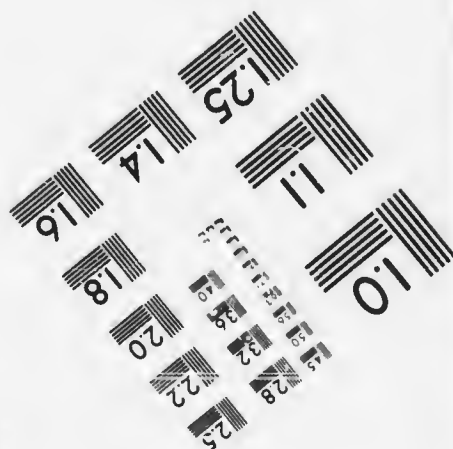


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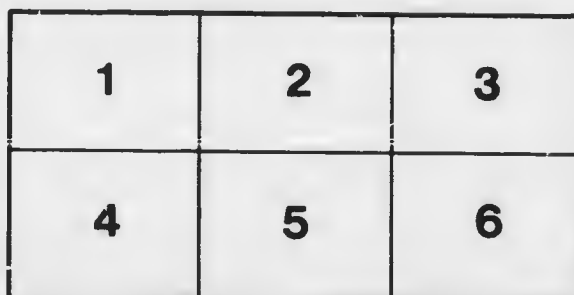
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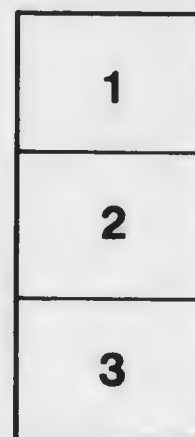
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A QUESTION DISCUSSED

AS TO

The Necessity, at the Present Day, for a
closer Union and Co-operation

AMONG

EVANGELICAL EPISCOPALIANS.

BY

R. V. ROGERS, M.A.,
MINISTER OF St. JAMES'S, KINGSTON,
AND
RURAL DEAN.

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“EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH, ONCE,” FOR ALL, AND NO AGAIN, “DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.”—*Jude*.

“WHATSOEVER THY HAND FINDETH TO DO, DO IT WITH THY MIGHT, FOR THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR WISDOM IN THE GRAVE, WHITHER THOU GOEST.”—*Eccles. ix. 10*.

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Disc 107

The Necessity, at the Present Day, for a Closer Union and
Co-operation among Evangelical Episcopalians.

With the desire of bringing this before you, I would ask, 1, *Who* are these with whom my topic says there should be a closer union and co-operation? Next, 2, Does this necessity *exist*? And, 3, lastly, Why *specially* at *this* day does this necessity appear?

Edo 107 - 100 of 100

This distinction of evangelical, as applied to a part of the Church of which we are members, may be an unwarranted assumption, as unbecoming on our part as it is invidious to the others; and, therefore, instead of a closer alliance, duty to our Church would teach us to abandon party, and seek to draw the cords closer with the whole body. But if it should appear that this distinction of terms stands for a difference, real as diversity of principles can make it, then it may be an absolute necessity for a more earnest effort to sustain and propagate these distinct principles,—specially if there be any desire and effort on the part of contrary minds to neutralize and destroy what we believe and value as truths, equally supported by the standards of the Protestant Episcopal Church and that only standard of truth, the Word of God!

To the discussion of the question. First. Who and what are Evangelical Episcopalians? The latter of these two terms, *Episcopalian*, distinguishes a part from all other divisions of the visible Church; the former subdivides this part, and distinguishes it from another, which I shall call *Sacramentarian*.

i. These terms are used for the sake of brevity, and as well-understood distinctions. No charge is brought, or even insinuated, that individual sacramentarians may not love and live the Gospel as it is in Jesus, and are not therefore, in a certain sense, evangelical; but it is meant that the system which they adopt is opposed to "the Gospel of the grace of God," and therefore anti-evangelical; that the preaching and acceptance of salvation begun, continued, and ended in the sacraments

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exclusively, is the very opposite idea to that revealed in the gospel of a salvation from sin and death, and safety in heaven, begun, continued and ended in Christ exclusively.

ii. The Evangelical Episcopalian does not deny the possibility of life in Christ being first communicated and received in the sacrament of Baptism, and afterwards increased and strengthened in the sacrament of the Supper of the Lord ; but he does deny any such necessary connexion between the sacraments and the life of God in the soul as to make them inseparable ! The evangelical idea is, that life is communicated to the soul by the Holy Spirit, producing, first, a living faith in Jesus Christ as a man's personal and individual Savior ; and next, a corresponding holy life from the constraining motive that Jesus Christ has manifested himself to him as his only and all-sufficient Savior—that life in the soul is Christ in the soul, indwelling by his Spirit ! This may or may not be in connexion with the reception of the two sacraments, says the Evangelical ; must be, says the Sacramentarian !

