived of its freedom.

It is common to speak of them as daughters deserting their "mother"; but to them the State Church had been a cruel stepmother, whom they had good reason to suspect, and whom they could freely leave without any sense of filial disloyalty.

A hundred years' experience of patronage and Moderatism accentuated and defined this attitude. It was not altered by the revival of evangelical religion within the Established Church in the second and third decades of this century. Separation from the State had come to be regarded, not as a thing to be regretted nor as a thing to be undone, but as a permanent basis of Church life and work. In the Basis of Union adopted in 1847, which is still one of the Standards of the Church, the uniting Churches declared that they "regarded as still valid the reasons on which they have hitherto maintained their state of secession and separation from the judicatories of the Estab-

lished Church." Even the abolition of patronage has led to no mitigation of this view. Of the 600 or 700 congregations formed by secession since 1733, six entered the Established Church in 1851, and two at other dates. Now and again individual ministers have applied for admission, which the General Assembly has thought it right to make extremely simple; but none have been men of any mark or consequence. With those insignificant exceptions, there has been a steady and willing acceptance of the position of a non-established Church.

Liberty of Individual Opinion

The Church has not expressed this preference in its creed as a principle. Last century the Seceders were distracted and divided by endeavours to define the authority of the State in matters of religion, and in 1796 the most conservative branch of the Secession declared that the Confession of Faith "must not be construed as investing civil rulers with a lordship over the consciences of men, or as inconsistent with the spirituality, freedom, and independence of the kingdom of Christ." But beyond such negative statements the Church has never gone, when prescribing terms of communion to her members and terms of office to her office-bearers. Even as regards State endowments, she has not, in her Standards, gone beyond the declaration that "Christ has laid it as a permanent and universal obligation upon His Church to maintain her own ordinances"—a declaration in which many advocates of State

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endowments would cordially concur. With a tolerance for which she has been well rewarded, she has held it undesirable to recognise any theory as to the relation between Church and State as entering into the substance of the faith. The one vital matter has been to recognise the position of the Church as free and independent, to submit to the decisions of her Courts, and to undertake a share in her direction and support.

Disestablishment

It is necessary to make this plain, because the Supreme Court of the Church, which fairly represents prevailing views, has for many years advocated Disestablishment and Disendowment, not as a measure of expediency, but as a matter of principle. The particular statement, "Our Church is free and will be free," has gradually shaped itself into the conviction that the Church of Christ as a whole should be free, and that Christians, not only individually but collectively, are bound to declare this, and to contend for the freedom of all branches of the Church in the interests of religion, and in the interests of the country. Those who have any acquaintance with the recent history of Scotland are aware that it is largely through the intrepid and industrious advocacy of this position by United Presbyterians that Disestablishment has become a recognised item in national politics. It is quite true that some loyal members of the Church have dissented and do dissent from this position, and that others have contended that Church Courts should con-

fine themselves to domestic affairs ; but they constitute a small minority. The prevailing view may be defined in the terms of documents submitted to a Union Conference, held three years ago, between members of the Established, Free, and United Presbyterian Churches. The Conference and the documents were unofficial, but they were fairly representative :

“ Relations between the Church as a corporation and the State as a corporation, in the shape of a special sanction, compact or covenant, involve, explicitly or implicitly, a determination or limitation of the Church’s freedom, to which she ought not to submit. The advantages which may be held to accrue to the Church from such relations with the State, are more than counterbalanced by the departure therein involved from the Scriptural and fundamental idea of the Church. . . . The State has not the qualifications necessary for dealing institutionally with matters spiritual, so as to determine the truth as to creed and worship ; and yet such determination is involved in the establishment of a Church. . . . The State should deal equally both with individuals and with Churches as regards religion. It is inconsistent with the principles of religious liberty that the State should select a particular Church for privilege and favour, and should declare that a particular creed and worship are the creed and worship which individuals should hold. . . . To ask a Church to be silent—for the sake of co-operation or union—upon a practical topic, which in her judgment affects the religious interests of the whole country and the welfare of the kingdom of God, is not reasonable.”¹

¹ A diverging statement of opinion was submitted to the same Conference by a minority of United Presbyterians, the sum of which was that Federation with the Established Church might be secured by refraining from declarations for Disestablishment. Those gentlemen are in a decided minority, but their position is not regarded by the majority as indicating any disloyalty. It is not a

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Before leaving this topic, it must be said that a large number of United Presbyterians entirely disclaim the negative statement that "the State has nothing to do with religion," and hold that the relation of the State to religion is a different matter from the relation of the State to the Church. "National Religion" has had no more powerful champion in Scotland than the late Principal Cairns, who, till his death in 1892, was the recognised representative of the United Presbyterian Church. Time after time the Supreme Court accepted his eloquent statements on the subject by overwhelming majorities. Even as regards the Church, some of us would willingly reaffirm a position laid down by the Secession Church in 1827 :

"Church and State owe mutual duties to each other, and, acting according to their spheres, may be signally subservient to each other's welfare. As many of those duties must arise from circumstances, and be regulated by them, there is no call to determine them minutely in an ecclesiastical document."

Liberal Sympathies

5. The late Dean Stanley, generalising in his usual fashion, described the United Presbyterian Church as "that most political of Christian Churches." Inept as the description is, it calls attention to one characteristic. No Church has been more careful in keeping its Courts and its organisations clear of

departure from any of the Standards of the Church. The Report of the Proceedings has been published by Messrs. Neil, Edinburgh, 1896.

political partisanship. It has indeed claimed and exercised a right to speak on all public questions of morals and religion, and such questions inevitably connect themselves with political action. But there has been no period when the Church has identified itself with one party, except so far as that party had on special questions espoused the cause of morals or religion, and had adopted measures embodying Christian principles. In fact, every now and then political leaders have been misled on this subject, thinking that they might reckon upon the concurrence and support of United Presbyterians, when they yielded to counsels of expediency. They have always discovered their blunder. There could not be a better example than the famous "Midlothian Campaign." When Mr. Gladstone swerved from the line he had been expected to take, and indicated that Disestablishment should not be pressed, United Presbyterians steadily declined from his leadership, and welcomed the declaration of Mr. Chamberlain, that Disestablishment was a matter of principle and must not be set in the background.

At the same time, and in virtue of this very consistency, United Presbyterians have been a powerful factor in the politics of Scotland. Individually if not in Church Courts, they have supported almost every movement towards the liberty and social improvement of the nation. They promoted the abolition of slavery with their full strength; they were almost to a man advocates of the reform laws; they were the pioneers in Scotland of the Anti-Corn Law agitation; they contributed largely to the abolition of Tests in the

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Universities; they were the only Church which cordially supported the Education Bill of 1872, whereby public schools were transferred from Established Church control to popularly elected Boards, which should regulate the place of religion in schools according to the wishes of their constituents. During recent years, they have been vigorous and effective in promoting public legislation in favour of temperance and social purity. When such questions have been at issue, they have closed their ears to the charge, often levelled against them, that they were "meddling with politics," and have rejected the domestic and provincial view of Churches, which regards them as private companies existing only for the administration of their internal affairs.

This policy has usually led United Presbyterians into the ranks of the party of progress and reform; and defenders of Establishments have sometimes ventured to say that they support the Liberal party in order to secure Disestablishment. There could scarcely be a more ludicrous perversion of history. Scottish Seceders were on the side of liberty and progress before Disestablishment had any place in politics—before, indeed, they themselves had formulated a claim for Disestablishment.

I may mention, as an illustration, that in the city of Glasgow, the so-called stronghold of United Presbyterianism, there are not, out of eighty United Presbyterian ministers, more than seven or eight who take an active part in political affairs. Yet if any important public question touching on morals or religion were before the community, I doubt if there are three or four who would be silent. The

“political parson” is in no greater favour among United Presbyterians than in other Christian Churches. The belief that Churches should not be entangled in politics is entirely in harmony with the belief that Churches should not be silent when righteousness, truth, or freedom is at stake.

Doctrinal Characteristics

6. The theological and religious teaching of the Church has had characteristic lines which are not yet obliterated. Last century it owed its very life to the constant proclamation and iteration of the doctrines of grace. It is told of Gillespie, the founder of the Relief Church, that on the Sunday after his deposition by the General Assembly, he gave out as his text, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel,” and prefaced his sermon by intimating that he would never make a public dispute his theme. His example was generally followed. The preaching of the Seceders was always evangelical, and as a rule non-polemical. Its affinity was rather with the Puritan divines and the standard Dutch theologians than with the exciting revivalism which has sometimes attempted to monopolise the title “evangelical.” It was not ecclesiastical bigotry, as Whitefield alleged, that led the Seceders to turn away from his field-preaching and that of the Wesleys, but an engrained dislike to extravagance and sensationalism. They habitually condemned what they styled “mere appeals to emotion.” While this diminished their attractiveness to crowds, it gave them a permanent hold upon Scotland. The

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national temperament is undoubtedly “perfervid,” but the religious impulses of Scotsmen are measured and sober, having a background of definite theology.

This combination of evangelical teaching with religious sanity is notable to-day. While it redeems the Church from the place of schismatics and sectarians, it is the chief source of its spiritual strength.

Another permanent feature of United Presbyterian theology has been its Biblical character. The “lecture,” or close comment upon Scripture, has been a recognised item in weekly worship. It is said that even now vacant congregations will not “call” a candidate who omits this, and who devotes both his sermons to “airing his own views.” Our best theologians—Dr. John Brown, Dr. Lawson, Dr. Dick, and Dr. Eadie—have been commentators. It is doubtful if there is any Church in which ministers have given so much of their energy to careful exposition of the Bible. Certainly there is none which has so consistently maintained that the authority of Church Standards must be regarded as subordinate to that of Scripture.

Theological Controversies

Sixty years ago the Church passed through a keen controversy with regard to the Atonement. James Morison, the founder of the Evangelical Union Church, who had propounded a crude and dogmatic Arminianism, was, in 1841, deposed from the ministry; but at the same time the Church

vindicated its sanity by declining to entertain charges of heresy against two of its professors. This latter decision was censured by the orthodox party in the Established Church, who had recently secured the deposition of Dr. Macleod Campbell, and twenty-five years later it was alleged as an evidence of unsoundness by the hyper-orthodox in the Free Church. Yet the Church has held on its way, disclaiming Arminianism, but free from Calvinistic rigours.

When the Atonement controversy had expired, a large number of United Presbyterians made their way to Germany, chiefly to Berlin and Halle, where they came under the influence of Neander, Tholuck, and Julius Müller—an influence evangelical and scriptural, yet in the main liberalising. To that band of students, which included three names well known outside Scotland—John Cairns, John Ker, and William Robertson—must be ascribed in no small degree the subsequent theological attitude of the Church—a sympathetic and tolerant, yet earnest and well-balanced orthodoxy, cognisant of contemporary movements in philosophy, science, and art, but distinct in adherence to evangelical doctrine.

Thirty years later, when those men had become the guides of the Church, there was another crisis. Two ministers were put on trial for heresy on matters touching the divine decrees. It is characteristic of the Church that their position was examined without passion and with comparatively little excitement, that one of them was deposed and the other acquitted, and that no permanent strife ensued. At the same time the Church

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entered upon a still more characteristic movement—the careful examination of her doctrinal standards. The result was a Declaratory Act, issued in 1879, in which the implicit and explicit fatalism of the Confession of Faith was disavowed, and a general freedom was given in interpretation of Scripture. This movement, which has since been followed by other Presbyterian Churches, caused no schism, and created no lasting antagonism. The Church was convinced that liberty was required, and conceded a liberty which up till this date has not justified the fears of the more conservative, while it has satisfied the claims of the more progressive. It is doubtful if any Church has made an important change in its theological position with so much unanimity and cordiality.

General Theological Attitude

The present trend of United Presbyterian thought is progressive. There is a general wish to give and to have freedom. Neither in regard to theology proper, nor in regard to biblical problems, is there any disposition to place an embargo upon liberal views. Beyond this, there is a pervading conviction that the Church has obligations towards scientific theology, with some regret that the yearly increasing claims of the pastorate hinder the adequate discharge of this duty in a Church which has no sinecures. Until 1876 not a single ordained minister was set apart for the study of theology, all the professors being ministers of charges. Even now there are only five—a smaller proportion than in any other Presbyterian Church. The wonder is

that the contributions to theological literature have been so considerable.

