

# Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 1876.

## REUNION.

In the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent speech in convocation on the subject of the resolutions agreed on at the Bonn Conference, he stated that he felt unable to sign the propositions agreed upon at the Conference, because he found them abstruse and difficult. His Grace does not appear to have paid sufficient attention to the subject to enable him to discover that the greatest harmony has prevailed as to the doctrines to be enunciated—the only difference having arisen from the difficulty of fixing upon the words best adapted to express those doctrines. And his want of attention to it, most probably arises from the fact, that the school to which he belongs would admit almost every phase and every variety of belief upon the subject itself. But the Archbishop went on to speak with something like disapproval of all attempts at reunion on the constitutional basis of the church, over which he presides. He said:—"He felt more in regard to those difficulties which separated the Church from those who were near in language, in sympathy, in regard to the same love of the Bible, and from being fellow Christians in this country, than he did in regard to those divisions which existed in respect to people who were a great distance from us locally." His Grace surely cannot mean that greater sympathy is shown by religious bodies in England, which refuse to respond in the slightest degree to the overtures made for union, than there is between the English and the Eastern Churches, all of which are willing to recognize each other, to make up their differences if possible, and to unite on one common ground of Christian truth and Apostolic order. During the last twenty years we have known a considerable number of overtures and proposals thrown out by dignitaries and other members of our Church, for union with the other religious bodies among us, on almost any basis those bodies might desire; and we have seen every one of those proposals rejected with a perfect storm of indignation. We knew, some time ago, a venerable Archdeacon, who nursed up quite a pet scheme, by which he thought the whole Wesleyan body could be induced to reunite with the Church. He had been innocent enough to pore over the writings of John Wesley, fancying that the modern Wesleyans were the *bona fide* followers of that wonderful man, and that his spirit and principles still animated the body; nor could he be induced to lay aside his chimerical project, until he was shown a pretty strong article in the *English Methodist Magazine*, which showed that the authorities of that body treated the whole thing with unutterable scorn. If then it be asked, Why can we not unite with them? the simple answer is, that the only way in which they will allow us to do so,

would be by becoming members of their communion. The way for this is open to any one of us who may feel so inclined. The same may be said of the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregational bodies. We can be allowed to unite with the Presbyterians by ignoring in the same breath prelacy and popery—which they consider to be identical—by throwing aside our Liturgy, our orders, and all that connects us with the saints and martyrs of all former ages, as well as with the Apostolic Church itself. Nor will the Baptists unite with us unless we repudiate infant baptism: we can unite with them by becoming Baptists. The same with the Congregationalists, while we retain any Church government which shall include more assemblies than one. We can unite with them by becoming Congregationalists. Of all these and of a multitude of others we can quote the words of St John:—"They went out from us because they were not of us." They hated our constitution, our doctrines and our legitimate connection with antiquity; and until this hate becomes softened, the most loving proposals we may offer for union will be rejected as much as ever. The violent attacks and the opprobrious epithets continually heaped upon us in their periodicals, are plain indications that our efforts to promote union in that direction, at present, had better be otherwise employed. We can only pray on, and work on in faith, trusting that in the course of time, God will be graciously pleased to turn their hearts to a better state of feeling.

The Archbishop's idea about making up our own differences at home, before we go abroad for union, might, it has been remarked, be applied to efforts made to convert the heathen; for surely they are at a greater distance from us in "sympathy" and in "love to the Bible" than even the Eastern Christians. He says he would like "to begin with those around our own doors"; although his heart soon expanded, till it embraced the Swedish Church, then the Danish Church, and the great Church of Luther. And then, "gazing across the Atlantic" "he could not shut his eyes to the fact that there were some thirty million persons, speaking too, the English tongue, and who were Christians, but not members of any Episcopal Church, with whom union might be sought." "All this," says the *Scottish Guardian*, "is very magnificent; but we have surely a right to expect from the See of Canterbury, something more than a solemn discourse on the duty of achieving the impossible."

Another abortive idea of union has also come to nought, but is now prominently brought before us by a very touching letter, which its chief promoter has addressed to the *London Times*,—in which Dr. Pusey states, that what had been the "dream and the interest of his life,"—"Eirenica"—were given up, and

the thought thereof closed, by the decree of Papal infallibility of 1870. Strange, unaccountably strange, that with such mental powers as his, and with such facilities for an intimate acquaintance with the subject, Dr. Pusey should ever imagine that England and Rome could possibly unite, without some violent convulsion, some unlooked for revolutionary change in one or other of them. His dream, however, like that of the Venerable Archdeacon's, we have just referred to, now has ended. And the baseless fabric of the vision leaves nothing behind it but disappointment and increased bitterness of feeling. That a re-union of the English and Roman branches, as preparatory to a reunion of all Christendom, and that on terms involving no sacrifice of truth or complicity with error, is doubtless, one of the noblest, and the grandest aspirations the human mind can indulge in, we believe; but as the *London Guardian* remarks, it is—what Dr. Pusey calls it—a "dream;" it has been a "dream" ever since the Reformation, and a "dream" it must remain till both churches are very different from what they are at present. "And," says the same Journal, "it must have required all the sanguine fervour for which Dr. Pusey is conspicuous, to expect that the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of Protestant England, could possibly be brought into ecclesiastical union with the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of ultramontane Italy; or that a practical attempt to combine them could produce anything but an explosion of repugnance, which would leave matters on a worse footing than before. Yet this is what Dr. Pusey doubtless did expect. His *Eirenica* are not one-sided. His mind is as open to Evangelicals within the precincts of the English Church as to Greeks and Romans beyond it. He has no thought of breaking up that great and venerable institution which we call the English Church, and to which we owe so much. He seems to have supposed that Christianity, adequately represented, would draw all men to it."

Ah! vain idea! the Representation of Christianity itself in a Divine Person, failed to do that, at the time of His appearance; and the most affectionate as well as the most perfect modern exhibition of the same system for this purpose, cannot be any the less a failure, until the hearts of men are prepared to abjure the most cherished errors, to give up their whole-life dreams, and, in real earnest, at the sacrifice of everything else, seek after both truth and peace. Dr. Pusey seems to have been disappointed when the Roman ecclesiastics informed him, that if the English Church joined the Roman, they would be a source of weakness to each other. The Roman prelates evidently understood the width as well as the depth of the chasm between us better than the venerable Oxford professor, although they failed to appreciate the goodness as well as the honesty of his intentions.