iii. Nor is this *may* and *must* be a distinction without a difference. Far otherwise. They are the distinctive terms which point out the antipodal difference between the two systems. The not denying the possibility of life given in the first and confirmed by the second sacrament, is by no means a granting of the certainty of it ; because, though we grant that it may sometimes be given, it must not be understood that we grant that it is always so, or that the reception of the sacraments is in any sense absolutely necessary to the receiving the Divine life in the soul ! “The wind bloweth where it listeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit,” bespeaks the sovereignty of “the Lord, the Spirit.”

iv. The Evangelical Episcopalian accepts literally his Church's definition of a sacrament,—that it consists of two parts, and that the one may exist and be received without the other ; that “the outward and visible sign” does not *ever* convey “the inward and spiritual grace,” and that the inward and spiritual grace of which water and bread and wine are signs, may be, and frequently is, given *before*, *at* and *after* the reception of the visible signs. He finds in the divinely-written history of the Church, that on one occasion the Holy Ghost was given *after* baptism, on another *before*, and in the case of the Head of the Church *during* baptism—showing that the Spirit of the Lord is not bound.

v. The force of the distinction between these two theories—salvation by faith through sacraments *exclusively*, and salvation by faith *independently* of sacraments—is, that whilst the one brings the soul of man into a direct connexion with the Divine Savior, the other uses as connecting links the lawfully-ordained ministers and the duly-administered sacrament. The first is the natural branch grafted into the living vine by an act of faith. It is the member of the body living by a life derived from the living Head. The second is the member incorporate in the Church, which is Christ's visible body only. With regard to the first, Christ declares (John vi.) that life is given and continued—"As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." In respect to the second, no such declaration is made, or even implied. At best it is an assumption only, without proof from the Bible or from the living subject of the sacraments. That life is always given and continued in sacraments is at best an induction from premises very uncertain, whilst that the inward grace *ever* accompanies the outward sign is an assumption contradicted by all but daily experience—an assumption most injurious to the soul's health, and subversive of the design of God in having a Church in the world.

Having defined the Evangelical Episcopalian in contradistinction to the Sacramentarian, we are enabled the better to consider *the necessity* for closer union and co-operation among the former. This we will do by considering—Second. *Does the necessity exist?* We have seen that the two systems already described are as it were at either pole, and therefore if the one be *truth*, the other must be *error*. Life given by faith in Christ Jesus through sacraments exclusively, and life given by faith in Christ Jesus only, like two parallels drawn from different points, never meet, though running side by side. Life begun necessarily in the one sacrament sends you for the keeping life alive and in health to that other sacrament. The life thus lived is a sacramental life. Life begun by faith in Christ Jesus brings you to Christ Jesus for the conservation of that life. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself," and "because I live ye shall live also," is His own assurance.

vi. I would here pause to remove an objection to the Protestant Episcopal Church drawn from the fact of the existence of two such different systems found in the same Church, and drawn confessedly from the same standards. If

we search the Divine record we shall discover that this is no strange thing, but that two directly opposite systems have ever prevailed in the Church of the Living God, drawn, too, from the same source—the Written Word. St. Paul notices this in his day as flesh and spirit, and describes the supporters of the two as “born after the flesh” and “born after the Spirit,” and marks the opposition of the two when he says “they that are born after the flesh persecute them that are born after the Spirit;” and their tendencies, “they that are born after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are born after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit;” and of these two contrarieties cites Jacob and Esau as the types. We remember that these two were both sons of the one father, brought up under the like training, and yet how different; equally different, at least, with any diversities which exist among us. Again, we are warranted from the words of the Lord of the harvest in expecting these discrepancies to continue till the Church as well as the world shall be reaped, but till then the tares and the wheat will grow together in the same field, deriving advantages from the same care and culture, and so alike each other that no human eye could be trusted to make a separation, “lest in gathering out the tares they root up the wheat.” Then, seeing that this anomaly in the Church of God has ever existed, and will during its militant state ever exist—before this diversity coming from an apparent unity be quoted in opposition to the Protestant Episcopal Church—the opponent must account for these Bible illustrations of contrary effects from the apparently same causes. The Church in the world is the field. The seed is the Word. The seed is good, and yet the fruit is often far otherwise; a sad intermixture is often the product of the ministry of the word, even when taught in its purity, and its culture faithfully attended to and plentifully watered with the dews of heaven. It cannot therefore be matter for surprise that, where man’s treachery prevails, there should exist these irreconcilable contradictions.