Yet I take it that, behind this general mood of mind, there is an undefined confidence that, if a doctrinal crisis should arise, the Church would be unhesitating and practically unanimous in its adherence to the central doctrines of the Catholic faith.

Public Worship

7. As to Public Worship, there have been many modifications of the bare and rigid severity of early Presbyterianism. The Church has a tradition to maintain in this matter, having been the first to sanction the use of hymns in church, and to contend for liberty to use instrumental music. Upon the whole the tradition has been maintained. Sermons and prayers have been shortened. In most congregations an anthem is sung at each service, and prose chanting is quite usual. Here and there the Apostles' Creed is repeated by worshippers, and, in many congregations, the Lord's Prayer. Such modifications of use and wont have been introduced without strife or public discussion under the sanction of sessions, which have the constitutional right to regulate public worship. The higher Courts of the Church have rarely, if ever, been required to interfere. Sessions have discharged this duty faithfully and carefully, declining to sanction changes not likely to accord with the wishes and the cultus of worshippers. Perhaps they have been too cautious and conservative. Yet the deliverance secured from disputes as to

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public worship has been a valuable blessing. The United Presbyterian Church stands, I think, alone, in entrusting public worship to sessions, and this seems to me one of the minor advantages of its constitution. Non-liturgical worship is at its best where there is adaptability and adaptation, with a constitutional check upon the taste and caprice of individual ministers.

Anti-Ritualistic Sentiment

The modifications introduced have not in any case included the introduction of a liturgy; and, although the advantages of a partial liturgy are from time to time discussed in ministers' clubs and in denominational literature, there is no evidence of a widespread wish for change in that direction. The publications of the "Devotional Service Society"—a clerical association—have been limited to suggestions for the orderly conduct of worship and for responses at children's services. In this as in other matters the sentiment of the Church is decidedly anti-ritualistic. In a corporate existence of 164 years not a single case is on record of a charge of ritualism against a minister. I know of only one United Presbyterian who has joined the Church of Rome. This feature can only be explained by the national character and the popular constitution of the Church. The Scottish nation, except its semi-foreign constituents, is decidedly, if less polemically than formerly, Protestant and anti-priestly in sentiment and conviction; and the United Presbyterian constitution makes it singularly

easy for congregations, without any ecclesiastical intervention, to check innovations of which they disapprove.

Foreign Mission Interest

8. The feature of this Church which has secured most cordial commendation is its earnest and increasing zeal for Foreign Missions. This is no new feature. Last century, when in most Churches the idea of Foreign Missions had scarcely been conceived, a large contribution was made to the christianising of Canada by the Seceders, who also rescued the Orkney Islands from a darkness almost heathen. During the missionary awakening at the beginning of this century, they were active in promoting such societies as the London Missionary Society. Thereafter individual congregations adopted and developed separate missionary schemes. But it is during the last forty years that the Church as a Church has entered the mission field with distinctive vigour. Besides contributing regularly to undenominational missions, specially to the Foreign Missions of the Free Church, it has at present separate missions in Jamaica, Trinidad, Old Calabar, Kaffraria, Rajputana, and Manchuria, with a working staff of 148 fully-trained agents, of whom 79 are Europeans, while under the superintendence of those agents there are 752 native assistants. The ordinary Foreign Mission income for last year was £43,570, and the Zenana Mission income was £5,266. As a mere matter of figures this represents a larger proportionate giving than any Church in Christendom presents; and this is

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all the more remarkable because, while the Church includes a fair proportion of wealthy men in cities, its congregations throughout Scotland are chiefly composed of people in modest though respectable circumstances, and it has practically no hold upon the inherited wealth of the country. In the smallest and poorest congregations, contributions to missions are made systematically and cordially, and there is an intelligent acquaintance with the yearly progress of mission-work. If the Church is more alive to her duties abroad than to her duties at home, in an over-churched country like Scotland this can scarcely be reckoned a fault. The one set of duties is not only less patent and less pressing, but is apt to present itself as denominational propagandism; whereas the other admits of no such mitigation or abatement. The warmest and the most catholic sentiments of the United Presbyterian Church are enlisted in the preaching of the gospel abroad. In none of our missions have we competition or misunderstanding with the missions of other Protestant Churches. Through God's blessing, their actual progress and stability have been remarkable, and in the years that lie before us, our enterprise and liberality in this department are certain to increase.

This statement may seem to savour of boastfulness. Yet no explanation of individual attachment to the Church would be accurate which left those facts untold. They largely account for the Church's present unity, cordiality, and hopefulness.

Church Union

9. It remains to answer the important question as to Union which has been suggested to the writers of those papers by the Editor. He asks, "Is the reunion of your Church with any or all of the Churches advisable or feasible." A clear answer is easy. The United Presbyterian Church has been travelling towards Union for several generations, steadily and surely, and the next step to be taken is unmistakable.

Teaching of Presbyterian History

The history of the Non-established Presbyterian Churches during the last ninety years has been a history of Union movements, frequently protracted and adjourned, but always ultimately successful. English historians have written slightly of the "multiplication of dissenting sects in Scotland;" but since 1807, when Thomas M'Crie, the biographer of Knox, formed a separate Church, they have not multiplied, but steadily decreased, the only increase being through the schism in the Established Church, whence emerged the Free Church of Scotland, about which I shall speak presently.¹ The first important union was in 1820, and the second in 1847. Since 1847, the Reformed Presbyterian Church has united with the Free Church, and two small "bodies" of Seceders have been merged in the Established Church and the

¹ The Evangelical Union is not a Presbyterian Church, having taken its place with Congregationalists.

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Free Church respectively. Meanwhile, there has been Union, all but complete, of Irish Presbyterianism and of English Presbyterianism. In Canada, in Nova Scotia, in Victoria, in New South Wales, indeed in every part of the world into which last century Scotsmen carried their differences, there has this century been a healing of the breaches. In every case, those who are familiar with the uniting Churches agree that the Union has been beneficial, both to the Churches and to adjacent Christendom.

While this is true of all Non-established Presbyterians, a United Presbyterian who was not in favour of Union would not be a true United Presbyterian. His Church owes its position, its power, its distinctive principles to Union. By Union it has thrown off narrowness and provincialisms, acquired solidity, sobriety, and vigour, developed its organism, and reached broader ideas of its function. When each proposal for Union has become practical, there have been dissentients who have argued that some sacrifice of principle, or at least of valuable traditions, would be entailed ; but experience has always proved that they were mistaken. United Presbyterians have learned that lesson. Twenty years ago they parted with more than a hundred congregations in order that the Presbyterians of England might be united, and there has been no reason to regret the numerical loss.

This year the Church is engaged in celebrating its Jubilee. It is a Jubilee of Union. All over Scotland United Presbyterians are giving thanks for the blessings which have rested upon the United Church. To oppose Union, or to disparage

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its worth, would be to reflect upon our history. Since 1847 all that is distinctive of the Church, in its organisation and its principles, in its work at home and abroad, has received its best developments.

Need for Union

Beyond this consideration, which may be reckoned, so far, a denominational one, the necessities of the country call for Union in Scotland with a voice which reaches the dumbest ears. At present there is a wasteful expenditure of money in maintaining superfluous congregations and developing separate agencies side by side. There is friction and contention, which deteriorates the tone of Church life. Congregations which exist side by side in a limited population, without any difference of creed and worship, are more apt to disagree and to strive in trivial, personal and local matters than those which are separated by a difference of principle. Meanwhile, the great religious problem of christianising the masses in our cities and the shifting industrial population in mining and manufacturing districts calls for united action and for the economising of resources. I have indicated certain shades of doctrine which mark the United Presbyterian Church ; but it would be preposterous to allege that these constitute such distinction from the other Presbyterian Churches as to give it a calling different from theirs.

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Union with the Free Church.

Such considerations have, during the last two years, led to a proposal for Union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, and the proposal has now been generally endorsed by the Supreme Courts of the two Churches. The most hopeful aspect of this movement is that approval has been expressed of "Union on the basis of the Standards as at present accepted"—a clear admission that there is no difference of principle between the two Churches. By different roads they have reached practical identity of view, and they have gained a confidence in one another which had not been established when Union was proposed thirty-four years ago. The Free Church has freedom in the forefront of her separate existence. Fifty-four years ago she claimed freedom from the State, and gave up Establishment and Endowment for the sake of freedom. Her noble achievements have been accomplished without any privilege or prerogative bestowed by the State. She gives no indication of a desire for such privilege or prerogative. On the contrary, for many years she has declared by her Supreme Court that the complete liberation of the Church in Scotland would be an advantage to the nation as well as to the Church. This is the attitude and conviction of United Presbyterians. Yet in neither Church is there any purpose of limiting the liberty of individual opinion at present possessed by members of both Churches. Neither Church would dream of asking the other to accept new principles. The general intention is constructive rather than

aggressive, and it is thus a movement which may fairly claim the good-will of all who on principle advocate the Union of Churches. The arrangements for Union have still to be adjusted, and thereafter submitted to the inferior Courts of the Churches. Yet it seems unlikely that any serious obstacle will emerge. The chief hindrance will consist in the strong attachment of the members of both Churches to their traditions and to their existing methods. But the traditions need not be interrupted nor the methods radically altered, and the United Church will be a broader, a firmer, a more comprehensive one than either has been during its separate existence. As a United Presbyterian, whose hereditary associations have been with the older if the smaller of the two Churches, I have no fear that we shall lose any valuable element of our Church life. On the contrary, several defects of which we are conscious will be eliminated, while new interests, activities, and traditions will enlarge our sympathies. I venture to say that the gain will not be exclusively on our side.

This, however, is not the place to discuss a question which is at present before the Churches in its various bearings. Yet I may add that it will be an almost invaluable contribution to the continuity and the national character of Scottish religion when those who have left the Established Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are united, and when Churches which have sacrificed so much for the Church's liberty and for the gospel resolve to continue their sacrifices and service as one Church.

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Union with the Established Church

I am one of those who seriously regret that this Union movement does not include that branch of the Presbyterian Church which is at present established. There is a cordiality between the Established and the Non-established Churches in Scotland, which has, I believe, no parallel in Christendom. No doubt there is often friction, with a sense of divergent interests, which takes a keen edge in districts where the Established Church outnumbers the Non-established Churches. Yet that is incidental rather than normal. The divergence rarely goes further than the "principle of Establishment," with its inevitable inequalities. Like most United Presbyterian ministers, I have valued friends in the Established Church, in whose general views of religious questions, theoretical and practical, I heartily concur. While this is one of the most agreeable features of the ministry in Scotland, it leads to important co-operation in good works, exercises a wholesome influence upon the Christianity of the country, and creates a widespread desire for an express and explicit identification of interests. Among the laity there is a general conviction that Presbyterianism, as such, is the Scottish religion, and that, while Established and Non-established Presbyterians do not differ in the essentials of creed and worship, they are as one in differing from Congregationalists on the one hand, and on the other hand from an Episcopalianism which attaches merit to Apostolical Succession and to formal elements in the Sacraments. Five years ago, when Disestablish-

ment in Scotland seemed imminent, those feelings expressed themselves in the unofficial movement towards a general Union of Presbyterianism, to which I have already referred. While divergences of opinion and sentiment were frankly expressed, it appeared not unlikely that terms of Union might be formulated which would yield a National Church, with all the prestige of the past conserved, and all the inequalities of the present removed. But repeated Conferences proved that one divergence was primary and practical, as determining the basis of a United Church. The Established Churchmen regarded Establishment as essential, while Free Churchmen and United Presbyterians adhered to the Church's independence of special privileges and to her freedom from the entanglement of special relations to the State. When this was made clear, the Conferences terminated, but they were not held in vain. They led to a mutual understanding of positions conscientiously held and will thus probably mitigate the acrimonies and asperities by which this great controversy is often degraded. They also showed that the members of the three Scottish Churches who are keenly anxious for Union are not ready to abandon the positions assumed by their Supreme Courts respectively. Finally, they made it clear that the question of Establishment is the only hindrance to a complete union of Scottish Presbyterianism. Meanwhile the issue of this movement throws us back upon the fact that the General Assembly, while desirous of Union, will not discuss Union except with the proviso that the establishment of religion must be preserved. This puts Union with

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the United Presbyterian Church out of the question. For us, as this paper has shown, the freedom, independence, and *αὐταρκεία* of the Church is a fundamental idea. Yet circumstances may alter, and bring an alteration of perspective. The views which regulate the present situation may be modified by some strong tide of sentiment in either or both of the Churches. The State may change its relation to the Church without asking for the consent of Church courts. The best contribution we can make to the Union of Presbyterianism is to carry out this present Union, to which there is no obstacle, and which is in the line both of ecclesiastical opinion, and of the general feeling of the Churches. If we take a step in the right direction, we may leave the future in God's hands, believing that He will lead us, or those who come after us, further forward in the same direction, provided that we carefully maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Unity of the Church

It would be misleading to close this paper without indicating the general view of the unity of the Church which tends to prevail with United Presbyterians, since it regulates practical policy as to the Union of Churches.

