

The Bishop of Chester, (Right Rev. Dr. Jayne) says of the Lincoln judgment, that it had vindicated and established two important principles, namely, the *continuity* of the Church of England and her *liberty*. They must be deeply thankful to the Archbishop and his assessors that they had once for all made it clear that this continuity existed, and that the Reformation was indeed a reformation and a restoration, and that it was not a revulsion and altogether a re-constitution of things. The Archbishop's judgment had also illustrated the liberty of the Church of England, and therefore they must feel from whatever quarter they approached the question, that rational liberty was what they needed, if they were to be a living Church.

HOME RE-UNION.

The following extracts taken from the address of the Bishop of Tasmania to his Synod, in May last are worthy of wide circulation and careful perusal :

The Bishop said :—" An uneasy feeling can be detected amongst the members of Christian sects in England and in Greater Britain as they note the steady disintegration into smaller bodies of their own people. A leader of the Wesleyans says :—" We are alive to the waste, the scandal, the *positive wickedness* of having two, or even three Methodist churches in localities in which, in the very nature of things, there is room for only one." In England we are told that in 1869 there were 100 different denominations, last year these had broken up into 254. So rapid a down grade was certain to attract attention, and at the present day vigorous attempts are being made to unite, under certain definite heads, Christian bodies who date their existence from some period within the last 300 years. It is natural that they should wish to enlist the Church of England in this cause. They ask whether we will not make common cause with them. Met with a courteous refusal they have asserted that 'the Church of England is the greatest hindrance to the union of Protestant Christianity.' Surely the time has come for a temperate yet firm answer to those who reproach us with fostering dissension. Our position admits of a philosophical explanation based on deep principles which have stood the test for ages. So far from fostering division, we believe there is no cause so holy as that of the

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of Christendom. There are no sacrifices we would shrink from to attain that object ; but the way to accomplish it does not lie in the direction some suppose. Let me bespeak your attention then whilst I address myself to the task of stating the position of the Church of England. I am about to enunciate no new or startling views. I can only claim to define for you what has often been said before, and in doing this I trust I shall not misrepresent the views of those who differ from us..... And, first let us acknowledge the pain it gives to every generous mind to be separated from any of his fellow-countrymen in worship and general Church policy. It is one of the trials of my life to be constantly passing from township to township, viewing in nearly every spot the plain evidence of our unhappy divisions, marking the waste of power and of money, the consequent scandal to our holy cause, and all the usual unlovely evidences of the principle of unrestrained private judgment. Going deeper still, it must be a still greater pain to every generous spirit to be divided in any way from men and women of deep spirituality, of fervent devotion and blameless life, who are exhibiting on every side in their characters the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The

history of England and America is full of the achievements of such men and women in every branch of philanthropy, in the struggles for freedom and enlightenment, and in the spread of truth, both scientific and theological. As I glance down my own book shelves and recall the names of some whom I revere as dear friends, I realize the debt I owe to these thinkers upon the ground occupied in common by all students of theology. The records also of missions to non-Christian races are bright with their triumphs in the name of Christ. Yet, granting all this, we cannot unite, as they would at present with us to do, with these post Reformation bodies. The basis they propose is, in our opinion,

WHOLLY WRONG.

It will never achieve a stable, corporate, united Christendom. We believe we can hold all that is true which they possess, and yet keep the *more excellent way* which is ours by birth-right which we can never surrender. Christian life has to do with two great questions which are capable of being taken separately. The first refers to the *individual* soul. In what does its salvation consist ? Where does it find its true home ? The answer is plain. Its salvation consists in personal union with the Lord and Master of us all, in union with Christ. This is a sacred and intimate tie bound by no indispensable external rules. The purest system in the world may fail to impart it to any particular individual. The grossest, or narrowest, or most superstitious organization of this or of any age can place no certain barrier between the soul of any one of its members and its God. Divine methods with the spirit of man are so diverse as well as wonderful that not unfitly they can be described in the words of Holy Writ. " There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen." But there is a further subject which by no possibility can be avoided. What is *to be the form* which the Kingdom of Christ shall take ? The problem must have pressed for solution immediately after Pentecost. And yet there are numbers of people for whom the question possesses little, if any interest. Taken up with the first step, with the bare salvation of souls, the corporate life, the building up of the kingdom, seems of third rate importance. We submit that it ranks *equal* with any other : for the future of a stable and solid Christianity depends upon the answer. Whilst we assert this, however, let us admit that it does not affect, one way or the other, the bare salvation of a soul. We re-echo what Dr. Pusey says :—" The Lover and Father of mankind has not one way only of bringing home His lost sheep. Ask any tolerably instructed Christian person, " Will any soul be lost, if in good faith he was what he was, living up to the light he had and repenting him when he did amiss ?" All Christendom would answer, God forbid !" But whilst we grant this, who can be content with no perfected system, no compacted kingdom ?

