

English speaking people for 286 years, as a faithful and felicitous translation of the Hebrew O. T. and Greek N. T. And to the advice and labors of our Revisors in the 17th. century, we owe our Book of Common Prayer, as we have it in our hands today, and which has remained practically unchanged for 235 years.

A recent historian of our Church thus refers to the Puritans and the Caroline settlement of the Church.

The Puritans were asked at the Savoy Conference to state what alterations they desired in the Prayer Book: "It at once became evident that they had come to the Conference in no spirit of compromise.

They had learned nothing, they had forgotten nothing since the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. At the Savoy Conference, as at the Hampton Court Conference, they demanded ascendancy of their own opinions, not liberty for tender consciences. They sought from the Conference the triumph of Puritanism over the Church, not a footing for Puritanism within the pale of the Church."

As the Puritan demands were necessarily, and from their very nature impossible, all that remained was for our branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church to strengthen her own position, and to determine her own policy.

The Savoy Conference practically closed the Reformation of the Church of England.

Dating its actual beginning from the abolition of the Papal Supremacy, A. D. 1534, from that event to the Savoy Conference, A. D. 1662, is a period of 128 years.

2. Secondly, Our Reformation in England, was A WORK OF RESTORATION.

This is a matter of the highest importance for you to understand.

It was restoration not destruction: 'Twas reformation not revolution that our Reformers aimed at and carried out.

In the words of the Lord to his Prophet Jeremiah, They sought to stand in the ways, and see, they ever asked for the old paths, the paths of the primitive, the undivided Church Catholic, and they were fully persuaded that thus they should find the good way, yea, a way in which they, and their children, and all who were to come after them, might find rest for their souls.

For what was the declared design of the Reformers of the Church of England?

It was not to found a new Church, or to institute, or establish in England anything new: it was to restore what was most ancient and most edifying in the form and order of the ancient Church of Christ: that which was Apostolical, that which was Primitive, that which was Catholic, this our Reformers sought to retain or to restore: abolishing what ever was merely Roman and Mediaeval, the offspring of the papal system, and therefore, comparatively modern.

Hence they retained in the Church, the Apostolic Ministry, in their three Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, which had existed in the Church from the times of Christ's Apostles.

Hence, they were careful to preserve, as they did, the unbroken succession of the Apostolical Episcopate, which historically identifies our Reformed branch of the Holy Catholic Church, with the Apostolic Church of the first century.

Hence, they retained the ancient Creeds of the Holy Catholic Church, and imposed no new terms of admission to the Church, besides those contained in the primitive symbol, "The Apostles' Creed."

Hence, in the compilation of our Book of Common Prayer, while using, after the taking away of Roman errors, the existing service-books of the Church, they borrowed largely from the ancient Liturgies of the undivided Church Catholic.

All the important features, for example, of our Communion Office, appear in one or other of the four great Liturgies of the early Church.

All this shows that what our Reformers did in England in the 16th century was not to found a new Church, but to restore and purify the old one. They did not pull down the venerable fabric, whose foundations had been laid in Britain in Apostolic days, and whose noble walls and arches had been reared in Saxon times: nay, all they did was to remove from column and arch and wall the daubing with untempered mortar, wherewith Roman plasterers in mediæval days, had defaced, and defiled, and disfigured the ancient and noble structure.

And when this done, was it a new building? Nay; Was it not the old fabric restored?

Never, therefore, English Churchmen, concede to others, never allow yourselves to think, that the Reformation was the beginning of our beloved Church.

It was its Reformation, its coming back to "the old paths" of St. Alban and St. Augustine, of St.