May we not answer the objector by turning the battle to the gate, by pointing out the objection as a proof of the Protestant Episcopal Church being a part of the Church of Christ, since the like discrepancy is found in both.

Having admitted the existence of these discrepancies in the Church at large, as well as in our department of it, I would add that, notwithstanding,

vii. These two contradictions, like truth and error, cannot

coalesce, but at the expense of truth; and therefore a truthful yet respectful, a faithful yet affectionate, declaration of differences should not be withheld, if we would be true to our own convictions and faithful to each other. If evangelical men believe themselves right, they must believe Sacramentarians wrong, and we know that right and wrong are terms of eternal moment in matters of the soul's health. If we differ from our brethren of the same Church as to *how* a sinner can be reconciled to God, *how* life is first communicated to the soul, dead by nature, *how* life is kept in being and in health till life here end in life hereafter, surely every consideration which can move a Christian man should move us earnestly, truthfully, and fearlessly to remedy their mistakes.

Compromise here is cruel. As a brother's keeper, if he perish through lack of knowledge, and his ruin be traceable to our neglect, how shall we answer the question, "Where is thy brother?" Surely we shall be pronounced guilty of brother's blood. Then let us carry the message which we have received of the Lord the Spirit to our brother in error; carry it *lovingly, truthfully, fearlessly*. This cannot be done effectively without union of council to plan, of effort to execute, of prayer for wisdom to direct, and energy to labor, and for that blessing from above without which nothing is strong, nothing is holy, nothing can succeed.

viii. Here it must be conceded Evangelical members of our Church have often betrayed their trust. By compromise, for the sake of peace, they have acted as if they were indifferent to their principles. They have co-operated with Sacramentarian brethren in labors where, consistently with their principles, natural results were not desired, nor desirable. They have had a common treasury, and yet no community in the objects for which that treasury was formed. Their idea of building up their Church, though seemingly one, had little in common, and therefore, whilst praying together for success, the success of either would be grief to the other. There has been a co-partnership, by constraint of effort, carried on by a machinery in common, aided by a common stock, with little, if any, oneness of aim and object. Something much akin to a mutual deception has been practised by each, though neither has been deceived. Like two rivals, they have sought to outwit, and outmanœuvre and outwork each other, though professedly of one mind and one in design. And as the God with whom we have had to do is "a God of truth," may we not ascribe

much of our failure to this? God has not honored with his approbation of success an alliance so contrary to his own nature and so subversive of the character of his cause.

Take an example of my meaning in the design of missions. This is to carry Christ's Gospel where it is not now known, or to build up those Christian institutions already existing. In the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States both bodies formerly united in the domestic and foreign field. Now, how can two such dissentients as to what Gospel is, join heart and hand in propagating that Gospel? What the Sacramentarian calls Gospel, the Evangelical dares not, but at the expense of truth. At best, in his eyes, it resembles the hard measure of the taskmaster demanding the tale of bricks without giving the straw. It is a working out one's own salvation, forgetting that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his own pleasure. It is a return to beggarly elements—retrogression, and not advancement. How, then, consistently can these two classes of opinion unite in propagating what, if it be Gospel to the one, is no Gospel to the other? Again, the same union, with like feelings and like results, has existed in our preparation of candidates for the ministry. Who and what kind of men shall teach, what shall be taught, what amount of preparation shall be sufficient to qualify the instrument for his work, and many other points of equal import, have been, I will not say reconciled—this could not be—but compromised, by stifling the convictions of conscience, to the injury of both parties and to the credit of neither.

ix. For a time, so the history of the past tells me, this compromise existed in the Mother Church in England, when an universal paralysis prevailed; but the moment that life was restored it was found so distasteful to the now spiritually enlightened, and if, judging from its effects, so little agreeable with God's mind, that the combination ceased, and each of these separate schools of theology, for these and kindred purposes, sought an agency of its own. At the beginning of this century the Church Missionary Society arose as the agency of the Evangelical body of their labors in heathendom. Educational institutions in London, Bristol, Elland, in Yorkshire, and other places, under Evangelical influence, were established as training schools for the ministry.