One advantage of belonging to a comparatively small Church is that exclusive views of the kingdom of Christ are impossible, in the case of men who are fairly informed and educated. The distinction between the visible and the invisible Church, which is accepted by all Presbyterians,

has become part of the substance of our faith. From childhood we have inhaled the idea that Christian unity depends not upon centralisation of Church government, nor upon identity of organism, nor upon tangible continuity of Orders, nor upon uniformity of worship. We do not think that, when our Lord prayed that His disciples might be one as He and His Father are One, the prayer had any reference to ecclesiastical affairs. In matters of faith the value of truly Œcumenical decisions can, in those latter days, scarcely be discerned, and in matters of administration it would be nil. The essential unity of the Church may be guarded amidst national and denominational divergence. The existence of separate centres of Church organism, and the co-existence of separate methods of worship and government, are not necessarily evils. They may, where they correspond to radical yet permissible divergence of view, broaden and deepen the Church.

Further, any Court, Council, or other Church authority may err, and the error may be so long continued, and so injurious to Christian faith and life, that separation becomes a Christian duty. When St. Paul broke with the Council at Jerusalem, when the Churches of England and Scotland disowned the authority of Rome, when Wesley left the State Church of England, and Chalmers left the State Church of Scotland, their movements tended towards one end—the upbuilding of that kingdom of faith and righteousness, which is the living and ever-expanding Church. The Reformers before the Reformation hid the light which God had kindled in their souls, not in most cases volun-

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tarily, but from defect of spiritual strength and independence. The Scottish Seceders served God better by organising separate Churches than the Pietists of Germany and Scandinavia, who, shrinking from schism, thought it enough to constitute societies and unions in which their spiritual life shrivelled or decayed. Secession may indeed be a blunder—it may even be a sin; the occasion must be considered before judgment. It becomes a duty to terminate the separate existence of Churches (1) when the errors which justified them disappear; (2) when a basis for organic work and worship has been recovered. Meanwhile there is more Christian unity among Presbyterians who are externally divided from one another than amidst the strife and faction of the Vatican, within the unalterable palisades of the Eastern Church, or even in the Established Church of England, whose members frequently display towards one another a sectarian animosity which the general sentiment of Scotland would not tolerate.

It may be that a time will come when the unity of the invisible Church will be mirrored in the visible Church. It is far distant—out of our sight. Even between those who have large and deep agreement in things spiritual, barriers rise. We do not see much prospect of union with Baptists, as long as the latter regard adult baptism as essential to Church life. Amalgamation with Congregationalists is not practicable, if it can be secured only through abandonment of a creed and recognition of the congregation as the ultimate unit of Church work. Presbytery, with its belief in the equality of Presbyters, cannot be incor-

porated in an Episcopacy which adheres to Apostolical Succession and Threecfold Orders. Nor can we, deeply as we may regret it, see a *via media* between an equal treatment of Churches by the State and privileges guaranteed by the State to one Church.

We may hope that such differences will disappear, and yet not regard them as sinful. We may even acknowledge that they give room for various Christian temperaments. Men who insist most upon the imperative necessity for external unity seem to be blind to the variety of God's methods in nature, in history, and in providence, and through their blindness to fail in charity, without which Church Unions are mere ecclesiastical contrivances. In Churches so diverging there may be the grace of Christ, and those of them in which His grace most constantly abides will be quickest to see and to acknowledge His grace in the others.

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WELSH CALVINISTIC CHURCH

BY
PRINCIPAL T. C. EDWARDS
AND THE
REV. JOHN OWEN

IX

THE WELSH CALVINISTIC CHURCH

BY PRINCIPAL T. C. EDWARDS, AND THE
REV. JOHN OWEN, MOLD.

Origin

THE Calvinistic Methodist Church is the direct outcome of the great Evangelical Revival of last century. That revival, though simultaneous with was quite independent of the Methodist revival in England. Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland, the fathers of the Welsh movement, had no knowledge whatever of the early efforts of their English brethren. Nor, at the first, did they know even of each other. Howell Harris was brought under religious conviction in Talgarth Church at Easter 1735. At Whitsuntide, on the same spot, he

[The Publishers did me the honour of requesting me to recommend a competent person to write on the Calvinistic Church in Wales. I am glad that Mr. Owen, of Mold, has undertaken the task, and confident that every member of that Church will consider the paper perfectly reliable as to facts, and safe in the statement of opinion. I thought it necessary to append this note, that I might not appear in the slightest degree to lay claim to the authorship, though I have read the paper carefully in manuscript, and added some remarks. I am willing to accept fully joint responsibility with the writer.—T. C. E.]

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found peace, and on his way home proclaimed to his neighbours that "God had forgiven his sins." The following summer he spent in going from house to house within his native parish to exhort the people "to flee from the wrath to come." Having spent one term in the following autumn in the University of Oxford, and being disgusted with the prevailing ungodliness of the place, he returned home to resume the work of exhortation which he had already begun, with still greater earnestness. About the same time Daniel Rowland, who was then officiating as curate to his brother in the parishes of Llancwnlle and Llangetho, Cardiganshire, experienced, through the ministry of the Rev. Griffith Jones, Llanddowror, a thorough spiritual awakening. In the neighbourhood of Llangetho there was a dissenting minister, Philip Pugh, a man of eminent piety and keen spiritual insight, who greatly helped the young curate to clearer views of evangelical truths, so that his ministry soon became a great power in the land, drawing men from almost all the counties of Wales to the remote parish of Llangetho.

A few years later, Howell Davies, one of the disciples, and a favourite pupil of the Rev. Griffith Jones, Llanddowror, was ordained to a curacy in Pembrokeshire, and commenced there a work similar in character to that of Howell Harris at Trevecca and Daniel Rowland at Llangetho, and soon won for himself the title of "Apostle of Pembrokeshire." Thus it was that Calvinistic Methodism began in Wales.

Growth

Harris, following the advice of the Rev. Griffith Jones, whom he visited in 1736, opened a school at Trevecca, which gave him further opportunity of carrying on the work already commenced. Before the end of that year he was led to establish Societies in the various districts which he visited. These "Societies" were to some extent on the lines of Dr. Woodward's Societies, but their aim from the very first was spiritual instruction rather than religious discipline. The planting of these Societies by Harris, as well as his powerful ministry, roused opposition from all classes, and brought upon him ridicule and persecution from the clergy, the gentry, and the common people.

But nothing daunted the intrepid spirit of Harris, who in these years visited all the counties of Wales, facing the fierce anger of the mob, led by the clergy, especially in North Wales, where his life was more than once in imminent danger. Gradually meeting houses or chapels were built.

For the first fifteen years, despite all opposition, the work prospered, but about 1750, a serious misunderstanding on a point of doctrine arose among the leaders, which led to the retirement of Harris to Trevecca, where he established a Home, into which he received his followers, who came to be called his "family," and whose life within the Home was regulated by the severest discipline. This may fairly be stated to be the one and only serious dispute during the whole history of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. In 1763, however, the leaders were again brought together, and the

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work revived throughout the Principality. This happy change was in a great measure the result of the publication of the hymns of the Rev. William Williams, Pantycelyn, "the sweet singer of Wales," who had been converted under the preaching of Howell Harris, and had been refused priest's orders in the Church of England on account of his Methodist proclivities.

Organisation

The formation of Societies made it necessary to bring them together into an Association, and this was done in 1743, at Watford, Glamorganshire. In the Association all the leaders, and all who took part in the work as exhorters, met in council, and discussed questions of doctrine and discipline, and exercised supervision over all the Societies. Gradually, owing to the extension of the work, it became necessary to establish monthly meetings, or Presbyteries, embracing counties, in order that a closer supervision might be exercised over the exhorters and elders of the Society (usually called leaders), as well as the members generally. The members of the Presbyteries met once a quarter in an Association.

Religious Instruction

In 1785, at the end of half a century, one of the most important events in the history of Welsh Methodism took place, namely, the separation of the Rev. Thomas Charles, B.A., of Bala, from the Church of England, and his admission to the ranks of Methodism. Hitherto the work of instruction

had been less efficiently done than the work of awakening. Mr. Charles felt at once that the problem of the time was how to administer instruction to the people. Hence the establishment of Sunday-schools, followed by the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society; hence also the preparation and publication of his "Christian Instructor" and "Bible Dictionary," two books which created a new era in the history of the Principality, and which are in general use at the present day.

Separation from the Church of England

From what has already been stated, it will be inferred that all the leaders of the Revival were members of the Church of England, and, it may be added without hesitation, that at first they had no intention whatever of separating themselves from that Church. But Howell Harris, who probably was the most zealous Churchman of them all, was thrice refused deacon's orders; and William Williams, Pantycelyn, the hymnologist, as well as Peter Williams, Carmarthen, the earliest of Welsh commentators, never received priest's orders. Since they were unable to find work in the Church, they were therefore compelled to cast in their lot with the Methodists. And in 1763, Daniel Rowland, having been for thirty years a curate, first to his brother and afterwards to his own son, at a stipend of only ten pounds a year, was, by the action of the Bishop of St. David's, driven out of the Church. In 1785, Charles of Bala, finding himself unable to obtain a curacy anywhere, though willing and anxious to

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work in the Church even without any remuneration at all, was consequently forced to cast his lot among the Methodists, or cease in his efforts to do good. But there were many clergymen, especially in South Wales, who, though holding preferments in the Church, worked heartily with the Methodists. In North Wales not more than three clergymen ever joined them; and for seventy-six years the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were administered to the members of the Societies only by clergymen. In 1811, however, the Calvinistic Methodists for the first time ordained their own ministers. For many years before this the number of the clergy had been inadequate to the need, and numbers had been, to a great extent, inevitably deprived of the Sacraments; and, it must be added also, that the most powerful preachers were not found at this time among the clergy, but among those who had been brought up in the Societies. But the first ordination, in June 1811, at Bala, and at Llandilo in August, effected the final separation of the Methodists from the Church. The position had been for a long time a most anomalous one. Side by side with the churches there had been chapels; and the members of the Societies attached to the latter often refused to receive the communion in the former, not on account of any hostility to the doctrine or polity of the Church of England, but on account of the utter incompetence of many of the clergy, and, it must be added, the notoriously immoral life which they led. The alienation of the Welsh people from the Church is often attributed to the fact that many of the incumbents were incapable of

officiating in the language of the people. This, no doubt, had its effect; for there was, in fact, a conspiracy to destroy the vernacular, similar to the attempt in the time of the Tudors, when William Salesbury, it is not too much to aver, came to the rescue and saved the language. The Methodist revival is essentially a literary and patriotic revival. It may also be said that it is a Protestant revival over against the claims of the Romish Church. We may add that it proved itself in politics a liberalising power; but, as we have said above, it was pre-eminently a religious movement.

But when once the Methodists possessed ordained ministers of their own, it was felt that an estrangement of many years' growth had issued in complete separation. Many of the clergy who had hitherto co-operated cordially with them, henceforth held aloof, confining as a rule their labours within the limits of their own parishes. Others continued to work with them as happily as before, but none joined them anew; and in time the last link was snapped which joined the Calvinistic Methodists to the Church of England.

