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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE POSSIBLE FEDERATION OF THE EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

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THE question of church unity is being more and more pressed upon us. In 1886, the Bishops of the American Episcopal Church adopted a declaration that they were ready "to enter into brotherly conference with all or any Christian bodies seeking the restoration of the organic unity of the Church." Many responses have been made to this; committees of conference exist, and correspondence is actually in progress. This is a single group of facts, one of several groups. In that most notable of the American ecclesiastical movements of the past year, the revision movement in the Presbyterian Church, the idea of closer union with other churches has prominently asserted itself. The measures taken for securing a formula that shall express the consensus of doctrine among the several Presbyterian bodies, were much more eagerly adopted than those for securing the revision of the present standards. Many Presbyterians are anxious that revision shall take such a form as to lower the barriers between them and other churches.

Among possible modes of greater unity, that by federation is prominently mentioned. The term federation is conveniently elastic for this purpose. We need not define it more closely than by saying that it indicates something less than the consolidation of existing churches into a single body, having governmental functions, and something more than the mere recognition that all the churches are in reality one. It implies, perhaps, a council of some sort, common to the bodies composing the federation. It implies some kind of accepted organization, some kind of official community. The common organization may have only advisory power, but it must be the power of advice that comes from a regularly accepted source.

It is a thing by no means to be taken for granted that such a federation, if feasible, should be confined to the churches that are com-