

evidently most dubious. That was why it was kept to the last, and moreover it is here that the final stand is to be taken. It is as regards this in particular that not an inch more is to be yielded. We at the very least want to know clearly what is meant by the term "Historic Episcopate" before we are able to say whether we are willing to enter into negotiations on this ground. It is an exceedingly ambiguous term; it may mean very much that is revolting to us, that would wound our honour in the most sensitive spot, that would be likely to sear the conscience in a most serious way, or it may mean very little that is objectionable. No Christian church has any inclination to make the word Episcopate a demon, not at all. Episcopate is a term that we all accept and endorse. That is one reason why we say that it is ambiguous. There have been stages of development in the growth of what is called the Episcopate; the word historic may embrace, and it ought to embrace, what it was in all the centuries. But any thoughtful person will see that when we look at it in that light the term is misleading. There was growth, there was development, and so the question may be very properly put, is it the Episcopate of the apostolic age, or that of the second century, or the third century; or is it that of the 19th century that is to be held by the coming United Christendom at all hazards. Or, to take it in another aspect. Among the divines of the Anglican churches, the term Episcopate has different shades of meaning. There are different schools of Anglican divines, and each has its own idea of what Episcopate means and implies. For example, there are some that hold bishops as they are in the Church of England and her branches to be of divine right, and that divine right embracing a theory of apostolic succession as high and as exacting as that which is held by the Church of Rome. Then there are others that do not lay a particle of stress on the succession, but think that Episcopacy or Prelacy is the best mode of government, both for order and unity of doctrine, and therefore, while it is not, strictly speaking, found in the New Testament, yet through the stress of circumstances it grew out of the polity that appears in the New Testament. In the circumstances and necessities it grew naturally out of what the Apostles laid down, and in a sense it was involved in what Peter and John and Paul taught. Now these are theories that are very far from being the same. The one makes the Episcopate an absolute necessity, and that because God has ordered it so; the other regards it as orderly and expedient, but not a matter of principle in the deepest sense; very good and suitable, but not necessary in the highest sense.

But passing from these theories now we are anxious to know how it is proposed to work the Historic Episcopate in the practical sense, supposing the claim that is made were conceded. Among the many possible results that present themselves to the imagination, there are these three that we may think of, and let us look at them calmly and fearlessly. There is first this possible result: that as soon as union is accomplished, all of us that are now ministers in churches that are Non-Anglican, would need to be re-ordained at the hands of bishops before we would be acknowledged as clergymen, or have the right to dispense the Sacraments in an orderly and lawful way. Judging from the present attitude of Anglican ministers around us, as well as elsewhere, we conclude that this, and this alone, is what is meant by the imperative stickling for the Historic Episcopate. Then, secondly, this, we imagine, might be the result, namely: a modification of the above in the following manner:—In order to obtain the union we who are of other churches, when the union takes place, might be acknowledged as ministers; that is, a life interest in the ministry would be granted us on condition that no more be admitted and recognized in the way we have been, by the laying on of the hands of Presbyters. Henceforth every candidate for the ministry must have the hands of a bishop laid on his head after the manner now practised in the Anglican Churches. In such a way as that the true succession could be maintained, and in time—that, is when the existing ministers had died off—the irregularities would come to an end. A third possible result would be as follows:—In the union that

is to be formed, the question of Church Polity is to be an open one. It is to be optional to each candidate for the ministry what mode of ordination or appointment to office he prefers. If he prefers the Anglican mode, well and good; there will be bishops available from whom the Episcopal grace, as at present conveyed in Anglican communions, can be had. If on the other hand he prefers ordination in the way that is more familiar to us, by the hands of Presbyter Bishops, then he can obtain it in that way. And congregations are in every case to be allowed the same freedom. They can have a minister of the one kind or of the other, and so as regards other matters bearing on the mode of worship adopted. Those that prefer a prayer-book and a liturgy can have them, and those that think greater freedom better, can do so. In this way all shades of polity and of modes of worship are to be tolerated, and let it be seen which in the end will prevail according to the law of the survival of the fittest.