Doctrinal Teaching

The fathers of Methodism loyally accepted the Articles of the Church of England, as well as the three early Creeds, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. The doctrinal standards of the Church were always appealed to whenever questions of doctrine were discussed. The Articles of the Church of England and the creeds of the universal Church were regarded as their standards of teach-

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ing, so that no other Confession of Faith was drawn up during the lifetime of the fathers of Methodism, nor in fact until the advent of Arminian Methodists into Wales, which took place after the death of Wesley. It cannot be doubted that all the founders of Methodism in Wales were Calvinist without a single exception. This is not to be ascribed to the influence of Whitfield, for the Welsh Revivalists were pronounced Calvinists before Whitfield ever made the acquaintance of Howell Harris. Yet it is clear that they did not teach in a controversial spirit, for Wesley was a welcome visitor to the Principality, and Harris especially co-operated with the English Methodists outside Wales. Yet we should be within the limits of the truth if we stated that the current of teaching flowed in a Calvinistic channel. The published sermons of Rowland, and especially the poetry of Williams, prove this. Charles of Bala, who wrote the catechism called the "Christian Instructor" and the "Bible Dictionary," is unmistakably Calvinistic in his teaching. It was not until the first leaders of Methodism had passed away that a Confession of Faith was drawn up. The Articles of this Confession are based upon the "Thirty-nine Articles" and the "Westminster Confession," though every article bears evidence of having been carefully considered by the committee who drew up the document. Possibly also some of the statements were accentuated in view of the teaching of the Wesleyan Methodists, who after the death of Wesley had begun to labour in Wales, and in their preaching had often attacked the Calvinistic position.

Polity

The polity of the Calvinistic Methodist Church has been sometimes described as a modified form of Presbyterianism, or as holding a midway position between Presbyterianism and Congregationalism. It would, perhaps, be difficult to decide which of the two elements predominates. Possibly they have varied at different times. The supreme power rests with the two Associations, one in North, and the other in South Wales. The ultimate power has rested from the first in the Association, and this principle is incorporated in the Constitutional Deed. And when we have regard to the physical conformation of Wales, as well as to the distinctive characteristics of each province, it may be said that this arrangement is the most suitable. The ordination and expulsion of ministers are in the hands of the Association, as well as the control of the Home Mission, the Auxiliary, and English Churches Funds. Also a Ministers' Fund has been formed by each Association. No property can be disposed of without the formal approval of the Association. The members have a right of appeal to the Association against the decision of the Presbytery.

To each of these Associations a number of Presbyteries are affiliated, ten Presbyteries to the South Wales Association and fourteen to that of North Wales. This includes the Presbyteries which are situated in England, such as those in London, Liverpool, and Manchester.

These Presbyteries may be described as exercising administrative powers within specified areas.

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In some instances this area includes a whole county ; but in the majority of instances the counties have, by this time, been divided into two Presbyteries. Whilst the Churches are allowed great liberty in the management of their internal affairs, the Presbytery see that the Churches act constitutionally. Whenever deacons or elders are chosen, delegates from the Presbytery must be present, who take the vote of the church, and declare the result. Again, whenever a church gives a vote upon a candidate for the ministry, or upon the election of a pastor, such election is not valid unless representatives of the Presbytery are present to take the vote, and report the result to the Presbytery, who have the power, though it is very rarely exercised, of refusing to confirm what was done by the church. When a dispute arises in a church, it may ask for delegates from the Presbytery to inquire into the differences, and the Presbytery have the power even of initiating an inquiry when they deem it necessary, though it must be said emphatically that the authoritative side of our polity is not accentuated. Again of late years, as the labours of the Presbyteries have increased, some portion of this work is delegated to District Meetings, which include a number of churches, from ten to fifteen, within a convenient area. These District Meetings have no legislative power, and all their decisions must be confirmed by the Presbyteries.

In 1864 a General Assembly was formed, in which delegates from all the Presbyteries meet. It is held alternately in North and South Wales,

except every third year, when it meets in Liverpool. Measures relating to the Assurance Trust Fund of Connexional property, the Book Room, Foreign Missions, the Forward Movement, temperance, educational, and political questions, bearing upon Free Church principles, are discussed in this annual meeting of the whole Church.

In 1893, Thomas Davies, Esq., of Bootle, Liverpool, established a lecture in connection with the General Assembly, which is to be called the "Davies Lecture," in memory of the founder's father, who was a member of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. Already four of these lectures have been delivered.¹

The General Assembly has as yet no legal power, and all its regulations, before they can have any binding force, must be confirmed by each Association.

The Ministry

It must be admitted that many of the exhorters were men of ordinary, if not small, abilities, and very limited knowledge; but, from the first, there was in the Calvinistic Methodist Church a succession of preachers of rare power, and among them men of remarkable intellectual ability and extensive knowledge. But the establishment of Sabbath-schools effected so great an improvement in the intellectual status of the members of the Societies and the hearers generally, that it became a matter of necessity to train candidates for the ministry much

¹ It is stipulated that the subject must be connected with some aspect of religion.

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more thoroughly than had hitherto been the case. And in due time the man to do the work appeared. In 1837, the Rev. Lewis Edwards, M.A. (who afterwards received the degree of D.D. from the University of Edinburgh), settled at Bala, in consequence of his marriage with the granddaughter of Charles of Bala; and in the same year, in conjunction with his brother-in-law, the Rev. David Charles, B.A. (who afterwards received the degree of D.D. from Princeton), he opened a school in that town for the education of young preachers, and others. In five years—viz., in 1842, Mr. Charles removed to Trevecca, to open a college in the building which had been erected by Howell Harris as a Home for his followers, and which by this time had become the property of the Calvinistic Methodists. Mr. Charles for many years carried on there, single-handed, a most efficient work. Mr. Charles' place at Bala had been filled by the Rev. John Parry (afterwards D.D.), who had been one of the first students of the school. These two institutions came to be regarded as colleges, and full well did they deserve the name. A college was built in Bala, towards which the churches of North Wales, inspired by the irresistible power and eloquence of the Rev. Edward Morgan, the secretary of the college, collected £25,000. The sum of £10,000 was afterwards collected towards the building. A few years later, through the efforts of the late Rev. Edward Matthews, a sum of £13,000 was collected in South Wales towards augmenting the Trevecca college fund. The establishment of the national colleges, as well as the starting of eighty-three

intermediate schools, has brought about a most important change in Wales; and, as a consequence, the college in Bala (which had hitherto trained its students in the arts as well as in theology) was converted in 1891 into a theological college, and opened to all, under the principalship of the Rev. T. C. Edwards, D.D., the eldest son of the founder of the college, who had died four years previously. It should be admitted that the endowments of the two colleges have been recently augmented by an additional collection of £22,000 in North Wales, and over £7000 in South Wales.

The ministry was from the commencement an itinerant one, though the early fathers of Methodism were most anxious to secure supervision over the "Societies." But the introduction of the pastorate was felt fifty years ago to be a necessity. In connection with the Home Missions of North and South Wales, the missionaries were really pastors, but in no other churches were there pastors until comparatively late years. The first was the Rev. John Phillips—afterwards the founder of the Normal College at Bangor—at Holywell, in 1835. The revival which passed over Wales in 1858 and 1859, gave a great impetus to the liberality of the churches. From that time onward pastors began to settle down in different parts of Wales. Though the movement was advocated by the leading men of the connection—notably the Rev. Dr. Edwards of Bala, and the Rev. Edward Morgan of Dyffryn—yet there appeared a strong opposition to it from several quarters. During these last years this antagonism has largely subsided. Undoubtedly, one element which had contributed

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greatly to the spread of the pastorate, is the activity of the clergy of the Episcopal Church ; and one of the points that told most against the Free Churches of Wales during the heated controversies of the past years, was the taunt that if the church clergy were removed, there would not have been a resident minister in hundreds of parishes in Wales. The taunt was more undeserved than it appeared to be, because a great part of a resident minister's work was done in Wales by devoted lay elders. The Calvinistic Methodists have taken the lesson to heart, and, to all appearance, the universal adoption of the pastorate is only a matter of time.

The itinerant system was not adopted by the Connexion on any principle, but arose from the circumstances of the time ; and while it was at first the only efficient means of spreading religion in different parts of the country, it became in time a hindrance to true progress, by discouraging regular and steady work of spiritual instruction among the ministers, and by inducing the Churches to rest satisfied with periodical excitement. If itineracy had become permanent, as many of its advocates wished, it would, we think, have by this time materially, if not fatally, weakened the denomination ; so that, instead of being able to show a continuous increase, as was the case at the late General Assembly, it would be now exhibiting a picture of decrepitude and senility in the face of intellectual and moral changes, such as those which young Wales is passing through at the present time. Nevertheless, it must be confessed that the Connexion has now to face a difficulty arising from

the reluctance of many churches to adopt fully and finally the pastorate, and to lay aside the few remaining traces of itineracy throughout the country. At present the tendency seems to be to accept a modified system, combining, it is hoped, the advantages of pastoral supervision of the churches with efficient preparation of sermons by the ministers. For instance, while the pastor holds Bible-classes in connection with the now established system of Scriptural Lessons, organised by the Sunday-school Committee, and while the immemorial custom of the Methodists—that of Societies for spiritual experience—is retained and encouraged, he is expected to make thorough preparation for the pulpit and to visit his people. In addition to this, he is often invited to preach in the neighbouring churches and at Presbytery meetings, sometimes also at the preaching which takes place at the Quarterly Associations.

Present Position

Statistics.—The statistics of the Connexion have been collected and published annually since 1867 by the General Assembly. At the end of 1896 there were 24 Presbyteries, usually known as “monthly meetings,” with 1330 churches and 150,442 communicants. In 1867 there were only 974 churches and 91,462 communicants. The increase, therefore, in twenty-nine years has been over 36 per cent. in the number of churches, and over 64 per cent. in the number of communicants. The total of the contributions in 1867 was £103,140, 16s. 1d., and in 1896 it amounted to

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£228,416, 16s.—an increase of over 121 per cent. The adherents, including the communicants, are 308,307. It should be noted that churches in England are included in the above account. To the Liverpool monthly meeting belong 41 churches, with 7854 communicants. In London there are 10 churches, with an aggregate membership of 3088; and in Manchester 15 churches, with 1658 members. The following items are interesting:—In 1896 the contributions towards the support of the ministry amounted to £91,576, 14s. 11d., and those to Home and Foreign Missions were £7887, 3s. The chapel debts are £332,877, 19s. 9d., but in 1896 the sum of £44,028, 9s. 11d. was contributed towards their reduction; and, according to a very modest estimate, the chapel property cannot be worth less than from £1,600,000 to £1,700,000. In 1880 its value was £1,302,267, 6s. 11d., and from 1851 to 1881 more than a million pounds was spent on chapels. It should be added that the debt has been increased of late years very much, through the building of schoolrooms for the use of our Sunday-school and week night classes, as well as the building of houses, or manses, for the ministers.

SUMMARY OF THE STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1896.

Submitted to the General Assembly of this year at Rhyl.

Churches	1,330
Chapels and mission rooms	1,536
Schoolrooms for the use of Sunday-schools	740
Ministers' houses	136

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Ministers	771
Preachers, or probationers	395
Deacons	5,434
Communicants	150,442
Children under instruction	67,585
Members on probation	2,706
Total number of those in the churches	220,733
Sunday-school teachers	25,139
Total number of scholars	199,059
Adherents—viz., hearers, including communicants	308,307

Collections.

Towards the ministry	£ 91,576 14 11
Total of the collections	228,416 16 0

The Calvinistic Methodist Church abroad

We append a summary of the statistics of the Calvinistic Methodist Church among the Welsh abroad :—

THE UNITED STATES.

There are about 100 ministers in U.S.A. ; churches, 185 ; communicants, 12,000 ; hearers, 25,000. It must be borne in mind that many descendants of the Calvinistic Methodists have become united to English churches, owing to their having lost the language of their ancestors.

SOUTH AMERICA.

Patagonia.—Ministers, 2 ; chapels and mission rooms, 6 ; communicants, 211 ; Sunday-school scholars, 352.

AUSTRALIA.

Victoria.—Ministers, 4 ; communicants, 337 ; Sunday-school scholars, including teachers, 341 ; hearers, 568.