The Pastoral Aid Society is established as the Evangelical almonry for the support of additional ministers. The Colonial Church Missionary Society is called into existence, in com-

paratively late years, to supply England's colonies and various parts of Europe with good men and true. The Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, the first distinct agency of the Church of the kind, comes as a messenger of love from the Evangelical members of the United Church of England and Ireland, to tell God's ancient people that Jesus of Nazareth is their own Messiah. By enumerating the above efforts of this distinct portion of our Church, it is not meant that these are all the fruits of their faith and labors proceeding from their love. On the contrary, this principle of love to God, unfettered by ecclesiastical compromise, and suffered to act in its own way, has been most prolific of good; and whilst these are the chief, the Evangelical principle has found, by combination with itself, a means of relieving all but every want, and discharging all but every duty to its fellow-man.

In connexion with what has been said, it is a fact worthy of consideration that this separate labor has been highly honored of God. The removal of a part has in no degree injured the residue of the same Church, whilst it has vastly swelled the treasury and enlarged the machinery for the carrying on the work of the visible Church. For example, the formation of a distinct Evangelical treasury for missions has not taken away one fraction from the older Protestant mission. On the contrary, whilst the Church Missionary Society has drawn from its own particular field a comparatively princely revenue, (£150,000 for 1866,) it has been only to provoke to emulation the Gospel Propagation Society, and to increase its revenues in a proportionate degree. And the same may be said of each new effort that in no degree has it injured those previously existing.

This rivalry between the two great parties in our Church in many cases has been productive of much moral good by toning down the pretensions of the one and keeping the other from ecclesiastical declension, and thus subserving the best interests of the entire body. Each class of thought has acted out itself, unfettered by the other, whilst both have labored in their own spheres under a responsibility to that Church of which they were the cordially attached members. And judging from consequences, I believe that the Great Head of the Church has deserted neither, for the work done by them distinctly has been immensely greater than when united, whilst the *modus operandi* of each has been more agreeable to either, because consistent with their principles; and, I will add, what I cannot

but believe, more honorable to God, because more consistent with the sacred dictates of enlightened conscience.

In the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, within these few years, the Evangelical body has discovered its position to be in itself unnatural, dishonorable to their principles, and has resolved it to be no longer tolerable, and therefore has formed distinct associations, in which they can consistently co-operate. The Church Missionary Society and the Evangelical Knowledge Society are but the beginnings of that end which will furnish this division of the one Church with an agency peculiarly its own. As in the mother so in the daughter Church, it will be proved that separation is not necessarily opposition, and that distinct organization in the present state of men's minds is more becoming Gospel simplicity than a mere outward unity. Let each according to its ability evidence its devotedness to its one great object, not by strife of words, but by holy deeds, and the interests of the whole Church will be most materially subserved. Let *self* be sacrificed on the altar—"we serve the Lord Christ"—and each separate service so carried on in the Spirit of Christ will test the truthfulness of the two systems better than labored controversy, because, in this particular, too, it will be seen, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Reviewing what has been said, I think we are in a position to consider—Third. Why should the cords of like principles bind together more closely the several families of Evangelical Protestant Episcopacy, at this time *especially*?

i. Evangelical Protestant Episcopacy has a great work to do, which, though it might be done by some other division of the universal Church, could not be done so well, but which this cannot do without united action. I mean, as the natural agency, to raise the fallen Churches, which, like itself, are episcopally ordered.

(1) The conservative element, natural to the constitution of Protestant Episcopacy, and which is sanctified by the Evangelical spirit which pervades it, renders its services peculiarly necessary at this day. E. g., our Church is eminently—I had almost said pre-eminently—a keeper of Holy Writ. She has a great regard for the Church of the past age, whilst seeking to adapt herself so far as consistent to the present. Evangelical Episcopacy is neither the slave nor the rebel against antiquity. No other Church excels, if it equal her, in the use which is made of Holy Scripture. Every doctrine of

the Bible she has adopted in her Standards, forming a consistent scriptural system. In her Liturgy she has embodied the Bible, and so, by the constant use of the former, she seeks to impress the latter on the mind and heart of her people, as no other Church, with its present system, can do. The Evangelical Protestant Episcopal Church has been found an eminently qualified missionary agency both at home and abroad. As a great controversial power Evangelical Episcopacy is unrivalled. In the contest of truth with western and eastern error, her points of resemblance give her a closeness of approach closer than any other evangelical body, whilst her points of difference being essential, she is enabled the more thoroughly to convince these erring Churches of their departure from primitive truth and apostolic order.

A further call for a closer union arises from this:—

ii. In our age there is a peculiar tendency to separation.

