

Christ Himself; Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.

4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration, to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called by God into the unity of His church.

At first glance these suggestions take one's breath away by their simplicity, and the liberality of the Bishops in giving up so much that has been thought essential to the Church of England, or at least its characteristic marks and inheritance. Our liturgical worship is clearly a non-essential; our thirty-nine articles are no longer articles of peace and union; even confirmation is unnecessary. One essential alone is required, which makes a bar to an immediate reunion with most Protestant denominations—that is the Episcopate. The offer seems a practical one; and so has led to some interesting discussions. But this one point renders it impracticable, and so it has led to nothing further. In fact, one may say that by this saving mention of the Episcopate, the Church of England has been saved from giving itself away.

As a matter of fact, since nearly all bodies of Christians take the first three articles for granted, what is really done in this proposal is to offer the "Historic Episcopate as a basis of Reunion," and it is doubtless in this sense that we have most of us thought about it.

Before saying anything on this point, I will draw your attention to two other statements in the Lambeth report, which express more definitely than these resolutions the exact position taken by the Bishops.

1. In the encyclical letter the Bishops refer to these terms of possible intercommunion. They assure it is not their intention to depart in any way from the recognized standards of the church.

However we may long to embrace those now alienated from us, so that the ideal of the one flock under the one shepherd may be realized, we must not be unfaithful stewards of the great deposit entrusted to us. We cannot desert our position either as to faith or discipline. That concord would, in our judgment, be neither true nor desirable which should be produced by such surrender.

2. The second point is in regard to reunion with our brethren of the Roman church. Here I quote from the report of the Committee.

The committee are "painfully aware that any proposal for reunion would be entertained by the authorities of that church only on condition of a complete submission on our part to those claims of absolute authority, and the acceptance of those other errors, both in doctrine and dis-

cipline, against which, in faithfulness to God's Holy Word and to the true principles of His Church, we have been for three centuries bound to protest. (Pages 85, 86.)

These two positions, placed side by side, seem to bar any approach to reunion in either direction. They seem to tell us that we must be content to do our work as we are, and leave the work of reunion to the Providence of God.

Yet, I think that we may be loyal to our position and inheritance, and yet pray and work for the day when we may exercise a fuller recognition and enjoy a more vital union.

But, if we desire and work for union, it must not be only in one direction. If at present there may be greater hope of the spirit of unity moving on the troubled waters of Protestantism than that there should be any healing of the division between ourselves and the Church of Rome, we must not forget that ultimately the bonds of unity must unite us in both directions. We must never leave out of sight the great historic churches of Christendom, whose adherents number three-fourths of the Christian world.

I will now point out the direction in which I think we are to look for the hope of unity.

When the church seeks with equal zeal for the restoration of its other "marks," then the mark of unity will follow. We say in the creeds, we believe the church to be one, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. We cannot desire unity at the expense of truth, holiness and apostolicity, but let each be sought for equally and held to faithfully, and the result must follow that in due time we shall come into the unity of the Faith, unto the perfect man. We shall grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ.

1. We must be Holy. The church is created for holiness. She is to build up men in holiness. She is to exercise an influence for holiness upon the earth. Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted. It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out.

Not that it is ours to condemn men or churches for lack of holiness—nay, they shall condemn themselves. They have a name to live, but are dead. The fate that overtakes them is this: that they cease to influence men's lives for good.

Now, can we say that any churches are so corrupt in morals that they stand thus self-condemned. I think not altogether. I believe no church has a monopoly of holiness—though I believe in some the brightness of this "mark" has been dimmed, and in proportion to its dullness, its candle has been removed from its place. Can we not thus largely explain the downfall of some of the once powerful churches of

the east, and perhaps we may say, though, in saying it, we partly condemn ourselves, the success of the followers of John Wesley and of some other modern denominations, is marked by a zeal of holiness.

2. We must be Catholic. I understand this to mean we must teach the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And here again I believe that while no branch of the church has a monopoly of holiness, so no branch has a monopoly of catholicity. I understand the definition of catholicity to be that which was laid down by St. Vincent of Lerins—*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. It is rather an eclectic way of arriving at the truth, but it excludes, in a way which must commend itself to every wide-seeing and impartial mind, those temporary and one-sided doctrines which have fascinated in different ages the impatient or puzzled minds of men.

Holy Scripture is the ultimate standard of all doctrine. We appeal to Scripture as to the word of truth. But not to scripture, as interpreted by some individual in this or any age. Still less as interpreted by ourselves alone. We appeal to Holy Scripture, as interpreted by the consensus of the Catholic church. The primitive church has accordingly a special weight in this interpretation, because the Fathers lived nearer to the time of the Divine revelation, and because the church was undivided in organization and doctrine.

3. Apostolicity in the church is the expression of its authoritative mission. Undoubtedly the Apostles were sent by Christ, and we believe that this first mission is continued by an authorized ministry. For fifteen hundred years it was accepted in the church that this authority rested with the Order of Bishops. At the Reformation period, for one reason or another, the authority was claimed, either by the general body of Christians or by various individuals. The claim was then made that in the primitive church the authority rested in the whole body, and had been usurped by the Order of Bishops. This is not the place to answer the claim, but at least we may say the charge of usurpation is a difficult one to establish.

Now, my point is this. When we shall have arrived at a substantial agreement upon these points in the church's life, then only can we hope for an outward unity. But in our endeavor after unity, neither point must be left out of sight. We may not disregard the question of authority, neither must we exaggerate it. Again, holiness must not become such a supreme end as to lead us to denounce every existing authority in the church, and to permit us to justify every well-intentioned schismatic act of reforming zeal.

We claim in the Church of England to have a loyal desire to hold fast to each of these marks of the Christian church.