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Sabbath-school System

No adequate and complete account of the Calvinistic Methodist Church can be given without a reference being made to our Sunday-school system. The circulating schools of the Rev. Griffith Jones of Llanddowror, which were started a few years before the setting out of Howell Harris, did much to prepare the way for the Revival; and its progress was much helped afterwards by these schools. For in these circulating schools the people were taught to read the Bible in their own tongue, and were regularly catechised in the truths of the Christian religion. And the fact that neither the Church of England nor the Puritans before the rise of Methodism gained a deep hold of the Welsh people can be explained by the fact that no effort had been made to teach the people to read the Bible in their mother tongue. The Rev. Griffith Jones of Llanddowror was the first to adopt different methods of reaching the mass of the Welsh people; and in this course he was enthusiastically followed, a few years later, by the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala—the greatest benefactor Wales ever had—who appointed (and paid mostly out of his own pocket) men who settled down in different places as teachers. On Sundays these teachers, who were really evangelists, taught those who were unable to go to them on week days and evenings. Mr. Charles began this work in the year 1785, three years after Mr. Robert Raikes had opened a Sunday-school for children in Gloucester. The peculiarity of Mr. Charles' movement was that

adults, as well as children, were received into the Sunday-schools. Though he was opposed at the outset by conscientious brethren, who regarded teaching people to read God's Word as "work," and therefore forbidden to be done on the Sabbath-day, yet his wise and persistent efforts prevailed, and Sabbath-schools sprang up thickly in every direction, not only among the Calvinistic Methodists, but among all Nonconformists, and even in connection with the Church of England, in Wales. It may be affirmed that the Sabbath-school has been a most efficient means of grace in the Principality; in fact it was by this means that many outlying districts in Wales were first evangelised. And further, it is to the continual reading and studying of the Bible, thus stimulated by the Sabbath-schools, that the Methodist Revival has been nourished, directed, and preserved from running into extremes. Thus an element of soberness has distinguished the religious life of our people.

There are two distinguishing features in the Sunday-school system of Wales—(1.) All ages attend it and take part in the work, the old as well as the young. (2.) Great attention was given from the first to public catechising; neither was this again confined to the catechising of the young. Several men appeared who proved themselves to have remarkable gifts as catechisers, such as Charles himself, Ebenezer Richard (the distinguished father of the late Henry Richard, M.P.), the Rev. Owen Jones, of Montgomeryshire, and the Rev. Robert Owen, Rhyl.

The Sunday-schools are grouped into districts,

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and a Sunday-school meeting, in which all the school is catechised publicly, is held every six weeks or two months; and these schools again meet annually in some central place.

With the advance of elementary education it was felt that a change must be made in our Sunday-school teaching. About eighteen or twenty years ago a syllabus of work, somewhat similar to that in use at the London Board Schools, was adopted, and an annual examination of all the classes in each Presbytery was initiated. This examination has been supplemented of late years by an examination for the whole of Wales, which only those who have obtained a first-class certificate in the Presbytery examination can enter. It need not be added that these examinations are optional.

In the year 1885, the centenary of the Welsh Sunday-schools was commemorated. Great enthusiasm was evinced everywhere in these commemorative meetings. As an outcome of this feeling it was resolved to form a Sunday-school Union for the whole of the Sunday-schools of the Calvinistic Methodists; and in the year 1886 this plan became an accomplished fact. Since that time the whole of the work of the schools has been directed by a Committee of Delegates from all the Presbyteries of North and South Wales, who meet twice a year in conference at Aberystwith. This establishing of a Sunday-school Union has undoubtedly proved to be a great stimulus to the Sabbath-schools. A revised syllabus of work for different standards has been published. The Union selects the portion of Scripture which is to be read during the year by the different classes in

the schools. Suitable lesson-books and hand-books have been published, which are sold in thousands every year. Undoubtedly the Sunday-school system among us has been greatly improved to meet the needs of the changing times within the last few years; and it would not be an exaggeration to say that it is the most efficient Sunday-school system existing. To understand the religious life of Wales thoroughly, one must study the history of its Sunday-schools. Possibly it is the efficiency and popularity of this institution which explain the fact that the Welsh people have not been so eager to teach the Bible in the day-schools.¹

Missionary Work

The Missionary Society of this Church was formed, January 31st, 1840, in Rose Place Chapel, Liverpool. The Methodist Church had not been indifferent to missionary work previous to this, for annual collections had been made towards the London Missionary Society since the year 1799. Mr. Charles of Bala was a most zealous advocate of the claims of the London Missionary Society, and it is probable that we are indebted to him for the first efforts amongst the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales for furthering missionary work in other lands. In later years subscriptions were also given towards the Church Missionary Society.

Several Welshmen had gone out to labour in the missionary field during the years previous to the forming of a Connexional Society. In 1800

¹ It is interesting and historically important to remember that through Mr. Charles' desire to meet the need of Wales for Bibles, the British and Foreign Bible Society came into existence.

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John Davies went out to Otahiti, where he laboured faithfully for fifty years. In 1816 Evan Evans went out to South Africa, going in the same ship with Moffat. In 1826 Isaac Hughes followed him. In 1830 Josiah Hughes settled in Malacca. These men proved themselves true missionaries. But there was a strong desire, especially among the younger men, to form a separate Missionary Society of their own, and this growing desire came to a head in 1839, when the directors of the London Missionary Society refused to allow a young Welshman of the name of Thomas Jones to go to India, with the result, as has already been stated, that our own Missionary Society was formed in the beginning of the following year. A mountainous district, called the Kassia and Jaintia Hills, in North-Eastern India, was selected for missionary operations, and Thomas Jones was sent to labour there.

The hill tribes of Kassia and Jaintia were sunk in ignorance and superstition: their religion was a degraded form of demon-worship, even when compared with the religion of the surrounding plains. The energetic missionary set himself to master the language, and to reduce it to writing. The first missionary was soon followed by the Rev. William Lewis, who, in co-operation with his wife, translated portions of the Bible into Kassi, both whilst out in India and after his return.

Other missionaries followed, but for some thirty years the Society met with serious difficulties, which caused a feeling of depression and disappointment at home in relation to our missionary work. A turn in the tide came, and during the

last twenty-five years the work has prospered greatly. A great change has come over the people, and there is at present a nucleus of a strong and prospering Kassi Church. Amongst those who laboured so successfully during the last thirty years, it would be wrong not to mention the name of the Rev. Thomas Jerman Jones, who died on his way home from India a few years ago. Mr. Jerman Jones proved himself to possess rare missionary gifts. He won the respect and admiration of the European residents, as well as the affection and gratitude of the Kassiss, by his heroic conduct during a visitation of cholera, which ravaged the hills in 1878.

The progress of the work has been steady and continuous, and it is not too much to hope that the whole of Kassia and Jaintia Hills will be won to Christ in a generation or two.

The year 1890 was the jubilee year of the Society, and it was resolved that some special effort should be made to commemorate the event. Whereas the directors aspired to collect £10,000, when the matter was put before the people, a wave of missionary enthusiasm passed over the churches. In a twelvemonth the sum of £37,326, 15s. was collected, and this munificent contribution—when the number and condition of the people are considered—was crowned by a princely gift of £30,000 from Mr. Robert Davies, Menai Bridge, one of the elders of the Church. The Jubilee Fund, as it was called, enabled the Society to provide for the training of ministers in Kassia by establishing a theological hall, and also erecting and fitting up hospitals for the convenience of the

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medical missionaries; and thirdly, mission work in the extensive and populous plain of Sylhet, where a missionary of our Church had at one time laboured, was reopened.

There are now ten missionaries, together with their wives, labouring on the hills of Kassia and Jaintia, two of whom are ordained medical missionaries, and one lady-teacher is stationed at the High School for Girls in Shillong, the seat of the government in Kassia.

In the plain of Sylhet there are three missionaries stationed, one being a medical missionary, together with five lady-teachers, who are engaged in teaching the girls and in Zenana work. It may be added that the salary of one of these missionaries is paid by the Calvinistic Methodist Church of America. One of the lady missionaries labouring in Sylhet is a Bengalee, whose father became a Christian years ago, and who clung to his faith during all those years of apparent lapse of the work in Sylhet. There are already five ordained native ministers in Kassia, who have districts assigned to them.

In polity the Church in Kassia is an exact copy of the Calvinistic Methodist Church of Wales. We give a summary of last year's statistics of the Kassia Church :—

Churches and mission rooms	281
Communicants	2926
Candidates for admission to Church membership	2592
Children under training in the Churches . . .	4244
<hr/>	
Making a total of	9762

The number of Sunday-school scholars is 10,540.

Last year's collection of the Kassia Churches amounted to 11,333 rupees.

It should be understood, also, that the whole education of Kassia and Jaintia is under the control of our Missionary Society. The children under training in these schools last year numbered 6542. In order to supply qualified teachers for these day-schools, a normal school was established at Shillong some years ago, over which one of our missionaries presides. As an indication of the attitude of the Calvinistic Methodist Church towards religious instruction, it may be noted that the Bible is regularly read and taught in all the missionary schools. Though the mission in Sylhet was only recommenced a few years ago, already there are encouraging signs of success.

About the same time the Rev. James Williams was sent as a missionary to Brittany, where he laboured amidst great difficulties of every kind for almost forty years. When Mr. Williams, through failing health, gave up his work, the Rev. W. Jenkyn Jones settled down in Quimper, where he has been assisted by two lay helpers, one a monk who was won to the Protestant faith during the life of the Rev. James Williams. The work in Brittany is, of necessity, different in character from that carried on in Kassia, yet it may be affirmed that real progress has already been made, and three churches have been planted there.

In referring to the success of our missionary labours, it is but right to acknowledge the labours of the Rev. Josiah Thomas, M.A., of Liverpool, who has been secretary to our Foreign Mission for the last thirty years. Much is due to his sound judgment and sympathetic oversight of the work. In recognition of this fact, Mr. Thomas was chosen

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Moderator of the North Wales Quarterly Association last year. As an evidence of the interest of the whole Calvinistic Methodist Church in its missionary work, we may instance the election this year of the Rev. John Roberts, D.D., Principal of the Theological Hall, who is home on furlough, to be Moderator of the General Assembly for the year 1898. Dr. Roberts is now bringing out a revised translation of the whole of the Bible into the Kassi language. In this work he is ably assisted by his wife.

We may add that a missionary is going out to the people of Lushai this year; and there are multiplying evidences that the missionary spirit is spreading in our colleges.

Mission Work at Home

Reference has already been made to the Home Mission Society, which has carried on the work of evangelisation for many years in the border districts between Wales and England. With the opening up of railways into Wales thirty years ago, it was felt that provision should be made to meet the wants of the English people who settled down in our midst, or who visited our watering-places. Though this movement was regarded with jealousy, and opposed in many quarters, it has proved a great success; and to-day there are about twelve thousand communicants in our English churches. A conference of the English churches is held annually, in North and South Wales alternately. This conference has no legislative power, but it gives an opportunity for the

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English churches to meet together and discuss questions which may prove of interest to them.

Some six years ago the General Assembly decided, at the instance of the Rev. John Pugh, of Cardiff (who had already been labouring successfully in Cardiff), to start what has come to be known as the "Forward Movement." It was felt that something should be done to meet the spiritual need of the rapidly-growing seaport town of Cardiff, as well as of other populous districts of Glamorgan-shire and Monmouthshire. Already several large and commodious halls have been opened; and up to this time thirty places of worship have been erected by the Forward Movement, having a roll of church membership numbering 1559, hearers 10,462, Sunday-school scholars 4426. Almost all these have been rescued from indifference and heathenism within the last few years. The whole of the Connexion subscribes towards carrying on this movement, and already there is a breath of the old evangelising spirit passing over our older churches.