We pass on, therefore, to inquire how best we can guard from error, organise most strongly and perfectly, make provision for continuous order, and for the due dispensing of all means of grace, " till we all come in the unity of the Faith unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Here at once we come to a complete divergence of opinion, a divergence based on *principles* ; and whilst we are ready to respect the honest convictions of others, we shall not ask in vain to be accorded the same respect for our own. The view held by the vast mass of Christians throughout the world at the present day, the view which was almost universal 300 years ago, is *that the true organization of the Church is in its main lines no longer*

AN OPEN QUESTION.

That has been settled for us by a continuous development from the earliest days of The Church. It has stood the test of time, and it is standing now. It is *not* a casual development,

but *Divinely* ordained as a safeguard for the Truth in its completeness. We realise on these general lines " the Divine Presence in History." We dare not gainsay it. Our duty is to hand on unimpaired what we have ourselves received of this continuous corporate life.

But there is another view equally based on principle, and though it is diametrically opposed to ours, it is none the less deserving of the respect due to the opinions of honest and honourable men. It is the view held by a few in every age, but which has received its greatest impetus in the last 300 years, owing to the widespread corruptions of the Latin Church ; and it is simply this, that the question of Church organisation, of the precise form of the corporate life, is *always an open one*. The outward form being of little or no importance, there is no reason in the nature of things why any individual may not at any time, if dissatisfied with his neighbours, create a church of his own. This view has even led men to assert (though it may well be, without having duly weighed the full import of it) that God has not been in the past history of the Church, that it was not till the 16th or 17th century of our era that the true idea of the Church was discovered under Divine guidance. The centre of this principle is, of course, the admission of

THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT

to its fullest extent. So long as the soul is in communion with its Saviour naught else is of consequence. The effect of this principle has been startling—so startling that even its supporters are becoming uneasy. Christianity among the English-speaking races, and among those who cling to this central principle, has been split up into numberless republics, and by the very nature of the case cannot be prevented from further cleavage. Nor under this principle, again, can any rite or usage, however holy its sanction, be counted safe for a single hour. Baptism has become an open question—has by one sect been ignored altogether. Confirmation has been absolutely dismissed by all. Holy Communion may suffer, nay has suffered already. The sacred call to the Ministry, to us so solemn, that it becomes a life-long vocation, has been put upon the same footing as any mere worldly profession. When so much that we hold most dear is given up, we are made anxious for the future.

The prominence of this, to us, wrong principle is easily accounted for. It is the excess of a great virtue which has its home among the Teutonic races in especial degree ; it is the unlovely excess of the spirit of liberty. Occasioned by the gross errors of a great Church it has had, nevertheless, to pay the penalty of excess by injuring the solid growth of the Church of Christ, and we ask, " If St. Paul was vexed in his soul at four divisions in the Corinthian Church what would he have said to 254 within the bounds of England ?" With all respect for those who conscientiously differ from us we can only courteously reply that we *cannot accept a wrong principle*. We look, and we shall ever look, for the ultimate re-union of something far higher than Protestant Christianity—nothing less than the re-union of all Christendom. It needs no prophet to discern the fact that the greater unity can only be realized upon the basis of the principle held tenaciously by the Church of England as a branch of the Church which has developed without break, though purified by reformation. It can never be realised, such is the craving for continuity implanted in the human mind, if we surrendered either our organic or our spiritual connection with the Church of the Apostles.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A subscriber in Nova Scotia writes us :—" I CONSIDER THE CHURCH GUARDIAN A VERY VALUABLE FAMILY PAPER AND ALWAYS ENJOY MY NUMBER."