

"The Independent" itself thus comments on them:

"They (the Bishops) say with singular unanimity, that the concession involves a surrender which they cannot properly make, and the reasons they give have it must be admitted no little force. They agree that the Historic Episcopate is an institution of Divine Authority, and as such is imbedded in the Constitution of the Church. That constitution would have to be changed. Such a change might involve injury, and in the language of Bishop Gailor, 'any injury done to the Episcopal Constitution would be regarded with no less dismay than an injury done to the Faith itself.' In the second place the historic Episcopate has been received by unbroken tradition from the Primitive Church, and can no more be repudiated says Bishop Leonard (of Ohio) 'and set aside and omitted than either the Bible, the Creeds, or the Sacraments.' It is a 'trust from God,' and must not be betrayed. Third, it would be to surrender a central ground of unity. Unity had its beginning in the College of the Apostles; it is to be regained and restored by the College of the Episcopate. Fourth, such a change would break the unity which exists between the Episcopal Church and the other branches of the Anglican Communion. Fifth, it would put the Episcopal Church out of harmony with four-fifths of all who profess the Christian faith. It is unquestionably true that the great majority of Christians belong to Communions having the Historic Episcopate. Sixth, in the language of Bishop Clark, 'if one fence comes down, all the fences must go.'"

One may gather from this summary that the ground was well covered, and that the claims of the Church have been presented by these "independent witnesses" in a way which must compel attention and respect.

From our point of view there is one thing which deserves more particular notice as being in itself a sign of the times, and very full of promise for the REAL reunion of the churches by and by. It is the fact that in so many of these Episcopal replies union with our Christian brethren of the various denominations is viewed merely as a contingency to that union the recovery of which is of the first importance between ourselves and the two other great branches of the Catholic family.

"If we are wrong," says Bishop Neely, "in our views of the origin, authority and functions of the Christian ministry, we have at least the satisfaction of sharing them with four-fifths of the Christian world; and for the rest it is better that we should be condemned because of honestly entertaining such views and of legislating in accordance with them, than because of willfully setting up barriers of our own devising, and insisting upon maintaining them when even so grave a question as that of the corporate unity of the Church is concerned."

"Christian unity," says Bishop Tuttle, "had its beginning in the College of the Apostles. It had its historical continuance in the College of the Episcopate at least down to A. D. 1054, the date of the schism between the Church of the East and the Church of the West. The law of unity was 'Episcopatus unus est cuius in solidum pars a singulis tenetur.' Yet in spite of this schism in the Episcopate and spite of the secession from it in the Continental Reformation of the sixteenth century, to-day of the 478,000,000 of Christians in the world 358,000,000 are Episcopalians and only 120,000,000 non-Episcopalians. A thoughtful person concludes that as the College of the Apostles began Christian unity, so the College of the Episcopate may well be called on to help to regain and restore Christian unity; and that to advocate any practices or views for the alleged promotion of Christian unity which disregard and count out the Historic Episcopate is simply "propter vivendi causas perdere vitam."

"Were all in this church," says Bishop Niles, "in our great love of our separated brethren to deal untruly with the Episcopate, holding it as a thing which we are free to take up or to lay down, aside from the sin of it we would wholly forfeit our place as a possible mediary between the Protestant bodies on the one hand, and the ancient Churches of the East and of Latin Christianity. Surely we ought all to care for the whole family God. Let one weigh the words of the Ultramontane (Roman) DeMaistre touching the possible calling of the Anglican Episcopate, in God's restoration of unity, and to them add the strong language of the scholarly Archbishop of Zante, of the Orthodox Eastern Church, which he used upon this very subject at the recent consecration of the Bishop of Massachusetts. When he has pondered them he will scarcely wish us to give away this possible power, this trust for the entire household of Christians."

Bishop Howe of Central Pennsylvania says: "It is the faith of this church that the Lord not only ordained two Sacraments for the Communion of His people, but also set apart certain orders of men for their administration, and provided for a succession of them from age to age. We can no more ignore the Divine order of the Church than we can the 'sacred mysteries' entrusted to it, or the sacred Scriptures which contain the history of Redemption. * * * What can be meant by Christian unity if it is first to be conceded that there is not to be one recognized source and channel from which ministerial authorization is to be obtained; that sects may be multiplied *ad libitum* and that every sect may authorize its own ministers of divine oracles?"