The Theological Position of the Calvinistic Methodist Church of to-day

It may be asked to what extent the Calvinistic Methodist Church of to-day retains its loyalty to its Confession of Faith, and its early teaching. As has been already intimated, the Calvinistic Methodists were from the beginning thoroughly orthodox and evangelical. The cardinal truths of the gospel have been unfalteringly held by them from the first; and when the Rev. Peter Williams

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—one of the most learned of the early Methodists —was supposed to incline towards Sabellianism, he was expelled from the ministry, nor does it seem that he gained any following. Since the days of Peter Williams, more than a century ago, no controversy has arisen as to any of the fundamental truths of our religion. The late Dr Owen Thomas, in his valedictory address from the chair of the General Assembly, in 1869, stated his conviction that the teaching of our pulpits was thoroughly evangelical. In 1888, the Rev. Principal Edwards, speaking as Moderator, expressed the same opinion as to the evangelical character of our preaching; and the Rev. Griffith Ellis, M.A., in his valedictory address of this year, endorsed the opinion of his predecessors in the chair. Whilst it might be argued that the controversial preaching has to a great extent passed away, it cannot with the slightest justice be affirmed that the Calvinistic Methodist Church has wavered in its allegiance to evangelical truth; and when a few years ago a Welsh bishop cast doubt upon the loyalty of the Calvinistic Methodists to the doctrine of our Lord's true Divinity, the charge was considered a most unjust one, not only by the people aspersed, but by almost the universal opinion of the people of Wales. It was indignantly denied from the chair of the General Assembly in 1893. Of late years what is known as the Kenotic theory respecting the Person of Christ has received great attention. A keen interest in the question both within our own Church, as well as the other Churches of Wales, has been aroused by the publication of the "Davies Lecture" of 1895

on the "God-Man." The appearance of this lecture has stimulated the present generation to devote their attention to theology ; for the contents of this book have not only been discussed in the Welsh periodicals, but in the Presbyteries, and many meetings of ministers of all denominations throughout Wales. To say that the advocates of the Kenotic theory have the least intention of obscuring the doctrine of the true Divinity of Christ (however any one might regard the result of the acceptance of the theory) would be very wide indeed of the mark. Whether the above theory will obtain general acceptance, it is rather premature to form an opinion. At present, however, a great number regard this doctrine of the Kenosis with distrust, and strenuously oppose it ; whilst another section suspends its judgment : but many of the younger ministers have been fascinated by the theory, and their number is increasing.¹

Scientific Theories

Though the leaders of Calvinistic Methodism, like all who have the interest of revealed truth at heart, have viewed with anxiety the new theories as to the creation of the world and of man, yet it may be claimed for our Church that it has never promulgated any explicit statements upon these matters. This attitude of reserve must be attributed partly to the liberal and cautious spirit of the late Dr. Lewis Edwards, who has guided and influenced the thought of the Calvinistic Metho-

¹ This paragraph has been left just as it was written by Mr. Owen.
—T. C. E.

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dist Church more than any one else during the last fifty years. From the remarks made by the Moderator of the General Assembly in 1896, as well as by the Chairman of the North Wales Association, we may infer that these representative men, speaking in the hearing of their brethren, desire the Connexion to have an open mind upon these questions, and not to be too hasty to accept these views, nor too eager to condemn them.

Higher Criticism

Great attention has been paid to the theories of the higher critics during the last few years. These views were at first, no doubt, regarded generally with much alarm, and though this feeling has somewhat subsided, the teaching of the Higher Critics is still looked upon with misgiving by many among us, as is seen, for example, in the Davies Lecture of 1896, on the Primeval Religion, by the Rev. Dr. Cynddylan Jones; and yet there are evidences that a minority treat these views with less disfavour, of whom the late Dr. John Hughes of Carnarvon was an example, whilst a few have publicly expressed their acceptance of them without relinquishing their hold of the "Inspiration of the Scriptures," and their number is probably increasing.

**Does the Calvinistic Methodist Church still retain
its Calvinism?**

Those who live outside Wales, looking at the adjective which differentiates us from the rest of the Methodist family, have supposed that our

Calvinism has been our predominating feature. The Congregationalists and Baptists were in fact, in their first conception, as pronouncedly Calvinistic as ourselves. It must never be forgotten that our "motor-power" has been the Methodist spirit, or the intense desire to evangelise the people. Though our Confession of Faith is decidedly Calvinistic, yet our theological position has been that of Moderate Calvinism for at least the last fifty years. Several of the men who drew up our Confession of Faith, such, for example, as the great preacher, John Elias—the greatest orator Wales has ever listened to—were undoubtedly inclined to high Calvinistic views; and during the first half of the present century, exaggerated and one-sided views of the truth were presented to many of our people. The coming of Wesleyan Methodism to Wales, and the controversies which followed, resulted in making the doctrine more hyper-Calvinistic than before. But in a few years a healthy reaction arose within the Calvinistic Methodist Body itself; and men came to the front who taught and emphasised those aspects of the truth which had been in danger of being forgotten. Amongst the preachers of Wales who led the way in this work, we must mention the Rev. John Jones of Talysarn, believed by many to be the most gifted man that ever appeared in the Welsh ministry. He spent some years of his public life in combating a one-sided Calvinism, which prevailed largely at this time. He was soon followed by a band of able men in all parts of Wales. Again the Rev. Dr. Lewis Edwards, through his influence upon the

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students under his training, and his masterly Essays (which are admitted by all to be the best theological work in the Welsh language), opened the eyes of his fellow-countrymen to a wider view of the truth, and taught them to recognise the opposite sides of every doctrine.

Now, whilst it would not be correct to say that Calvinistic Methodism has discarded its Calvinism, the "five points" are not to-day emphasised in the pulpit as they were forty or fifty years ago, in the days of those who drew up the Confession of Faith, and their immediate followers. The truths are viewed from a wider standpoint than was done in past years; and there is a far deeper sense of the mystery of things, and consequently such doctrines as election and predestination are scarcely ever treated in a controversial spirit. Whether the Calvinistic Methodist Church can remain long in its present transitional state it is difficult to tell. A desire was expressed at the opening service of the Theological College at Bala, six years ago, that our aim should be to attain a "wider view than Calvinism, and a deeper view than Arminianism."

We should not conclude this section without referring to the exegetical spirit which has characterised these last years, and which has served to do justice to the many-sided aspects of the truth.

Exegesis has, to a greater extent than ever, been added to dogmatics. There has been, no doubt, a transition from the substance of theology to the correct way of expounding it. And this, it is to be hoped, will result in a wider and truer dogmatism. Men's minds will naturally run

in the channel which all thoughtful theologians in these days happily acknowledge. In Wales theology will not become, in future, narrow and one-sided, as it was in peril of becoming in the past, when ministers knew nothing of colleges giving instruction in Church History, and when there was no study of theological subjects according to a comparative method. This deficiency was the consequence of the unjust exclusion of our ministers from the older universities—an exclusion that has had the disastrous effect of most seriously, some think fatally, in the Principality of Wales, injuring the Church which was guilty of perpetrating it. The opening of the older universities has been to the Welsh Non-conformists, like the discovery of a new world, the dawn of a new hope.

Reunion of the Churches in Wales

It cannot be said that Wales has witnessed any effort to bring about the corporate reunion of the Churches. It is true that the Calvinistic Methodist Church is recognised as a branch of the Presbyterian Alliance, and it has several times sent representatives to the Pan - Presbyterian Council, and corresponding members from our Church attend annually the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, and delegates from that Church are received at our General Assembly every year. Our members who remove to places in England where we have no place of worship of our own, are advised to attach themselves to Presbyterian Churches.

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Further, it may be said, the Calvinistic Methodist Church holds fraternal relation with the other Nonconformist bodies in Wales; and beneath all differences there is a growing appreciation of each other's work. Deputations from all the Free Churches welcome our General Assembly annually, and our Church gladly unites with the other denominations to welcome the annual meetings of the different religious bodies.

The Nonconformists of Wales, as was remarked by the late Bishop Thirlwall some years ago, are fundamentally at one in their theological belief, and it may be added further that they are one in the spirit that animates them. They all may be said to be the children of the Methodist Revival; and now that the controversies of the past have been forgotten, they realise their unity more and more. Though it may sound somewhat of a paradox to say, the consciousness of their spiritual unity makes the Free Churches of Wales somewhat indifferent to all attempts to realise an outward corporate unity. Free Church Councils have been established in many parts of Wales, and they have already borne some fruit.

Though candour compels us to admit that there are jealousies and rivalries in many localities, which show themselves now and then in local elections, and the baser sort of natures often take advantage of these sectarian differences, yet taking a broad view of Wales, it may be affirmed that the general trend of things makes for peace. Undoubtedly the establishment of the National Colleges, where students from all the denominations freely mix together, and form friendships with one

another, tends to greater charity and good-will. And the growth of sacerdotalism in the Church of England has compelled the Free Churches to draw nearer than ever in defence of evangelical truth.

It may be questioned whether the Nonconformists of Wales ought not by this time to form a still closer union, and why especially the Congregationalists and the Calvinistic Methodists might not formally coalesce into one. It would seem that logic demands this, and that it is only sentiment, or prejudice, or the influence of great names in the past, that keep them apart.



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
(EVANGELICAL)

BY THE
REV. H. W. WEBB-PEPLOE, M.A.

NOTE

THE Publishers will be pleased to arrange for the separate issue of any of the articles in this volume.

Owing to unavoidable delay the article on "The Church of England," by the Rev. Prebendary Webb-Peploe, has had to be inserted at the end, instead of at the beginning of the volume along with that of the Rev. Canon Knox Little.

X

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

(EVANGELICAL)

BY THE REV. H. W. WEBB-PEPLOE

VICAR OF ST. PAUL'S, ONSLOW SQUARE, AND PREBENDARY
OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

IN these extraordinary days it is not uncommon to hear that an Evangelical Churchman needs to defend HIS position, and to give an account of himself for being found where he is, exactly like a man who is brought before the magistrates and accused of trespassing on another man's property. Meantime, the so-called "Trespasser" knows that every acre of the land that he treads upon is his own ; that he inherited it from his fathers by direct lineal succession ; and that he holds the title-deeds which prove it to be his without one shadow of doubt ; and, on his side, there is nothing but unfeigned astonishment that every magistrate and policeman in the country is not familiar with the facts, and does not accord him his rights without question or doubt. The only real question, in his mind, is whether his accusers, and his judges, will be at the pains to study the proofs which he can offer in regard to the legality of his position. To him and his family they have long been so unquestionable, and in the history of the past have

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so long been unquestioned, that he has never thought it necessary to bring them forth for inspection. Ofttimes he may have looked into them for his own personal satisfaction; and as surely as a man rests upon the title-deeds which have for ages been unquestioned, and which came to him at his father's decease, as a token that the inheritance was his, so has the Evangelical Churchman honestly satisfied himself that his, and his only, is the property entitled "The Church of England"—so far as, under the feudal system of Heaven, any man can claim to be a possessor of that which is really OWNED by the King of Kings, and by no other. He may not (and, indeed, in most cases, we know that he will not) have thought it necessary to study those deeds with a view to meet the counter-claims of others, or to establish his own right to enjoy the property bequeathed to him, simply because he never supposed that other claimants could arise, or that he could be addressed as a trespasser on what he knows to be his own; but should necessity arise, and should his questioners be honest men, he knows with a certainty which keeps him perfectly calm under inquiry, that men have only to look into his title-deeds carefully, and with a sincere desire for truth, to discover that it is not HE who is trespassing, or wrongfully claiming the property, but that the Church of England is his, and that he should be left in undisturbed enjoyment of his rights.

"Might," as we all know, is not to be taken for "Right," and theoretically there can be no need to enforce such a truism, whether in things tem-

poral, ecclesiastical, or spiritual. Yet who among us can fail to recognise the fact that, in practical life, Might is all too frequently accepted for Right. And assuredly this has been made only too manifest during the last few years in regard to "The Church of England"—in whatever aspect we regard it. Sixty years ago it would have been deemed absolutely unquestionable that to Evangelical men alone did that Church, in every sense, belong—in her doctrinal standards, in her ecclesiastical arrangements, and consequently (though of minor importance) in her temporal endowments. Then, though apologetically, and as being themselves on their defence, there arose certain men, who at first did not venture to give their names or addresses to the public, but who issued certain well-known Papers or Tracts, in which they pleaded for a right to remain on the property which was then held by Evangelicals, and not to be cast forth as trespassers or intruders, even though they acknowledged that they did not answer to the description of those to whom the Church of England then confessedly belonged. Unfortunately for what is now called the Evangelical party (but what some still hold to be the true Church of England, as a body), those anonymous writings were soon acknowledged by their authors; and from apologies those authors soon turned to assertion, from assertion to claim, till, from assertion and claim, they gradually passed to possession, and are now openly affirming their right and title to the Church of England as THEIR OWN, while Evangelicals are thrust aside as Interlopers who

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have no real inheritance in the Church—simply because, (1) from a consciousness of right, and (2) from a conviction that, *qui s'excuse, s'accuse*, they have not thought it becoming for humble Christian men to be constantly defending their own position in the Church.

To whom, then, does the Church of England by succession belong? It may be vain to hope for perfect unanimity, or absolute agreement even on points of vital importance; but with all possible latitude and allowance for lawful differences of opinions, and while admitting readily that in our great National Church there is ample room for all who, in mere points of observance, could be described as “High Church,” “Low Church,” or “Broad Church,” it is impossible that men who differ radically upon subjects which constitute some of the chief foundations of their faith, can all alike, and in the same manner, be considered as lawful heirs and possessors of that great inheritance called “the Church of England”; which, when it was bequeathed by the Reformers of the sixteenth century to their children, was, in the most exact manner possible, defined, ordered, and guarded by every device that spiritual wisdom and learning could suggest. The first question, then, which has to be carefully considered, is—

What do we understand by the Church of
England as “Established by Law”?

