

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, FEB. 10, 1876.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The present position of the Church of England is forcibly alluded to by Bishop Harold Browne, in a correspondence between himself and a Mr. Horsey of Southampton. Our readers will probably recollect the refusal of the Vicar of Richmond, the Rev. C. T. Proctor, to attend the opening of a local cemetery. The Bishop was appealed to, who justified the Vicar in his refusal. Whereupon Mr. Horsey writes to the Bishop, refers to a letter of the late Bishop Sumner's, and expresses his belief that the true Church of Christ is composed of "an elect number," and "not confined to the narrow bounds of any outward and visible Church." Bishop Browne says he does not see that Bishop Sumner's letter is at all opposed to his own; and that he believes he would have said, as all sound and intelligent English Churchmen would say, that the English Church is the Church brought to England from the earliest days of Christianity; that though in the middle ages it became soiled with corruption, yet at the Reformation it was purged of all such corruptions, but was then no more a different or a new Church than Naaman was a different or a new man when he was cleansed of his leprosy. No one would have acknowledged that Gehazi was Naaman, because he had Naaman's leprosy, while Naaman was made whole. And the only claim which the Roman Church has to be the ancient Church of England, is that she has the leprosy, while the English Church is clean and whole, the true old Church, purified and restored to vigor and health. Such was the belief of Hooker. The Romanists made a schism about three hundred years ago, and to our great sorrow the Nonconformists left the body of the English Church about two hundred years ago. But the Bishop remarks that it does not follow, because he believes this as historical fact, that therefore he treats dissenters with disrespect. He can understand that a person may be indifferent to the fact that one body of Christians is the ancient Church of the nation, and that another is only two hundred years old; but he cannot understand why it should be uncharitable to say that it is so. He has never hesitated to express his earliest longing for a reunion on sound and lasting principles; but to acknowledge that any other body of Christians is the ancient national Church of the land would be to acknowledge what all history contradicts. And as he believes that the only possible hope of Christians ever uniting is in the existence of a great, ancient, Apostolic, but reformed Church, so, in his belief, he would be most uncharitable if he combined with others to disregard the existence of such a Church, and to pull down all its landmarks and distinctive characteristics. He says, "the

Church of England is either the ancient Church of the land, or she is a usurper and an impostor, and ought to be treated as such." As for the intangible myth of such an invisible Church as Mr. Horsey seems to fancy he has an idea of, the Bishop does not appear to think it has "local habitation" enough to require notice. He says however, that he cannot understand *union* between *divided* bodies; and desiring true union, he objects to all shams. It is not fundamental difference of faith, he says, that separates Churchmen and dissenters. It is because dissenters differ from Churchmen on the special subject of the Church. Churchmen have always held that the Church ought to be but one body, and dissenters hold that there can be any number of different churches, and that every small variety of opinion justifies Christians in establishing a new sect. The principle of modern dissent is, that the Christian Church is not a community, but a bundle of unconnected sects, some in alliance, others at war one with another. This is a principle which our reformers objected to as much as any one.

THE TWO SCHOOLS.

Perhaps there is no part of the Bishop of Winchester's late *Pastoral* that is more noteworthy than in the reference he makes to the two chief schools in the Church. He lays down the fundamental principle that the Church as regards her human organization, was constructed so as to combine order and united action with all just freedom of thought and will, or as it has been otherwise expressed, its aim was identical with that of all civilized and enlightened governments. It is very true, undoubtedly, that, though order and freedom are not necessarily antagonistic, the balance between them, even if once established, is easily disturbed, and it is undeniable that excess on one side sooner or later produces reaction on the other. The Bishop refers the Rebellion and the Revolution to the results of the fierce struggle that had been going on in previous reigns. And partly because every branch of Christendom with any vitality in it, has always had these two great Schools of religious thought, which have been permitted to work side by side, not aiming at the absolute supremacy of one to the utter extinction of the other, but acknowledged as necessary factors of the Church; and also in part because of the struggle to which we have referred, these two Schools have for the past two or three hundred years manifested a prominence in some degree proportionate to the active energy of the Church. The one School has aimed more at objective, the other at subjective religion. One School believes that Christ has redeemed a Church, and that the duty of mankind is to live as befits their high calling as members of that Church; while the other holds

that each soul is redeemed one by one, and that the expression "the Church," is little more than a compendious way of naming those who in the end will be found to have been saved. Now it is clear that there is nothing really contradictory in these two modes of looking at precisely the same truths; nor is there anything contradictory in the way the Bishop has expressed the features of each School. We will quote his Lordship's words. He says:—"It may be difficult to define exactly the relative positions of the two Schools in all cases, for the various revivals in the one direction or the other have been marked by various characteristics; but we may say generally, though not universally, that the one School has taken the side of order, the other craved for greater freedom of action; that the one has upheld episcopal, the other has at least sympathized with Presbyterian government; that the one has esteemed highly the Christian Sacraments, the other has laid most stress upon preaching the Word; that the one has been favorable to the higher adornment of divine service, the other has been content with barer walls and simpler ceremonies that the one has given more thought to the training of the young, the other has relied most on converting the adult sinner; that the one has been more devoted to pastoral labour, the other more zealous for public preaching and for foreign missions; that the one has produced nearly all our theological literature, the other has contributed chiefly to devotional and practical writings; that the one has made much of corporate life, the other has given its chief thought to personal religion; that the one looks back with sympathy and respect to Christian antiquity, feeling that in all its changes the church has still had one stream of life running through its history, the other has for the most part shrunk from identifying the present with the former conditions of Christianity, believing that for centuries it existed only in the Bible, and could be scarcely found in the organized societies of the world; that, once more, the one has dwelt much on repentance for sin and striving after holiness, the other has more cheered the penitent with the thought of pardon purchased, and blessedness assured."

The Bishop says that for schools with characteristics like these, both of them have proved a blessing to the Church, especially when they have worked quietly together. He thinks that when fundamental truth is preserved, a certain amount of variety rather contributes to strength, than engenders weakness; such a variety stirring up, not hatred but emulation in good works; and the danger of stagnation imminent when all think exactly alike, is warded off by the watchfulness of one School over the deficiencies or excesses of the other. Unhappily, however the conflict is often in proportion to the zeal. His Lordship