Now, a word or two as regards these three possible results, supposing a union were effected on the basis of the so-called Lambeth Articles, including that on the Historic Episcopate. As regards the first, it is abundantly plain that it is not union at all, it is absorption; it means not that the lion and the lamb lie down together, but that the lamb lies down in the inside of the lion. If that is done, the question is settled, and settled in a very effective manner. That would be peace of the kind spoken of in a country in former days, with which we are somewhat intimate. "They made a solitude and called it peace." What is meant by it, is that many of us are to consent to extinction, and then we have union accomplished. If that is what is meant, and it is plain what many mean when they talk so loudly of their desire for the union of Christendom, it is an insult and an outrage to make overtures to us, and it is mockery to call such overtures generous. What sense of honour can men have when they seriously make such a proposal to us? They must think us either knaves or fools, or else their own intelligence is somewhat curious. As to the second possible result, it is not much of an improvement on the first. We would be recognized as ministers, but only on sufferance, merely for the present and for the hardness of our hearts. It is the difference between immediate and gradual extinction, nothing more. It is asking us to say that our fathers, in all the generations that have elapsed since the Reformation, and we have made an entire mistake as to the convictions that they and we formed regarding the teachings of the New Testament on matters of Church polity. It is a confession, on our part, that one Church was right in every respect, and all the others were wrong; that one has a monopoly of the favour of God, in a word that one has ever had and has now the exclusive right to the promises made by the Lord Jesus Christ. That quasi life standing would be a humiliating position. There would be creatures around us looking upon us as a very inferior grade of clergy, because we did not come in by the succession, these exclusives would be impatient for our translation to another world so that the beauty of order and system would shine out in all its glory. If that is to be the result of union, we beg to be excused, we say regarding such generosity, "Thank you for nothing." We do not see that the work of evangelizing the world can possibly be helped by such a course, or that the glory of our Saviour King can be promoted. As to the third possible result, we have not the same serious objections to it that we have to the other two. That might be workable, certainly the others are not. That means that we of other Churches would be treated as equals, not as inferiors. And can there be union that is worth having until the several parties to it are recognized by one another as equals.

When, however, we come to study the matter from that point of view, does there not press itself irresistibly upon us this thought: that before we begin to look at overtures for union, the several Churches do recognize one another as being on an equal footing, first of all, as an absolutely necessary preliminary. Surely we ask for nothing unreasonable when we ask for such a recognition as that! If that be refused, then let us hear no more words

about union from the Church that refuses it. Remember, we are asking nothing from our neighbours that we do not freely grant to our neighbours. We are going on the basis of the Golden Rule then. We recognize the ministry of all our sister Churches, that are on an evangelical basis; we freely concede every evangelical Church to be a branch of the Church of Christ on earth. We regard the ordinances that are dispensed in these Churches as valid ordinances. We receive as members in full standing those that come from such Churches, and freely welcome them to fellowship with us without imposing any additional obligation, and all that we ask in turn is that we be treated as we treat others. At present that is not the case. Those that talk about union, that deplore the divisions of Christendom, do not regard us as a Church; they do not give us a place in the Catholic Communion; we have no ministry; we have no valid ordinances; we are schismatics; we are irregular; we are responsible for disunion, and we only. So long as that attitude is maintained, union is impossible. But we beg to say that if it is impossible, and so long as it is impossible, we are not to blame. The attitude that our Church takes, and that many other Churches around us take, is not a repellent attitude; an exclusive attitude; an attitude that monopolizes everything that seems to be worth having.

In the meantime, what is to be done to lessen the scandal of division; the intolerant rivalries, the unseemly antagonisms, that give such an occasion to the enemy to blaspheme? We can at least pray for union, we can do no more; we can work for it along legitimate lines. If our prayers for the healing of the breaches of Christendom be sincere, if they be believing prayers, we will follow them up with works. They that really pray for union will cultivate a spirit of fair play towards those that do not see as we see. They will give credit for conscientious convictions to those of other denominations. They will not take up a position or assume an attitude that tends to give pain to others. It is well to remember that synods and church councils may err, and have erred. The best of men, and, as a necessary inference, the best of councils and conferences, are liable to make mistakes. We should not suppose that we have in our Church, in our system of doctrine, in our form of polity, and in the practices and usages that we follow, all the good that is possible; that we, and we alone, are strictly in harmony with what God has revealed for us in His Word. Let us ever remember that the articles on which all evangelical Churches agree are of vastly greater importance than the articles on which they differ. Let us make much of this fact. In all evangelical Churches the love of God in Christ is taught, the nature of sin in man, the salvation of Christ through His sufferings and death, the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, the authority of scripture, and in all is found holiness of life as the outcome of gospel teaching. In all are seen many and blessed examples of lives that were once sinful changed into holy lives, and these lives are ever growing in beauty and usefulness. Let us not be slow to acknowledge such points wherever they are found, and let us endeavour more and more to reach out in our own lives after greater growth in such an outcome for more knowledge and more practice of the knowledge that we have. If we do this and expect great things from God in answer to prayer, then the union that Christ prayed for on the night on which he was betrayed, will come, and come sooner than many suppose. May God hasten it in His own way and time. Amen.