(1) This is caused by the prevailing licentiousness of thought, which, cut loose from the ancient restraints, seems resolved to navigate the whole circle of science by the aid alone of its own self-invented chart and compass. Two master spirits, each with its attendant, are abroad in the world—*superstition*, with slavery, mental and spiritual: *infidelity*, with licentiousness; and so pervading are these powers that few wholly escape the influence of one or other or even at times both these powers. It may seem strange, and yet not stranger than true, to say that the same mind can be influenced, almost at the same time, by two such contraries—two such variant masters—teaching you at one time to believe too much, at another to believe nothing at all. It requires no great insight into human nature to discover its tendency to extremes. Its history affords abundant evidence of the devotee of to-day becoming the infidel of the morrow, and the slave of yesterday the rebel of to-day.

(2) Additional and excitative of this separative spirit, there exists a combined effort, well understood, ever acting, on the part of our brethren of the opposite school, to destroy the Evangelical Protestant element as we define the term, and understand and appreciate it, in Protestant Episcopacy. He cannot have been a very close observer of the events of the last few years in our Church, well nigh everywhere, and not discovered this. Unchecked by authority, if not, as in some cases, fostered by it, a revived sacramentarianism has filled our pulpits, occupied our professors' chairs, and even worn our

mitres. As a necessary consequence, a revived externalism, decked in all that appeals to the eye and to the ear, has obtruded itself into our Churches, and has so overlaid the simplicity of our services as to reduce them to the merest "figures of the true," and perverted our worshipping assemblies into ecclesiastical places of display.

Call this reproduction of him who was a liar, from the beginning and abode not in the truth by whatever name you please, it is his, with just so much of the features and character of the Father as his cunning craftiness sees suitable to the peculiarities of our day and generation to produce. We see this, though others may not; but seeing it, knowing its character and tendencies, are we faithful watchmen if we give no alarm? Duty alike to ourselves and to our brethren who differ from us demands of us this, even though they may charge us with being troublers of Israel, and cast out our names as evil. Because, I again affirm, both of us cannot be right, and the one party who thinks the other wrong, and fails to tell it so, sins against one of the first principles of religion—"thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and assumes a responsibility for which it will have to answer at that great day when all that is wrong will be pronounced sin, and that alone which is right in the sight of God holiness.

CONCLUSION.

Combination is the spirit of the age; union the principle for the accomplishment of any desired object. In the arts and sciences, agriculture, commerce, and trade, as well as religion, little is accomplished but by combined effort. This is a truism needing neither proof nor particular illustration. To a certain extent this principle of association has been ever acted on. The Church itself is an example of this, and her varied institutions evidence that the theory of her own creation has never been forgotten. Were the Church of Christ--were the Church of which we are members--what it was at the first, what it was designed to be, what it ever should be, such combinations as that of which we are contemplating the formation would be needless. But we are called to consider things as they are, and not as they should be; and looking at our branch of the visible Church, we see and feel an influence carrying us away from our ancient principles. We see a cloud coming over the light of the Reformation as it dawned on our beloved Church at that memorable period. Borne along by a strong under current, we see and feel ourselves drifting away from our

established landmarks. Nay, further, we see and feel a power already risen to an unlooked-for height, and yet rising higher and higher, much alike that against which our forefathers jeopardized their lives unto the death. It bears another name, 'tis true, and yet it is not another. It is the same religion of fallen man, made to suit the natural cravings of man as a religious animal, at the least cost of the principles and tastes of his fallen nature, dressed up to catch the lusts of the eye, with sounds to ravish the ear and allurements to captivate the whole man, suited to the day. Beyond question this is a modernized development of "the mystery of iniquity."

Consistently enough the favorers of these fantasies have sought to withdraw the word Protestant from our Episcopacy, since with them the word had lost its meaning, and they were daily assimilating to that system politico-religious against which the word was introduced, whilst the Evangelical was equally distasteful to their system, and therefore to be discarded or misinterpreted.

Planning, plotting, and strategic, ceaselessly active, with the whole man bent on this one thing, the Sacramentarian sacrifices every consideration to the interests of his system. Perhaps unknown to himself, but certainly not unseen to the close observer of events, the sincere disciple of this school at times sacrifices that nice sense of honor and that strict truthfulness which was once the ornament of Protestant Episcopacy. It would seem that, though not yet, has the revivalist of Laudism received the mark of the apostacy, yet he has the number of the name, and is influenced by the spirit of that counterfeit of truth, ecclesiastical and spiritual, "deceiving and being deceived."

Seeing that things are so, standing fast in the faith of our Church principles, we must resist them, in no degree giving place to what we believe to be alike inconsistent with God's truth and our Church views of it.