That Christianity was introduced into our land in the earliest centuries of this era—if not in literally apostolic times—is a matter upon which

there can no longer be any doubt. That England owes the clear revelation of Divine truth not so much to Augustine, the missionary of Pope Gregory, who came to Canterbury in 597 A.D., as to the preachers of earlier days, and then to the faithful teachers from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, is also now universally admitted by all intelligent students of history. And these are points of the utmost importance in deciding the question, What is really meant by the Church of England? It is not of Rome, by Rome, or for Rome that she exists; and never while Churchmen are faithful to their position can they do otherwise than protest against the claim—all too eagerly advanced by Roman Catholics (as is but natural, *if it were lawful*), and all too readily admitted by those who are hankering for “corporate re-union”—that the Church of England received her blessed inheritance of the Christian faith from Rome, or is in the smallest degree bound by the special tenets of Rome. What the Church originally received from its founders was the simple word of God as found in the Bible; and on this, and this alone, that Church is constituted, and stands, so that (as the Reformers wisely laid down in our Sixth Article concerning the Holy Scriptures), “Whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.” Never has the Church of England, when rightly represented or described, had any other foundation attributed to her than the Holy Scriptures, and those alone. Herein, of course, she does not

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claim to stand by herself! All the Nonconformist and Free Churches in every part of the world would, without question, affirm that they are in accord with her on this point; but it is as a loyal member of the Church of England that this affirmation is now made by the writer, and in order to show what is the first and only foundation of that Church. It may differ widely from other Churches (which have for the most part departed or dissented from it in our land) with regard to ecclesiastical matters or questions of Church government, but it is one with them all in its estimation of the only true foundation of a Church; and, while admitting that "every Church has power to decree rites and ceremonies for itself," and that the pathway of true "wisdom is to keep the mean between the two extremes of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting variations in regard to a public liturgy," she yet "professes to the world, and is fully persuaded in her judgment (of her most learned members), that the Book (of Common Prayer) as it stood established by law, doth not contain in it anything contrary to the Word of God." (The Preface of the Book of Common Prayer.) This, then, and this alone, is the inheritance bequeathed to us, and for which, as true Churchmen, we are to contend unto the death—the Word of God, *i.e.* whatsoever is contained in, and may be proved by, Holy Scripture. More than this no man may ask of us; less than this no man may impose upon himself when seeking to define true membership of the Church of England. The charter of our rights, and of our possessions, is "the Bible"; and however diverse

may be (*and are*, in these days) the defenders of true Churchmanship, there can be no question as to the mind and intention of our fathers, to whose bravery and wisdom we are indebted for all that we enjoy. They meant the Church of England to be a Biblical Church, and nothing more nor less than this. But from this simple confession or foundation truth of our faith, how great and solemn are the deductions which immediately flow. All will seek and "find freedom to worship God" according to the special dictates of their training, conscience, and taste : one with elaborate adjuncts, if his soul so desires, another with even the simplicity of the bare hillside gathering (such as that which was honoured with the special sermon of the Master); one finding it helpful to kneel in lowly adoration before God, another preferring to stand while addressing his Lord; one claiming to approach God most effectually with everything that appeals to the senses; another finding in those things an absolute hindrance to worship. But let it be clearly understood that, in each and all of these cases, no liberty can either be asked or accepted by any loyal member of the Church of England, which takes him a hair's-breadth outside of "the simplicity that is in Christ," or that "worshipping of God in the Spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh," which (as St. Paul says to the Philippians) constitutes circumcision in opposition to "circumcision," or "reality" as opposed to "form." Moreover, while liberty is given to all men in things non-essential, the Scriptural basis of the Church of England leaves no question whatever as to the

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essential points of doctrine, the holding of which alone constitutes real membership of that body. To mention but a few of the most vitally important, we must surely admit that (*a*) the Church of England knows nothing of a so-called liberty to reject the Bible as being altogether God's Word, and to say, as has often been said of late, "The Bible contains the Word of God; but the Bible is not the Word of God." It seems difficult to understand how any honest interpretation of Articles VI. and VII. of our Church (by which every minister of the Church is bound, both in the letter and in the spirit thereof) can bring a man to any other conclusion than that the Bible is, from its opening to its close, the direct revelation of God and of His Son Jesus Christ by the actual inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

(*β*) The Church of England knows nothing of a sacrificing priesthood, by whom there may be presented to God, on behalf of the people, anything that is to benefit them spiritually; for it seems impossible for any one who cleaves simply and faithfully to the Bible to hold otherwise than that there was made by Christ once and for all upon the cross "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world;" so that for any man to profess to offer a "sacrifice of our ransom," or "a propitiatory offering" (in any sense) "for the sins of his fellow-men," and for the people to believe in the necessity and power of such an offering, is at once to place themselves in opposition to the teaching of the Church of England.

(*γ*) The Church of England knows nothing of

a priestly "Confessor," to whom the troubled soul must needs come and detail its iniquities and distresses, and from whom it must look for the blessings of pardon and peace. Once only in God's Word do we find the charge given, "Confess your faults one to another;" and this, as every honest reader knows, refers to offences committed against a neighbour to whom acknowledgment is to be made, and will involve confession *by*, as much as *to*, the minister of the gospel, whose "faults" are assuredly as great as his people's. In strict accordance with the teaching of God's Word on this point, our Prayer-book has literally not one word upon "confession to a priest"; except that (1) in a solitary passage, in which it is bidding men welcome to the Lord's Table, advice is given to the sinner who cannot, by private study of God's Word, and by humble prayer to Almighty God, so "quiet his own conscience," as to feel that he may partake of the Lord's Supper, to "come to some discreet and learned minister of God's Word and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's Holy Word (not by the pronounced absolution of man, but by that one instrument of power which the Church of England ever magnifies) he may receive the benefit of absolution, &c."; and (2) in the case of "a sick person whose conscience is troubled with any weighty matter," he is to be "moved to make a special confession of his sins," and is then to hear the comforting words of absolution bequeathed to us by "our Lord Jesus Christ." How, then, is it possible for faithful members of the Church of England either to require, or to practice, periodical "confession" to

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any human fellow-sinner, and to look to him as a powerful agent, or factor, in regard to "absolution," when both the Scriptures and the Prayer-book declare, in the plainest possible terms, that "none can forgive sins, but God only"?

(δ) The Church of England knows nothing whatever of more than two "Sacraments"; but in strict accordance with God's Word (as usual) she teaches her children that there are "two only, as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord," by which is undoubtedly meant that there are but two ceremonies, or rites, which can be entitled "Sacraments" (a name of ecclesiastical adaptation from Roman military usage; but clearly defined and explained in the Church's Catechism for her children, and about which, therefore, there cannot justifiably be any mistake), and that these two rites, or ordinances, are "generally necessary to salvation," *i.e.*, should be thankfully accepted and taken advantage of, as a "means whereby we receive the grace of God, and as pledges to assure us thereof," whenever it is possible for men to enjoy them; but that they are not absolutely indispensable to salvation, where by reason of circumstance they cannot be partaken of. Where then, we would ask, with all tenderness, but firmly, is there place in the Church of England for those who speak (as the Romanist does) of "seven sacraments," or of "all the sacraments," as if there were many; and who openly require men to come to the "Sacrament of Penance," and to see to it that in dying they enjoy the "Sacrament of Extreme Unction"? All these,

and many other inventions of man, the Church of England knows nothing of, and has scrupulously thrown them aside, as being foreign to God's Holy Word, and therefore not compatible with the true churchmanship of the Gospel. For want of space we may not now attempt to deal with such other points as the Invocation of Saints, Prayers for the Dead, Chrism in Baptism and Confirmation, the use of Holy Water, and many others, upon all of which Holy Scripture is absolutely silent, and for which, therefore, the Church of England has given to her children neither a command, nor even a suggestion, that they are either lawful or in any sense profitable or right. On the contrary, it may be safely affirmed that, by silently ignoring them, the Church of England has (like the Holy Scriptures) given proof that they are not according to the mind of the Lord.

Now, it was against the more important of these doctrines and practices that our forefathers protested in the sixteenth century; many of them being content to suffer at the stake rather than admit the lawfulness or Gospel character of such teachings; and thereby not only gave to the Church of England at its re-formation the new name of "Protestant" (which it has borne from that day to this, as against the errors and follies of Roman Catholicism, and which no true member of the Church of England can refuse—as its true historical title); but also restored to the Church its grand old position of "evangelical," *i.e.* a church that "knows nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified," and neither offers to, nor asks from, its members anything whatever that is not

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found in and affirmed by God's Holy Word. Thus the true members of the Church of England are without doubt those who as "Protestants" stand firm against Romish or other similar corruptions; and who as "Evangelicals" glory in Christ Jesus alone as being everything that man can require before God. But a "Church" must of course be a corporate body, as distinguished from individual souls. And the Church of England, while rightly composed of such men as we have described, has her collective position and her corporate history, of which her members should be thoughtfully proud. It is with gratitude that they, who are called Evangelicals, look back and realise that when in the sixteenth century the Church was being purged, she was not formed, but simply REFORMED, on the lines and models received from apostolic times, introduced into England in the very earliest days of Christianity. They may doubt the reality, or power, of, what is now called "Apostolical Succession," but they hold tenaciously to the spiritual and ecclesiastical teachings of the Apostles. Hence they would base all their utterances and formularies upon the lines of the Epistles, and all their ecclesiastical organisations upon the pattern of the earliest churches—"Christ" being the only subject of their preaching, and the threefold orders of the ministry being the great central idea of their Church government and work. But that "ministry" must be one of service and not of rule; of self-sacrifice and not of official dignity and power; of rejoicing to "spend and be spent for others," though counted as "the filth of the world, and as the offscouring of all things."

Such are the distinctive features of Evangelical Churchmanship briefly summarised, and with perhaps many important omissions.

But it is needful now to consider briefly—

The Position of Evangelical Churchmen at the Present Time

Confessedly they are in a minority and are not so often found in high places as in the earlier half of this century. The reasons for this are manifest if not satisfactory. The Oxford Movement, with its æstheticism and its learning (at least in some of its greater lights), naturally attracted the finer spirits of the day; and as it spread throughout the land as a grand "Reformation in Worship," it drew to itself those who, as the most enlightened and refined, felt dissatisfied with the miserable condition into which public services had fallen. Everywhere Church restoration was commenced, musical taste was developed, and in almost every way Church life was rapidly developed. This would, of course, have been an unfeigned blessing to the land, had not doctrines, strange and unheard of in the Church for 300 years, been gradually reintroduced; until true and faithful "Evangelicals" were compelled to protest and to say that, while rejoicing in beautiful, and even in ornate churches if desired; while welcoming music and every other adjunct that would help to the honour and glory of God and the better service of His people, they must withstand any

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retrogressive movement towards Rome, and any development of doctrine or practice which would in anyway whatever contravene the teachings of Scripture. This protest (too strongly made, as some of us think, when it led to the prosecution of individuals at law, but rightly made, we believe, when made in love and gentleness or upon *principle*) might have been expected to open the eyes of the leaders, both in Church and State, to the perils which of later years have been so rapidly growing through the determined efforts of zealous but mistaken enthusiasts, who, in the vain hope of "Corporate Reunion" with Rome, have been accustoming English congregations both to the doctrines and practices against which our Fathers protested at the cost of their own blood. But, while the middle ranks of the English nation remain essentially Protestant and Evangelical, and the poorer classes have more sympathy with Dissent than with High Churchism, the power has unquestionably passed (both in Church and State) into the hands of those whose tastes, sympathies, and practices are all against what is called "Old-fashioned Evangelicalism;" and it is idle to deny that the position of Evangelical Churchmen is in the present day one of general contempt and neglect from those in authority, though in the heart of the nation, if once roused to give expression to its feelings, there can be little doubt that the verdict would be strongly against any attempt at assimilation or union with Rome, and strongly in favour of simple Evangelical teaching and practice. There need, therefore, be no fear as to the issue, we

trust. In the end, the Evangelical cause *will* prevail; and all that is required for the attainment of this end is, that those who are for the moment captivated by the appeal to their senses, should see the danger of emotion without Biblical sanction, and that the great mass of the people in our land should be roused from their lethargy and led to speak clearly as to what they hold and desire. Meantime the position of Evangelical Churchmen, as judged by themselves, is one of (1) absolute certainty as regards the doctrines which they hold; (2) comfortable assurance as regards the Ecclesiastical polity of their Church (if it may be rightly or duly administered), as being in full accord with, and inherited from, the arrangements of apostolic times; (3) patient submission to what they believe to be the injustice of the present distribution of patronage and honours; (4) earnest devotion to the spiritual welfare of the nation; and (5) ceaseless prayers to the God of all wisdom and power that He will overrule all to His own glory and honour. To be calmly convinced, as Evangelical Churchmen are, that "*the truth*" is on their side, and must finally prevail (*magna veritas et prævalebit*), is sufficient to uphold them under far greater difficulties than any that may have arisen through what we believe to be a temporary defection from that simple "faith once delivered to the Saints," and which, though restored to us by our fathers at the time of the Reformation, has again been clouded over by the spread of æstheticism, in what are described as the higher ranks of society.

