

ORGANIC CHRISTIAN UNION.*

THERE can be no doubt that the spirit of union is in the air. The time for making the most of our differences and glorying in our divisions has, for the present at least, passed away; some are lauding the blessings of union, and seriously asking how it may be realized. Nay, the work has been actually taken in hand. The various bodies that broke off from the Methodist communion have coalesced into one, and the same has taken place in the Presbyterian body.

This last is indeed a very remarkable occurrence. Presbyterianism represented the most theological of all the Protestant movements. The Lutheran reformation was largely practical. Its great leader cared very little for hair-splitting or for theories in any shape. So long as he could maintain the freeness of Divine grace, he cared very little about other things. The English Reformation was, in great measure, of the same character—essentially practical. It was different with Calvin. He refused to break with the Church of Rome until he had constructed a theological system which he could set up over against it, and this he did, with great learning and with marvellous subtlety, in his Institutes.

The intellectual temper of Calvin distinguished the principal nation by whom his system was adopted. The Scotch differed from the inhabitants of the Southern Kingdom in being of a far more metaphysical turn of mind, in being addicted to the abstract and the logical, like Calvin and his countrymen, rather than concrete and practical, like the English. The consequences of these tendencies have come out in the divisions of Scotch Presbyterianism, so numerous, indeed, that very few living men can be acquainted with them all. It is a thing hardly short of the marvellous that union should have been attained in the midst of such diversities.

If such reunions have been accomplished, why not go further? Why should not all the Churches of the Reformation form one communion? This is the question which has been asked in the Episcopal Synods and conventions in Canada and the United States; and Dean Carmichael has made a very serviceable and useful contribution to this subject in the little volume now before us.

He begins with the arguments in favor of protestant union, which he states (to the number of eight) clearly and plainly. He next gives five good reasons for considering Canada a hopeful "field to test the movement in." This is followed by a brief but accurate and sufficient historical outline of the fortunes of the Church in regard to unity, mentioning principally the rupture between the East and West, the different reformations, and the separating from the reformed Churches.

It is principally with the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Methodist bodies that the Dean deals in working out the theory of reunion.

**Organic Union of Canadian Churches: with a comparison of authorized Standards.* By the Very Rev. James Carmichael, D. C. L., Dean of Montreal. Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1887.

He shows that these communions agree in all the main, fundamental doctrines of the Christian Creed. Even in regard to the ministry, the Dean remarks: "It is plain from the foregoing comparison that the three systems are agreed (1) on the Divine Institution of the Ministry; (2) on its being, as an order, distinct from the laity; (3) on the necessity of a proper call and transmission of authority; (4) on the duties of the ministerial office; (5) on its dignity, responsibility, and honour; (6) on the power of the ministry to bind and loose, and to excommunicate and declare absolution."

The points of difference have reference to Church Government, the Ordination of Ministers, and God's Eternal decrees. With regard to the last of these, the Dean remarks: "In connection with a doctrine of this tremendous nature, one might fairly hope that, out of a Christian Conference, some solution of existing difficulties might arise. That there must be an article on the subject seems a necessity, [is it absolutely so?] but it might be so framed as, on the one hand, to acknowledge the sovereignty of God and, on the other, to allow the exercise of the right of private judgment as to how God uses that sovereignty for His own glory and the good of His Church."

We have no doubt that, whether or not the time has yet come for this agreement, it will come very soon. The Article of the Church of England is, as a matter of fact, accepted by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and some bold spirits have even attempted to show that the Confession of Faith does not necessarily teach Calvinism!

Dean Carmichael feels, as all must feel, that the real difficulty of reunion lies in the differences of Church Government. As he rightly observes, there can be no real union unless the Churches are under one government; and there are several elements of happiness in the state of things in the Canadian Churches. The separation of Church and State, the large amount of lay influence in the Episcopal Church, and other things are mentioned as having a tendency to remove difficulties.

What the issue of these movements may be it is impossible for any human mind to forecast. That much good must come by the way is certain, whether the end is reached or not; and nothing can be better than Dean Carmichael's way of handling the subject. There is not a word here which can give offence. There is no assumption of superiority—a fault seldom absent from books of this kind, yet of the most grievous and offensive character. The little book shows as much wisdom by what it does not contain as by what it does, and we strongly recommend its perusal and circulation.

MY LONGING,

My Master and My Lord!
I long to do some work, some work for Thee:
I long to bring some lowly gift of love
For all Thy love to me.

The harvest fields are white;
Send me to gather there some scattered ears;
I have no sickle bright, but I can glean
And bind them in with tears.

Hetty Bowman.

THE CHURCH AND ITS APOSTOLIC MINISTRY.*

We call attention to a work bearing the above title with much satisfaction, as it meets a want felt by the clergy and by earnest-minded laymen engaged in Bible class work and other forms of activity. The Bishop of Colorado was invited by a large number of clergy to deliver a course of lectures on the Authority of the Church and her Apostolic Ministry, and this volume contains the result of that invitation. The work is especially adapted for general use; we trust it will be very widely circulated. The following is the opening section of the first lecture: "The Nature of the Church."

"There is an obvious need at the present time of correct teaching upon the subject of the Church. The Christian minister who feels his responsibility in declaring the whole counsel of God must often lament the prevailing ignorance on the subject, and be deeply impressed with the importance of giving to his people sound and full instruction concerning the 'Gospel of the Kingdom,' which it is his bounden duty to 'preach' (St. Mark i, 14). Belief in the Church is fundamental. With the loss of the Church you may lose the faith which it enshrines. The Church is the 'keeper and witness of Holy Writ' (Article xx.), 'the pillar and ground of the Truth' (Tim. iii, 15). The doctrine of the Church is an essential part of Christian teaching. The creed of Christendom, brief as it is, teaches us to say 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church,' after we have said, 'I believe in God,' in 'His only Son our Lord,' and 'in the Holy Ghost,' The Church is the Body of which Christ is the Head. The saved through Christ are 'added to the Church' (Acts ii, 47). Upon the Church rests the responsibility, through Her Ministry of the Lord and Sacraments, of their spiritual nature, their growth in grace, their preparation for their heavenly felicity. It is our duty as well-instructed Christians and Churchmen to learn what the Church is, the Notes which distinguished it, its Authority, Orders, Polity and Government, that we may know and improve our privileges, and so attain through the Kingdom of Grace, a glorious entrance into the Kingdom of Glory. And I cannot but think that a better knowledge of the Church would help us in resisting the rationalistic tendencies of the times.

The old gross infidelity of the last and the beginning of the present century, has indeed disappeared from among the intelligent classes. Except among the illiterate, you will find no admirers of such writers as Paine and other like despisers of God's revelation. But you will find instead a growing spirit of rationalism. It is defended by writers of no mean ability. It allies itself with science and philosophy. It is popularized in current literature, which abounds in unwarrantable assumptions, discrediting the Bible in its sup-

*The Church and its Apostolic Ministry, lectures by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Spaulding, Bishop of Colorado. Published by Young Churchman Co., Milwaukee, may be had of Rowse & Hutchison, Toronto.