"If we can settle," says Bishop Scarborough, "what the original form of the ministry was, as we find it in the New Testament, in the Early Church, in the Church for fifteen centuries, and what it is to-day in the great body of believers, our feet will be on solid ground."

Bishop Whitehead says: "As the matter now stands, the Episcopal church (in common with the immense majority of Christians of the present and of the past as well) without one particle of personal feeling, or unkindness to any individual, holds what she believes to be the Apostolic, Primitive, and afterward Scriptural, position, backed by eighteen centuries of continuity since."

Bishop Johnston says: "The Anglican Church has faith to hope and pray for a larger and more comprehensive unity than that represented by the Protestant bodies. It is needless to say that any idea of a union of all Christians would have to be abandoned if we give up the historic ministry, which is so tenaciously held by the most ancient branches of the Church."

"If the Apostolic Succession in the Christian Church," Bishop Leonard of Ohio says "is an obstacle to Church Union, then this American Episcopal branch must not be held responsible. It is not her fault that this ministry is her inheritance. The burden was imposed too long ago, and has been borne too many generations to be objected to now at this end of the nineteenth century. And religious people who have voluntarily and conscientiously separated themselves from the ancient and venerable Catholic Body, ought not to feel aggrieved if that Body insists upon the essentiality and need for Apostolic ordination."

"Such a repeal," Bishop Gailor says, "would involve a surrender of the belief in the necessity of Episcopal ordination, and ultimately of the Episcopate itself. It might possibly be a long step toward union with a few of our Protestant brethren; but it certainly would be a complete abandonment of even the prospect of visible union with the remaining three-fourths of the Christian world."

We have not quoted from the replies of

Bishops who are recognized everywhere as outspoken on the Catholic side. The names of McLaren, Seymour, Nicholson and Grafton are among the twenty-seven, and every one knows that what falls from them will have the Catholic ring about it. The quotations we have given show that they are by no means alone, and we think furnishes some indication that things are not all going the way of the Broads.—*The Angelus, Chicago.*

THE LITURGY.

A ritual enshrines and preserves the truth. Men recognize this truth in the various secret societies which they have founded. In order to perpetuate the principles of these bodies, to guard them from change or loss, to preserve them from the careless meddling and the more criminal attacks of this and each succeeding generation—to serve these purposes, men put the principles which they would keep into a settled ritual; and then they deem their society and its truth secure. Now, precisely the same ends are to be accomplished, and the same danger to be averted, in the Church of God. The Church is to be the pillar and ground of the truth. The Church is to keep that truth that will save mankind—not merely this or that generation of men, but every generation of men, away on in the future, "till the last syllable of recorded time." She could not do this at all were she not a divine institution.

But, divine as is the Church in its origin and organization, in another aspect it is a body of men, of sinful, fallible men. Because this is the case the Church's treasure of truth is liable to the same dangers which assail any other body of men. The shifting opinions of successive generations beat against the shore of divine truth, as the storm waves lash Eddystone Light; and were there not breakwaters and defences provided to guard the truth, it would in time be washed away. The Liturgy keeps the truth of Christ, as it were, in a casket—a casket which is always open for the inspection of each private Christian. Every Lord's Day we may see that the jewel of great price is there, unchanged and undimmed in even its finest point. Such a ritual expresses the truth in the most exact language attainable, embodies it in language which is scientifically accurate, in words which, like fine gold, have been refined seven times in the fires of the Church's martyrdom, and have been beaten into perfect shape by the giants of her past history.

The Prayer Book is the chronometer by which every private time-piece must be set, and by whose help the ship of Christ calculates her course across the trackless sea of time.—*Selected.*

We have the assurance that not in a general way but in a special manner and degree Jesus has prayed for a peculiar blessing in the line of our loving labors in behalf of those to whom we are sent in His name. What need have we to doubt or fear as to the result of our labors which have this intercession in their behalf?—*H. Clay Trumbull, D.D.*

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