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Meantime it may be profitable to consider briefly—

The Advantages or Disadvantages of the Present Position of Affairs

Theoretically, it might appear as a subject for great distress and regret that—while the Church of England as a corporate body is unquestionably advancing with giant strides in her influence and power, both at home and abroad; in the activity and devotion, both of her clergy and laity; in the multiplication of her agencies for the advancement of the people's welfare in education, temperance, thrift, sanitation, purity, and such like—the one party in the Church which appears to be the least recognised and honoured by the State should be that which claims to have the most complete scriptural authority for all its teachings and all its developments, caring nothing for tradition or for the Fathers unless their teachings be in exact accordance with God's Word; but simply asking at every point, in matters social as well as spiritual, "What saith the Scripture?" But though at first sight discouraging that such a plan of action should be thought little of, it is not without its advantages, both for the party itself and for the people at large. As in politics, so in religion, the possession of place and power has never proved an unmitigated blessing, but has been fraught with danger to the party that has attained thereto; while a time of rejection from office and from posts of honour has often proved most beneficial to those who appeared to be laid

aside for a time. It has led to a greater earnestness and devotion to their cause, and to more zealous consideration both of their principles and duty; and unquestionably we may affirm with regard to Evangelical Churchmen that, while they are no longer tacitly accepted as representing "the Church" by those who hold power in the State, and they no longer receive that patronage which they formerly enjoyed, their present position is one for which they may well be thankful and take courage, if only they will learn one more lesson than they have already been taught by those who have taken their place in public favour for the moment, and present an united front to the world in matters of real spiritual importance. Once truly compacted, as it ought to be, in brotherly love and forbearance, the Evangelical party would immediately be found an invincible force in the Church. This lesson is, to sink their minor differences in matters of no importance. It was without doubt to the Evangelical preachers of the last century, and of the commencement of the present century, that the nation owed its first awakening from the awful lethargy and deadness into which she had fallen in regard to spiritual matters; but the revivals thus created did not affect the Church as they should have, because when men received the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its power from the lips of revival preachers, they generally found themselves cast out of the Church of England, or felt compelled to retire therefrom on account of its deadness. It was to the Oxford Movement that the Church, as a corporate body, owed that wondrous quickening which has so sig-

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nalised the Queen's reign—a quickening which has made her what she now is, the admiration or envy of almost all other Churches in the world. And who has received the chief benefits of that movement? Shall we not humbly say the Evangelical party in the Church? But why, and how, it will be asked with astonishment, if, as above stated, it has led to their large deposition from the power of place? Because from the time that the Oxford Movement commenced there arose Churchmen who, as *Churchmen*, declared that life should be given up to religion; that to have church buildings like barns (and too frequently *rotten* barns), to have services and sermons not even decently performed, to have clergy who were non-resident while drawing perhaps large incomes from a parish, and hunting and shooting when they should have been visiting or ministering to their flocks, was a disgrace to the very name of a Christian ministry and Church, and to rob the people of all their rightful inheritance in that Church. Up to their light, let it ever be acknowledged, did the leaders (and followers) of that movement seek to stir the dry bones of the Church, and wondrously did their zeal act upon the generation that followed them. Rapidly, as we know, were churches restored in every part of the land; clergy became resident among their parishioners, and were multiplied in a remarkable manner; new churches sprang up in all our cities and towns; services were increased to an almost inconceivable extent; new bishops were demanded and new dioceses created; ordinations and confirmations were added without number; and, in short, the

external tokens of activity have been almost incalculably increased in the Church. Whether in all these movements real spirituality has been advanced in every place where energy and activity have been displayed, is of course a question which cannot easily be answered; but safely we may affirm that among all who have profited by this revival in the Church, none have gained so much as the Evangelicals. They were the special inheritors of the vital truths of the Gospels; but had, alas! fallen under the power of the general lethargy that prevailed, "holding the truth," but "holding it back in unrighteousness of life," or at least in the dulness of spiritual torpor. Roused, however, by those whom they almost felt to be rivals and opponents, they entered, thank God, upon a new phase of existence; and for the last thirty or forty years we may safely say that no truer, or more earnest, Churchmen could be found than the Evangelicals have been as a body; and meantime they have been the men who have faithfully preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified, while their brethren of other schools have gone after Tradition, or the Fathers, or the Sarum, and other "Uses," and have not hesitated to adopt the heretical practices and phraseology of Rome, or have made shipwreck of their faith through German speculations! "It pleases God by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe;" and it is to the preaching of Jesus Christ, rather than to ceremonies or higher criticism, that evangelical men look for the salvation of the people—provided that the life be in accordance with the Word preached; and that both ministers and

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people can say individually and collectively "To live is Christ." For their present zeal and earnestness in preaching, they humbly acknowledge their indebtedness to the Wesleys, the Whitfields, and other such heroes of the Gospel; while for their zeal and earnestness in practice, they confess their indebtedness to the noble patterns given by the leaders of the Oxford movement, and their followers. Yet they would venture, with all humility, to remind these brethren that true religion does not, in their mind, consist in (or even gain by) an immense multiplication of services and ritual; but in the "binding back" (*Religio*) of the individual soul to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The difference between us would seem to be this—that the one party considers, that in the Church life the objective side of Christianity is to have the chief place, while Evangelicals consider that the subjective comes first, and can alone lead the soul to know and enjoy the objective. The one party would offer visible tokens of worship to the unconverted as a power, and think that spiritual edification—and even new life—will thus come; while Evangelicals hold that the true worship of God can never be known or enjoyed in a church until the individual souls have become partakers of the life that is found in Christ Jesus alone. Hence it is a cardinal doctrine with Evangelical Churchmen that souls must be separately saved by the preaching of the Word before they can take part in acts of worship like the Holy Communion; and nowhere, we believe, is this preaching of the Cross, with its corollary of a living unto God through the resurrection power of Jesus

Christ, more faithfully and powerfully set forth than among Evangelical Churchmen, since they have been roused by the two great movements of the last century to see what the gospel of Christ can really do for mankind. But we must now inquire briefly as to the effects produced on the world at large by evangelical churchmanship as we have now endeavoured to describe it.

It may suffice to point in the fewest possible words (lest we become fools in glorying) to—

(a) The present condition of the parishes where an evangelical ministry exists. It is the habit with certain men to publish in “religious” papers, the numbers of their communicants, the amount of their collections, &c. We humbly think that this plan is not good, either for the parishes concerned, or for the public at large. But we may, with confidence, say that if comparisons must be made, evangelical parishes are assuredly not behind others in any one of the points to which reference is so frequently made in weekly journals.

(β) To the power and lasting effects of “missions” held by Evangelical men in different parts of the country. Very remarkable and blessed those mission efforts have been; and have they not till lately been almost entirely made by Evangelicals?

(γ) To the glorious work done by the Church Missionary, and other kindred societies; the magnificent sums entrusted to them for the work of the Lord among the heathen, and the devotion shown by Evangelical missionaries (male and female) in all parts of the earth. “By their fruits ye shall know them;” and assuredly, if

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“preaching the Gospel to every creature” is the *raison d'être* of the Church, Evangelical Churchmen need not hesitate to affirm their claim to the position, in comparison with any other members of Christ's Church, all feebly as even the best of us have yet risen to the dignity thereof. But turn we now for a moment to consider—

The Points of Difference between Ourselves and other Bodies of Christians

No man, we trust, will, in these days of enlightenment and liberality, think for a moment of *un-Christianising* any man, however much he may differ from ourselves, if only he believes in the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the power of that Atonement which He made for the sins of the whole world, and in the gracious work of the Holy Ghost in bringing sinners to God. But once grant that a man is “a Christian” (even by profession), and immediately we must concede that he is also “a Churchman.” Yet not, of course, necessarily a Churchman like ourselves! Hence, while we recognise that in every so-called Christian Church, or denomination, or separate body of believers, there may be found the true children of God, we cannot fail to notice what we think to be errors and mistakes in those who are outside our own ecclesiastical organisation, and in some of them (at least collectively) to discern dangerous errors of doctrine. With these, however, we are not now concerned. “To the Law and to the Testimony” in regard to these points;

and there we must leave them for God to be their judge. What we are now to consider is rather points of Church government and practice in which we differ from our brethren of the dissenting denominations. And here Evangelical Churchmen feel that they are perfectly safe; because, as they hold, they stand upon the Scriptures alone in regard to all the points in which the Church of England differs from other bodies.

(*a*) In their Church government they claim to stand exactly on the model left to them from Apostolic times—Apostles, elders, and deacons; or bishops, presbyters, and deacons; and so for their three-fold ministry they have distinct Scriptural authority.

(*β*) In their binding of congregations under one law and one head, so as to make a Church, in contradistinction to separate congregations, they deem that they follow the clear teaching of St. Paul, and believe that this rule is the only Scriptural one.

(*γ*) In their use of a Liturgy they believe themselves to be justified by the honest rendering of the Greek in Acts ii. 42; and by the frequent occurrence in the Epistles of forms of words which seem almost certainly to be parts of settled prayers and hymns.

(*δ*) In their habit of baptizing infants they not only hope that a gracious God will “favourably allow this charitable work of theirs, in bringing an infant to His Holy Baptism” (see the Baptismal Service), but they believe that in the rite of circumcision, and in the custom of the Jews (recorded by Maimonides) of baptizing all

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infants of the heathen who joined the family of Israel, and in many of the expressions used by our Lord and His Apostles, they find ample justification for the rule of their Church.

There are many other points in which, if time and space were at command, it would be a pleasing task to prove that the Evangelical Churchman's position is impreguably founded upon the basis of God's Word. But, acknowledging candidly that others besides ourselves believe themselves to be teaching in full accordance with God's Word when they set forth opinions diametrically opposed to our own, upon such matters as we have now alluded to, and many others that might be named, it may be profitable for us to turn from the points on which we differ to inquire lastly—

What Hope is there of Reunion between the different Churches now represented in our Land?

And to the writer, at least, the answer seems definite and unmistakable.

(a) For "corporate reunion" it is simply idle to hope (or to work) with such churches as the Roman Catholic and the Greek, so long as they continue to hold and enforce those "dangerous deccits and blasphemous fables" against which our forefathers so nobly protested; but whether between Churchmen and Wesleyans reunion may be possible is a matter on which hope, if not expectation, may well busy itself, and earnest prayer will assuredly be well-pleasing to God.

(β) For “corporate reunion” between Churchmen and the other Free Churches it seems equally idle to hope—at least in the present generation; but for a very different reason from that which precludes reunion with Rome. The writer has attended the Conferences held at Lucerne and Grindelwald, with the view to considering this important question of reunion, and he left both places with the painful conviction that, while in vital questions of doctrine there may be little real disagreement, it would be impossible for Churchmen, or for Dissenters, to yield to the other on points which they have been taught from their infancy to consider as of essential importance to the very Being or “Esse” of a church.

What then remains to be aimed at and looked for in our generation? Simply that Christian men of all “the churches in our land” should (α) forbear one another in love where they must disagree, (β) meet wherever possible upon the common grounds of doctrine and practice—as is now done at Keswick and other Conventions for the deepening of the spiritual life, and (γ) vie with one another in this single point, viz. who shall do most for the glory of God by winning souls to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ?