

action of the Church, whom all governments depol and reject. Her true home is with the people. It hears her voice."—Catholic Columbian.

CHURCH UNITY

THE CONCORDAT OF EPISCOPAL AND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

By Rev. Walter Elliott, C. S. P., in The Missionary

Our readers will thank us, I hope, for offering them another article on the proposed Concordat between the Episcopal and Congregational Churches; if not in the front rank of Protestant America for size, those denominations are easily so placed for the ability of their clergy and the sincerity and personal zeal of their laity. In our preceding number I treated this subject, so portentous of the ecclesiastical future of America, mainly from the point of view of the Congregationalists; and now I will briefly consider its significance to Episcopalians.

The main thing is the effect of this projection of political religious policy among Christians, hitherto decidedly—aggressively—non-political. And as I write, the daily press reports the election of a layman as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, a denomination whose opposition to Episcopacy has ever been less acrid than that of the Congregationalists. But this by the way.

The following statement of fundamental Episcopal doctrine is by Mr. George Warton Pepper, a distinguished lawyer of Philadelphia, and perhaps the leading lay Episcopalian in the country. It is taken from a powerful and truly eloquent discourse which he delivered at a recent General Convention of his Church in which he sat as delegate. Speaking of the present tendency towards Protestant unity, he says:

"This Church has peculiar responsibilities in this matter because of our present great opportunity. By its great comprehensiveness and openness the Episcopal Church is especially qualified to lead the way [to the union of churches]. There is no doctrine of Christian faith to which this Church is not hospitable, and as long as we avoid extremes in any direction we may hope to take a leading place on the march which leads to the distant goal of complete knowledge."

I have italicized the words "comprehensiveness" and "hospitable." Paraphrased, Mr. Pepper's summary statement means this: The Episcopal Church welcomes to its membership and ministry adherents of any of the churches which are generally considered worthy the name of Christian.

This doctrinal stand is practically identical with the fundamental, or four-fold profession of faith, officially adopted by the Episcopal Church of America and the Church of England, in the eighties of the last century. It was offered to the other Protestant bodies as a basis of denominational union—this irreducible minimum of sound doctrine—and was termed "the essentials of the Christian faith," and "the terms of inter-communion." There is, of course, no doubt whatever that Mr. Pepper and all other Broad Churchmen wholly agree with this very momentous doctrinal utterance. I will quote it verbatim.

"I. The Holy Scriptures of the old and new Testaments, as containing all things necessary to salvation, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

"II. The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol, and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

"III. The two sacraments, ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.

"IV. The historic Episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

"Now it is upon the layman's Unilateral affirmation of the doctrinal openness and comprehensiveness of the Episcopal Church, as well as upon that Church's official Quadrilateral of irreducible orthodoxy, that the Concordat rests—as a medium by which it is proposed to extend the Episcopal priesthood among Congregational ministers and parishes. It seems to me that the Episcopal Church would not herein act inconsistently; and I am certain that she may herein well claim to hold sound Christian doctrine as Episcopalians, almost universally, are minded. Low Churchmen and Broad Churchmen make up the vast majority of Episcopalians, both clerical and lay; and no one will question that their practically unanimous doctrinal position is what I have stated. The average Episcopalian is as firmly convinced of the doctrine of Comprehensiveness as he is of Christ's divinity.

Outsiders might object that High Anglicans in the American Episcopal Church are not so minded. This is true of some among the ministers; however, these are militant High Anglicans, and they are not the rule but the exception, even among High Churchmen; and not one in a dozen lay High Churchmen is opposed to comprehensiveness. The average High Churchman is represented by the writer of the following letter, recently printed in The Living Church, a journal which tentatively

endorses the Concordat:

"I call myself a Catholic and embrace fully all Catholic tenets and practices, strongly believe in a sacerdotal order, that the Mass is the only proper principle service on the Lord's Day, and in the use of such Catholic devotions and forms as the Way of the Cross, confession, holy water, incense."

"However, I find myself in strong accord with the proposer. My reading has been limited enough, but no one can read Gore's *Roman Catholic Claims* and not realize the pity and the sin of schism. Further, I believe no sincere Christian can impute all the blame for past schisms to the separated bodies.

"If by Baptism we are one, how much will God know us to be separated? He is infinitely beyond us. Then, by strict mathematics, how much to Him are these divisions which we wrangle about? 'Christian Churches not accepting the Episcopal order have been used by the Holy Spirit.' Of course they have, for in God's eye their difference from us must be infinitesimal!"

Close observers have always felt what this candid writer practically avows: High doctrines are usually held by Anglicans rather as religious opinions and views than as articles of Christian faith; they do not hold these sacred truths and follow these venerable doctrines in anywise as do our Catholic people.

Tolerance of doctrinal differences (comprehensiveness and openness), clearing the way down to the principles affirmed in the Quadrilateral, is notoriously the working creed of the Episcopal Church. Now the Concordat would offer an arrangement by which any reputable Congregational minister, who accepts that doctrinal basis, may be ordained an Episcopal priest and continue his ministrations in his congregation; a little fraternal diplomacy will smooth away all minor difficulties. A sort of *quantum*, and yet really organic union is thus to be secured between the two denominations.

As it was to be expected, some High Anglicans, mostly clergymen, are showing violent discontent with the Concordat. Yet none of them is a better type of high doctrinal belief than is Dr. Manning, of Trinity Church, New York; he has set his name to the proposal of the Concordat. He has done so because he firmly believes in comprehensive tolerance of doctrinal differences; he undoubtedly represents the High Anglican sentiment. In fact all High Churchmen are continually taking their places in Church organic assemblies side by side with ministers who believe the Quadrilateral doctrine should be made yet further reducible, not hesitating to preach to their people to that effect. Indeed some bishops are to be placed in this class. If all these may be, yes, must be thus tolerated and comprehended within the Episcopal communion, why should not fairly orthodox ministers be drawn from *without* and affiliated by "historic" orders to the "Catholic Church" as it is "locally adapted to the varying needs of the people of the United Church by Protestant Episcopalians?"

Such is the comment I have to make on the statement of some Catholics, that the Concordat will be the final word of abdication of the Catholic position hitherto claimed by High Churchmen. Nothing of the kind. The Concordat must not be called a Broad Church inspiration. It is inspired by honest Episcopalianism as America knows that denomination among the many other Protestant bodies serving our people's religious needs. That Church is, as a matter of fact, just what it is thought to be by its adherents and all others—a form of Protestantism making rather persistent claims to be also Catholicism. With the Concordat effectuated, they will be hitherto on their "Catholic" chariot a Congregationalist trailer.

Meanwhile, alas that it must be said, to anyone but a latitudinarian doctrinal comprehensiveness is compromise with false doctrine. The Quadrilateral, with its "terms of intercommunion" and its "essentials of Christian faith," is a signpost pointing to the Saviour in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii, 13).

In conclusion I beg the Catholic reader to ponder the following extract from The Living Church published with the first promulgation of the proposed Concordat. I have seen nothing on the subject more intelligently stated on the Episcopal side. Bear in mind that this tentative approval is part of a leading editorial article:

"It may be admitted that the Church takes a certain risk in ordaining a priest and sending him, with neither vestments nor liturgy, back into a Congregational relationship, among people who may be entirely unsympathetic with his desire to add the authority of episcopal ordination to that ordination which he already possesses. Episcopal ordination is only worth having in that it makes a man a deacon or a priest when he was not a deacon or a priest before, and that implies a desire on his part to perform diacal or priestly functions.

"We have in the past urged the immorality of any proceeding whereby a man should be made a priest unknown to himself. This concordat and the appended canon seem to protect both him and the Church from this danger. The minister could not fail to recognize that he had been made a priest.

"And yet, once started, we believe a movement toward unity will re-

ceive a surprising impetus. Our London letter in this present issue tells of a plan tentatively worked out between the Bishop of London and certain Wesleyan ministers. We understand that English Moravians have also made overtures seeking to find a basis for unity. The essential things are, first, that we all preserve a truly sympathetic attitude, and, second, that we insist unfalteringly that unity can be reached.

"It means very much for men of the age and standing of Dr. Smyth and the dignity of his associates to be willing to go so far in seeking to bridge the old, old, chasm between episcopacy and non-episcopacy. It is because we recognize that ironic desire that we are anxious to find a way to meet it. And it is certain that only the graver and more serious of his fellow-ministers would be likely to take the step which these are willing to take, while our bishops, on the other hand, would be able to treat each candidate solely on his individual merits.

"We commend the concordat to the thoughtful consideration of Churchmen. It is easy to criticize it. But it may be better to take the risk of accepting than the greater risk of refusing it."

THE ONE TRUE CHURCH

HOW PROTESTANT SEEKERS HAVE FOUND THE HAVEN OF TRUTH

By "M. C. L." in Edinburgh Herald

"As I look down the course of history, I find that there is only one Church which has existed from the beginning of Christianity to the present, teaching one faith, and being under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Rome. This is established beyond doubt by Scripture, tradition, patristic writing, and by all history. Those words were written a few years ago by the Rev. W. Farmer, an American Methodist, who further expressed the sound opinion that only a mind of 'wonderful inconsistency, illogical, and unhistorical agility' could jump from the Council of Nicea to the time of Luther, ignoring in its prodigious leap twelve centuries concerned with the most important spread of the Christian Faith. But the 'sons of the Reformation' do not quite ignore those centuries; they assert that during that period the Church went astray, became corrupt, so that it was necessary to begin again, and establish new churches; and so they ground the 'Reformation' on a falsification of the Divine promise, contradictory to the words of Scripture and of Our Lord Himself. Mr. Farmer pointed out that the 'reformers' in their desire to purge the Church of abuses, and attempting to give to many of its ancient formularies and practices a new meaning entirely perverted of the original and true contents of Christian revelation. The Church from the beginning was compelled, and she had the Divine commission and authority, to define faith and reject error if truth were to be preserved incorrupt. Hence the definition of many fundamental doctrines and the condemnation of heresies, Arianism, Montanism, etc. She defined the dogmas of the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the Incarnation, and so on, while Protestantism accepted, and which many Protestants still hold. To admit her decisions then surely makes it logical and inevitable, necessarily to admit them now, for she still stands in an unbelieving, critical, and materialistic age as a mighty bulwark against the disintegrating and corrupting forces of modern rationalism, and as a source of the true Faith and practice. It is not surprising to read in the journal which records Mr. Farmer's observations that he has been received into the Church whose authority he even then recognized. (Sunday Visitor, 27th April.) The same journal records the remarks of another Protestant minister, the Rev. C. Harbord, of Kansas City, who, after studying the entire history of the Christian religion as written by both Catholic and Protestant historians, arrived at the following conclusions as the results of his research: (1.) That the Catholic Church has an unbroken history back to the first century, whilst between that century and Protestantism there is a gap of 1500 years. (2.) That the history of the Catholic Church has been one of unity of faith and doctrine, and that of Protestantism one of division, strife, contention and unrest. (3.) That there is not a single truth that is taught by any Protestant body that is not taught by the Catholic Church, who teaches many vital truths that are not taught by any Protestant body. (4.) That the doctrine of the Catholic Church have ever been the same, while Protestantism is always changing. (5.) That there is in the Catholic Church a spirit of reverence and devotion that is largely wanting in Protestantism. Every Catholic is taught that the Church is the House of God, and to behave therein with reverence, 'while too often the Protestant churches are turned into club rooms and play houses.' This gentleman also has followed the light, and entered the One Fold of the One Shepherd. The Philadelphia Record, (8th April), prints a summary of an address by Mr. R. A. Cram, a leading Episcopal layman of Boston, of whose conversion we may hope to hear, as he advocated Church unity on the basis of a return to the Catholic fold. He emphasized the divi-

sion of the churches, their scattered efforts to solve the great problems of reconstruction, and after calling attention to Catholic doctrines, insisted that the Sacraments were indispensable in the preservation and practice of the Christian Faith. He declared that without a doubt his Church had to go back to the tenets of the Middle Ages when Church and State, hand in hand, insisted upon the indissolubility of the marriage tie, and when it taught that the Sacrifice of the Mass was the greatest and highest religious service, and that the forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament of Penance was essential to regaining the grace of God; the arguments for the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation were not, he said, to be challenged, and the doctrines which had been set up against it—most of which had been thrown aside—were not in accord with the spirit of Christ. He concluded by saying that the frequent efforts made by Anglicans towards a union with the Roman Catholic Church had never been effectual because they were always concluded with certain provisos; certain Anglican bishops would have liked their authority ratified by communion with the Church, with the right to teach and to do pretty much as they liked, but the Anglican bishops and clergy would have to realize that they must, in joining the Catholic Church, become what the latter reasonably insists upon, devoted priests in the ministry. The study in contrasts afforded by the words of these different persons recalls what Kinglake wrote of the Church: 'The universal aptness of a religious system for all stages of civilization, and for all sorts and conditions of men, well befits its claim of Divine origin. She is of all nations and of all times, that wonderful Church of Rome!' ('Eothen,' ch. xi.) And Schlegel confesses 'Protestantism was the work of man, devoted priests in the ministry. 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