

ten. Party conflicts and party symbols are of this sort. But there is also something which it is worth while to remember and hold fast. The Reformation placed aloft two unchangeable and eternal principles. A return to these would lay a solid basis for union of doctrine and union of action among all Protestants. These two principles are,—the Bible the Church's only rule, and Christ her only king.

A great movement has just taken place in Germany. It is a movement towards union, on the basis of the most venerable symbol of the Reformation—the Augsburg Confession. The movement is not an hour too early. Nowhere has the church been so fearfully rent, and nowhere have her divisions produced more lamentable consequences, than on the native soil of the Reformation. It gladdens us the more, therefore, to mark the return of a better spirit, and a disposition among the Germans to terminate the long and bitter feuds which divided the Lutheran and Reformed churches. The bold advances of Rome have hastened this result. That great enemy of christianity is laboriously intriguing in Germany, to acquire political supremacy. She dare not, in that country, employ the dungeon and the sword to suppress the truth, as she does in Italy; but the supremacy she is now labouring to acquire would, if attained, be but the precursor of violence. That violence would fall impartially upon all the branches of the Protestant German church. Alarmed by the imminency of the danger, the Protestant pastors from all parts of Germany assembled in September last at Berlin, in order to devise, if possible, some common ground on which they might unite in resisting the common enemy. That great ecclesiastical conference is styled the *Kirchentag*.

This is the sixth annual meeting of the *Kirchentag*. It was attended by upwards of two thousand persons, the great majority of whom were ministers. The *Kirchentag* is not confined to Prussia, but obtains in great degree in Wurtemberg, and in less degree in Baden and Nassau, and in some of the free towns, as in Bremen. Its three main constituent parties are the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches, and the Union. This last party was founded by Professor Nitzsch, who drew up, in 1846, a doctrinal *consensus*, or Union creed, between Lutherans and Calvinists. In addition to these three parties, the *United Evangelical Church* of Germany recognises the *Separatists*, chiefly of the Baptist and Methodist persuasion, as within her pale; but these latter were not represented by any delegates at the *Kirchentag*. The actual members of that conference consisted of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Unionists.

The sittings of the *Kirchentag* lasted nearly a week. They were held in the *Garnison Kirche* of Berlin, which was fitted up

with a platform and rostrum. Every morning there was a sermon in the dome or cathedral, and at an earlier hour, auxiliary meetings on matters of various interest to the religious world. Every evening there was divine service in several of the churches of Berlin, at which the more distinguished of the pulpit orators of Germany officiated.

The great aim of the *Kirchentag*, at its present meeting, we have said, was to rally all the scattered forces of the Reformation in Germany under one banner. The renewed attacks of the Romanists have shown the necessity of this. Dr. Nitzsch opened the proceedings with a speech strongly union, and at the same time condemning the views of those who sought to obtain union by dropping all definite forms of confession. He proposed the adoption of the Augsburg Confession as the common bond of the Protestant churches in Germany, and as being the ground-work alike of the Lutheran and the Reformed church.

Dr. Krummacher followed from the Reformed point of view. He cordially seconded the adoption of the Augsburg Confession as the common banner of evangelical Protestants. He argued that the Augsburg Confession contained the germs both of his own and of the Lutheran theology.—From that confession the Reformed church differed in not one point, and he could not but regard that confession as a glorious national charter of the Protestant faith.

Dr. Stahl, who spoke for the Lutherans, advocated the adoption of the proposed symbol. These three speakers, the representatives of the three parties in the church, were followed by others from different parts of Prussia and Germany, all with wonderful unanimity recommending the adoption of the Augsburg confession. The Assembly was then called on by its President to pronounce for or against the following resolution :—

“The members of the German Evangelical *Kirchentag* hereby will make known that they with heart and voice hold and profess the confession presented by the Evangelical Princes and Estates to the Emperor Charles V., at the Imperial Diet at Augsburg in the year 1530, and hereby publicly testify their accord with it, as the oldest and simplest common record of publicly acknowledged evangelical doctrine in Germany.

“To this testimony they subjoin the declaration that they all and each for himself hold fast to the peculiar articles of their separate churches, and the Unionists to the *consensus* of both; and that no prejudice shall hereby accrue to the various positions of the Lutherans, Reformed, and Unionists, with reference to Article X. of this confession, nor to the peculiar circumstances of those Reformed congregations which have never adopted the *Agustana* for their symbol.”