#### PAST AND FUTURE.

We cannot undo the past and begin afresh. We have to take the past as the starting point and determining element of the future. But the gospel reminds us that what cannot be obliterated may be transmuted by divine grace. In Christ Jesus we may become new creatures; and in the eternal life that we begin in union with Him, all old things, so far as there is any condemning power in them, pass away, and all things in the transfiguring light of heavenly love become new.—Hugh Macmillan.

## Christian Endeavor.

### TOPIC OF WEEK.

BY REV. W. S. M'TAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE.

JANUARY 8.—The duty of every day. Are we doing it? Ezra. iii. 4, Eph. vi. 6-8.

A plain, prosaic theme. The daily duty of a few may bring them into prominence and win for them applause, but the daily duty of the many is commonplace. No matter how well it may be done, there is no glamour about it; nothing that will be heralded through the press; nothing to call forth the plaudits of the multitude. The majority are called by their daily duties to the workshop, the store, the office, the kitchen, the field, the forest.

I. God can be served as well in one sphere as in another, provided the calling itself is an honourable one. Devoted Christians have been found in the most unexpected places. Circumstances are not everything. Joseph maintained his integrity amid the corrupting influences of Egypt. Obadiah feared the Lord greatly, though he was over the household of the wicked Ahab. Daniel served the Lord faithfully in Babylon. Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward ministered unto the Saviour of her substance. Susanna Wesley, though hampered by poverty, did such a work for God, in the bosom of her own family, that eternity alone will reveal its magnitude. When John Eliot, the apostle of the Indians, was too old and infirm to attend to public duties as he once did, he felt that he could serve God by teaching a little Indian girl to read. General Havelock and Captain Hedley Vicars, served God in a sphere which is supposed to be a most difficult one—the army. They converted barracks into houses of prayer. John Pounds served God faithfully in his little shoe-shop, in Portsmouth, by doing his cobbling well, and by teaching neglected children how to read and write.

II. If we are not satisfied with our present situation, if we imagine we are fitted for something better, we should remember that the best way to qualify ourselves for promotion is to be faithful where we are. We must learn to creep before we walk. If we are not faithful in little things, it is not likely that we shall be faithful in greater things. Rev. John McNeill, in speaking of the call of David, says: "He got it because he was there to get it. When his father sent for him he was keeping sheep, very likely near the house, and when they sent for the stripling he was faithful to his charge. . . . The point is this, be faithful where you are; be faithful in keeping sheep; be faithful in the office; servant, be faithful in the kitchen; whatever your sphere, be diligent."

Those whom God has called into important spheres were men who were faithful where they were. Gideon was threshing grain when he was called to be judge over Israel; Amos was following the flocks when he was called to be a prophet of the Lord; Elisha was at the plow when he was invited to succeed Elijah in the prophetic office; Peter, James and John were busy with their fishing tackle when they were called to be apostles. "Seest thou a man diligent in business he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men." If you see a man who is not diligent, you will likely find him a little later in the bankruptcy court, or before the police magistrate.

III. We shall be rewarded not according to the results of our labours, but according to our fidelity, (Eph. vi. 8). Even in this life we shall be cheered by the consciousness that we are doing right, that we are glorifying God, and that we are doing something for the uplifting of our fellow-men.

What cheers the musing student, the poet, the divine?  
The thought that for his followers a brighter day will shine.

However obscure the position we occupy, we exert an influence; and, if we are doing our work faithfully, we know our influence is for good. Though poor, we may make many rich. Though we may be unknown to fame, we may be well known for worth.

Our brightest moments and our choicest blessings often come to us when we are engaged with homely, commonplace duties. In "The Legend Beautiful," Longfellow gives a good illustration of this. A monk in his cell had a vision of Christ as He appeared when healing the lame and blind in Galilee. But the bell rang, calling the monk to his evening work of distributing alms. He hesitated, fearing that if he went the vision might be gone when he returned. But a voice within him whispered, "Do thy duty." He went, helped the poor, and returned. When he came back the vision was still there, and he heard a voice saying, "Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled."

Finally, Christ will openly reward us at the last for our fidelity. He will say unto us, "Inasmuch as you have been faithful in a few things, I will make you ruler over many things; enter into the joy of your Lord."