

CHRISTIAN REUNION.*

At a time when the subject of Christian Reunion occupies so much of men's thoughts, it is well that they should be told something of previous efforts in the same direction. For we must not imagine that the Reformers viewed with indifference the manifold divisions of the religious societies which broke off from the communion of Rome. On the contrary, they deeply lamented them, and tried as much as possible to put an end to them, although with no great success.

It is well that we should look back upon their efforts and their failures and should see what we may learn from them, and what we have to avoid; and Mr. de Soyres has, in his Hulsean Lectures before the University of Cambridge, furnished us with useful material for this purpose. The subject has not been entirely neglected; for as Mr. de Soyres reminds us, it was treated by the Rev. H. B. Wilson in his Bampton Lectures; whilst "the work of Karl Hering, published as far back as the year 1836 remains still the standard history," which Mr. de Soyres had purposed to translate supplemented "with the relations in past times of the Church of England and the foreign Reformed Churches."

It so happened that Mr. de Soyres was appointed Select Preacher at Cambridge, in October 1885, "almost the exact bi-centenary of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes." He tells us "the discourse then delivered," which is in the present volume appended to the four Hulsean Lectures, pointing out "the old relations of cordial sympathy and communion between the Anglican and Huguenot Churches. The appeal was received with assent by the members of the theological faculty at Cambridge, and words of sympathy and approval came from Dr. Hatch and Fairbairn at Oxford, Professor A. S. Farrar at Durham, the venerable Bishop of Worcester, and many others. Still more acceptable, as a testimony to the practical possibility of the step advocated, was a communication from Dr. Eugene Bersier. In this letter the distinguished leader of the Reformed Church in Paris declared not only his cordial assent to the plea, but expressed his willingness to co-operate personally in any effort to bring together the two Churches."

This sermon on the Huguenots is not the least interesting portion of the present volume. The preacher sketches briefly but clearly the relations between the refugees and the English Church of the period of the revocation (October 22, 1685). Because of the sufferings of the Huguenots, as well as from sympathy with the cause for which they suffered, they were received with "a bounty more than English in its munificence, a hospitality more than royal, which foresaw not that the industry of the visitors would one day repay the gift."

Mr. de Soyres laments that not only has the cordial intimacy which then existed between

the English Church and the French Reformed Church passed away, but that nowadays the names of the great Huguenot divines who were had in honour by the great Anglicans are now hardly known by English Churchmen; and we may join in his regret. We may also cordially acknowledge that the various schools of thought which are found among the French Reformed divines are represented in the Church of England. Who would not welcome the Monods into the Evangelical section of the Church? Who would not hold out the right hand of fellowship to the eloquent and distinguished Bersier, who, by the comprehensiveness of his intelligence and the catholicity of his spirit, rises superior to party?

Mr. de Soyres recognizes, however, the indispensable truth that the "idea of episcopal succession as a note of the Church had never been abandoned at the English Reformation" whilst we are not prepared to deny that "it held a far less prominent and exclusive position" in earlier days. And it may be admitted that the language of the English Reformers "was as absolute and decided against episcopacy without reformation as it was against reformation without episcopacy."

The eloquent appeal which Mr. de Soyres made to Anglican Churchmen to sympathize with the suffering Communion from which he sprung must have spoken to the hearts of his hearers, and doubtless will speak to many more through the press. If he cannot offer any tangible practical suggestions for bringing the Churches nearer together, it may be because he thought it better to leave these to result from the necessities of the case and from future Conferences between the Churches.

We have left ourselves space for only the slightest account of the four Lectures which form the bulk of the volume. The first is introductory and treats of the work of Baur at Cambridge, which the lecturer describes as diplomatic, and the work of Melancthon which was based on deeper sympathy and more complete knowledge of the conditions of the case. At the end of the lecture he gives a very interesting account of the remarkable effort of Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople.

The second lecture has some general remarks and besides, deals, at some length, with the efforts of John Durie, Calixtus, and the great Arminian Grotius. The third lecture notices some of the causes of the failures of efforts to promote Protestant reunion, and specially notes the extreme Erastianism of the German States. But the chief interest of this lecture consists in the account of the correspondence, on this subject, between the two greatest men of the day, Leibnitz and Bossuet. Although the result seemed as far as ever from being attained, yet ye says Grotius and Leibnitz had not laboured in vain. The last lecture deals with the religion of nationality. We can cordially recommend these lectures as not only instructive and interesting, but as well calculated to help the reader to further study and research.

THE PRESS ON THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

THE prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln has excited greater interest than any Church event of the century. The Church Association is condemned generally by the English Press; even the Rock, evangelical of evangelicals, regards the action as a mistake. The London Times says, "we cannot pretend to sympathise with the proceedings of the Church Association. The aggrieved parishioners in this case are almost avowedly mere puppets. Very little would have been heard of the Bishop's practices outside the diocese of Lincoln, where, apparently, they have caused little stir, if the Church Association had not sought them out for what we must take the liberty of calling party purposes, and seizing the opportunity of making an example of a Bishop. Again, we must ask what benefit the Church of England is likely to derive from such proceedings. There scandal is far greater than any scandal that could arise from such irregularities as the Bishop of Lincoln is accused of. It is much to be wished, indeed, that the Archbishop had been able in some way or other to stay the proceedings." The Standard writes, "If every party in the Church insisted upon penalising every failure to satisfy the stiff legal standard of the Judicial Committee, there would be an end of all comfort and warmth in public service. The Evangelical clergyman offends as systematically by his omissions and by his additions as his Ritualistic brother. Of the two, if persecutions for trivial deviation are to be the rule, the Low Church party will lose most. One has only to consider the character of the charges on which the Bishop of Lincoln is about to be dragged before the Primate, to feel that, wherever the breach may lie, the blame rests only with his adversaries. The test in each case must be the suitability of the ritual to the temperament and convictions of the people; and tried by this simple standard, the conduct of the Church Association will appear nothing short of cruel. It is vain, we suppose, to urge on enthusiasts of the ultra-Protestant type the consideration that the usages they abhor tend, beyond all dispute, to promote religion. What is distinctive in the High Church movement may be, according to the Evangelical rendering of Christianity and of the ecclesiastical law, indefensible; but who can deny that it has led to a marvellous growth in the life of the Church; that it attracts vast numbers of men and women for whom Low Church formalism has no fascination, and whom the extravagance of the Revivalists would repel? There is room for all, and there is need of all, within the Establishment."

The Leeds Mercury, one of the best of the Nonconformist papers, expresses as follows the universal opinion of English dissenters:

"The public generally must have considerable difficulty in understanding why a body consisting of members of the Church of England, who so far as we know are all of them favourable to the maintenance of the existing

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