

Who can say how soon the dear child's simple prayer is answered—'Pity my simplicity, and suffer me to come to Thee.'

I would remind all that in claiming these covenant blessings we do not deny the possibility of very special graces to those outside the covenant from God's overflowing mercies.
—Lord Nelson, in *Church Bells*.

HOME RE-UNION IN SCOTLAND.

DUE to very many various causes, which it would not be easy to enumerate, there has undoubtedly been a considerable breaking down of many of the old prejudices that formerly formed an artificial yet formidable barrier between Scottish Presbyterians and Scottish Episcopalians. The printed formularies of Presbyterianism may be unaltered, but, as a matter of fact, both the doctrinal beliefs and religious sentiments of Scotland have altered enormously in the last fifty years. There is now far less among Presbyterians of a hard and narrow Calvinism; there is much more of a readiness (and I trust the feeling may be reciprocated more and more by us) to recognise the work of the Holy Spirit among those outside their own communion; while the liturgical, and what I may call the 'æsthetic' movements are every day diminishing the external differences between us as regards the structure and adornment of our churches, and the ordering of our services. Again, I suppose the number of able and learned Presbyterian divines who continue to believe in the old *iure divino* theory of Presbyterian Church government might be counted on one hand, and leave a finger or two to spare; while there have been here and there instances of Presbyterians whose voice must have commanded respect with their acquaintance, and indeed, with Scotchmen generally, and who declare that the want of a personal ecclesiastical supervision, such as Episcopacy provides, is an element of weakness in the Presbyterian Churches. Perhaps the late Principal Tulloch was right when speaking of recent changes, he wrote:—'The deepest influence of all is the decay of faith in any divine form of Church government at all. This is the the real root of the present movement in our (i.e., the Established) Church' (Mrs. Oliphant's *Memoir of the Life of Principal Tulloch*). But may it not be that this disintegration of faith in their own system is paving the way for a more unprejudiced consideration of the claims of Episcopacy, and is a necessary step towards a more favourable view of 'The Historic Episcopate,' which the Bishops at Lambeth declared to be an essential condition of an approach to unity? Let it be distinctly understood that the Anglican Communion embraces, and has always embraced, many who accept Episcopacy, without having formulated for themselves any doctrine as to its origin, or as to its being of the essence of the Church's organisation. We shall not demand of any who may desire to join us more than we demand of our own members. Practical acceptance of the Episcopate, as we possess it, apart

from any 'dogma' concerning it, is all that is actually required. This far we can go; but beyond this we cannot go.

"We all of us, I am sure, are at one with the Bishop of St. Andrews in his longing that the divisions of Christendom, and more especially of our own land, may be healed. Where I differ from the Bishop of St. Andrews is not in the object he has in view, but in the method by which he proposes to attain that object. So far as I can observe, there is no eagerness on the part of Presbyterians to jump at his proposals. Are there ten Presbyterian ministers who will say out boldly that they desire union with us on the terms proposed by the Bishop of St. Andrews? Are there twenty of our own clergy throughout Scotland who regard the Bishop of St. Andrews's scheme as *justifiable in principle*? Are there five who believe it to be *practicable*? I am far, indeed, from considering that discussions of theological theories are necessarily only barren scholastic exercises. But I must look at things also from a practical point of view; and without here expressing any opinion whatever on the profoundly momentous doctrinal consequences that may, or may not, be involved in the Bishop of St. Andrews's very singular proposal of the temporary recognition of the validity of Presbyterian ordinations, as a practical man I say that it is absurd to urge a scheme of union which, in the first place, though constantly advanced and expounded annually or oftener, commends itself to a wholly insignificant number of either of the parties whom it is sought to unite, and which, secondly, if conceivably successful in winning over some from Presbyterianism, would inevitably detach from us a much larger number of our own people and clergy, and possibly drive them either to the Roman Communion or to the formation of a separate body. I do not believe in schemes of union that are to be effective at the cost of splitting one of the parties, if not both, from top to bottom. The truth is, it must, I think, be acknowledged, that my venerable brother in the seclusion of his library at St. Andrews is not in real touch with the actual world of Scottish thought and feeling."—*The Bishop of Edinburgh*.

NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS AND THE CHURCH.

THE following appears in the *Scottish Guardian*, signed J. Gilliland Simpson.

The ceaseless controversies into which Churchmen have of recent years allowed themselves to be drawn, in the daily newspapers, cannot but be exceedingly painful to all friends of the Church. No good can possibly come from such controversies, because the conditions which are necessary to the satisfactory solution of any important problem, are notoriously absent in a newspaper correspondence, especially when the combatants shield themselves under the ignoble shelter of anonymous letters. Foremost among the conditions is that of a strictly logical method, and will anyone pretend that the skirmishes that have

taken place on the subject of the Christian ministry, have as a general rule displayed anything approaching to accurate thinking on either side?

The way in which the question at issue is stated is somewhat as follows: "If the Apostolical Succession is of any real value, can it be shown that Presbyterian communities retain it equally with the Anglican Church?" Now I submit that to attempt the discussion of a double-barrelled issue of this kind is absolutely fatal. There are two distinct questions that must be discussed separately. It is quite useless to deal with the evidence for or against the validity of Presbyterian orders until the contending parties have agreed that the Church is a visible organised society, the Christ-bearing Body, endowed with *karis mata*, of which orders is one. It may or may not be true that the Alexandrian patriarch was elected by the presbyters of the city; but it can hardly be doubted that e.g., Alexander and St. Athanasius were supposed to have received grace for the office and work of a bishop. This and other similar instances of apparent irregularity in the course of ecclesiastical history, may only be urged by those who admit the principle which was undoubted at the time of their alleged occurrence, that the Christian minister represented God to man and man to God. But yet they are most illogically quoted in argument before the disputants have come to any agreement about their major premises.

There are a host of other points that can never be adequately dealt with, where there is no possibility of securing that both parties shall start from the same premises. How great is the abuse to which the maxim "In things essential unity, in things indifferent liberty, in all things charity," is constantly subjected? "Things essential" begs the whole question. Episcopalians too often allow it to be assumed that they, as well as their opponents, believe in the ultimate result that the acceptance of the dogmas relating to the Blessed Trinity and the Person of our Lord constitutes what is essential, and that the belief in the Holy Catholic Church is an inference from, and not a part of the faith of the Gospel. Then there is the meaning of the word *tolerance*. Never once in these newspaper wrangles have I seen it clearly maintained, that tolerance and fidelity to truth, are moral qualities perfectly consistent with one another. And lastly, we ought to make it far more clear than we do, that our contention is not for a matter of form, or order, or practice, but that in its essence it is a battle on behalf of a vital portion of the once delivered deposit of truth, on behalf of the spirit and not of the letter, on behalf of a true philosophy of ourselves and of the world. It would be indeed difficult to imagine the great Richard Hooker, condescending to the arena of newspaper controversy had such a method been known in his day, in order to assail the faulty logic and the Anglican Church was this, that in the midst of anxious controversies and vigorous assaults, he alone of his contemporaries recognised her true greatness, her establishment on